

**SCOTTISH COUNCIL  
FOR NATIONAL PARKS**  
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**NEWSLETTER**  
**AUTUMN 20003**

**The Future of SCNP - Some Good News**

Earlier in the year, the Executive made a joint bid with the Council for National Parks for England and Wales to the Esme Fairbairn Foundation, for three years funding to implement the first stages of our Business Plan. This would have put us on a sound footing and provided the wherewithal to pursue our main functions of promoting the cause of National Parks in Scotland.

Unfortunately, and much to our and CNP's surprise, we were turned down. On hearing this news, the Hannah Stirling Loch Lomond Trust made a donation of £2000, for which we are most grateful. In addition, Scottish Natural Heritage has awarded us £5000 for core funding this financial year to bridge the gap until more substantial resources can be secured. We are currently discussing the mechanics of drawing down the money from SNH. Our thanks to them also.

CNP has been unswerving in its support for SCNP and far from being deterred by the Fairbairn Foundation disappointment, has set up further meetings with us to renew our joint campaign.

As mentioned in earlier Newsletters, we have made arrangements with both SNH and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park to meet twice yearly to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. Two meetings have been held with each body now. They are held in a very informal atmosphere where professional views are exchanged in a manner that is both frank and friendly and this is proving useful and constructive. In due course, we hope to set up similar arrangements with Cairngorms National Park.

We see these meetings as a vital part of maintaining good relations with key bodies, understanding their problems and priorities, and thus being able to present our thoughts in ways that are likely to be most effective.

We have always known that our work would require 'the long haul' and that there will be successes and disappointments. The recent

disappointment over three year funding has been offset to some extent by recognition from two other bodies, the Hannah Stirling Trust and SNH, that SCNP's work is of value to the National Park scene in Scotland.

Yours

Robert Maund - Chairman

**Cairngorms National Park**

The dispute over the boundary of the National Park looks set to continue even though the Park is now in being. The official opening was upstaged by a rival piece of publicity when the media were invited by the Perthshire Alliance for the Real Cairngorms (PARC) to join an ascent of the 3200ft., Carn Liath in Highland Perthshire to highlight the inconsistency of the official boundary. A good time was had by all and the message got valuable coverage in the Press, TV and Radio. The Minister, Allan Wilson MSP, is clearly anxious to move on and forget the boundary issue. However, this is one that is unlikely to go away and will have to be reconsidered, together with the issue of Planning Powers, before too long.

**Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park**

We have continued to keep an eye on contentious planning applications and other possible developments which have not reached the application stage as yet. Particularly of concern is the wish to set up a commercial float plane service on the Loch. SCNP has established that to do this, part of the Loch would have to be licensed as an airport and would require planning permission.

It is clearly important for the Park Authority to consider how the use of aircraft on the Loch impacts on the aims and objectives of the National Park and adopt their policy approach to such ideas as a background against which any applications can be determined. It would not be adequate just to address this proposal on an ad hoc, 'on its merits' basis. We have passed our thoughts on this issue to the Park Authority urging them to consider the policy first and act accordingly.

This brings us back to one of the main priorities for the Park, namely to prepare and get their own Plan in place as quickly as possible so that the pressure to deal with every

issue on a one off basis is removed and things can start being considered against a coherent policy background. We understand work is going ahead on the first stages of the Plan but that it has probably slipped a little against the programme. In our discussions with the Park, we have stressed the importance of maintaining the programme as far as humanly possible.

### **SCNP Executive**

Since the last Newsletter sent out prior to the AGM on 2 April, the Executive has met on four occasions, 16 April, 5 June, 8 July, and 12 September. A further meeting is scheduled for 30 October 2003.

The meetings with SNH were held on 17 March and 11 September 2003 and we meet again in April next year.

The meetings with Loch Lomond and Trossachs National park were held on 21 March and 15 August 2003 and we meet again in March 2004.

### **Planning Ahead**

One of SCNP Executive's major concerns about the National Park designation process in Scotland is the absence of any overview or strategy about the future.

SNH's policy statement (02/04) refers to 'examining how the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 could be applied to other areas of Scotland, including marine areas;'

The only other straws in the wind might be the mention of National Parks in the recent manifestos of both the Labour and Liberal-Democrat Parties and the specific reference by the former to the establishment of a 'coastal marine national park' in an unidentified location. These references, however, may have been prompted by election prospects rather than being evidence of strategic thinking.

By way of contrast, in England and Wales, the formal Report of the National Park Committee of 1947 chaired by Sir Arthur Hobhouse, proposed 11 national parks and one further (North York Moors) was later included. All but two of the areas were designated in the early 1950s. The Broads followed in the 1990s and the South Downs is currently under consideration for

designation, along with the New Forest.

**The key point about the foregoing is that, from the outset in England and Wales, successive governments had a clear geographical strategy to work to in progressing secondary legislation and followed this closely.**

In the absence of such forward thinking, the SCNP Executive has put together a discussion paper to promote the case for **A National Park Strategy for Scotland**. We will be consulting members and other key interest groups shortly before launching a campaign to bring about the preparation of a clear strategy in Scotland.

### **Communication with Members and Friends**

We are only too well aware that we need to keep in closer touch with all the membership of SCNP and that because of shortage of resources, we have not succeeded in this aim. With the recent modest improvement in our funding, we aim to improve the situation so that there will be four newsletters each year, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. These will be posted out to you and will also appear, as now, on our web site (see address below).

You could also help us. At present there are less than 100 people involved with SCNP and some of those are non-payers! We need to boost the membership and bring on board everyone who has a concern with the environment in Scotland, whether they live here or elsewhere. There must be many people with Scottish links living abroad or south of the border, who have a real concern to see Scotland's splendour properly managed for the greater long-term good. **We need them to join us to give us a stronger voice when making the case to the Scottish Parliament and Executive.**

Please talk to your friends, neighbours and relatives and encourage them to join. Let us know who they are and we will send them information about the Council. You can do this by telephone, post or via our web site. **We look forward to hearing from you.**

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