



### Autumn 2008

I visited Dava Moor recently at the invitation of the **Save Our Dava Campaign** which is trying to prevent the development of several substantial windfarms which threaten to change the area's wild beauty for ever. When drawing up the Cairngorms NP boundary, Dava, a recognised Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) was considered for inclusion in the Cairngorms National Park but eventually rejected.

Dava Moor is a wild and beautiful landscape with wide horizons, huge skies and extensive views south to the Cairngorms, rolling hills to the east and west and open views to the north to the Moray Firth. The imposition of massive wind turbines into this landscape would not only do irreversible visual damage but would also threaten the diverse habitat which is the home or hunting ground to many threatened bird species including raptors such as ospreys and eagles. Construction and access work would also do irreversible harm to extensive blanket bog and the complex drainage of the area. Many respected scientists consider that in terms of carbon retention, blanket bog is as important in preventing climate change as the tropical rain forests and for that reason alone, should not be disturbed for development.

Government guidance on the location of wind energy projects lacks clarity and unfortunately is written in a manner which is all things to all men. As a result, the location of wind turbine schemes is still largely a developer-led scramble rather than a plan-led approach. In my view, the only way to afford Dava the necessary protection would be to include it in a northerly extension to the Cairngorms National Park as part of the current National Park Review. To allow wind farms in areas such as Dava would be a dreadful act of vandalism for which future generations would never forgive us.

**Robert Maund**  
Chairman

### Possible name change.

SCNP is considering following in the footsteps of CNP and changing the name from Council to Campaign. Initial consultation seems to suggest that campaign more accurately reflects what we do whereas Council now seems outdated and gives non-members the impression that we are some kind of official body set up by government. We have applied to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR) and they have confirmed that such a change will not present any problems for them. We now propose to go forward to the 2009 AGM on Friday 17 April to seek approval from the membership.

### National Parks Review.

The quinquennial review of Scotland's first two national parks has commenced and the report on Stage 1 is due out shortly. Government has sought views on Stage 1, is to seek reactions to their findings and use the results to create the brief for Stage 2 which should start in November. Stage 2 will almost certainly cover any boundary changes (there is already cross-party support for the extension of the Cairngorms to include the Perthshire highlands as originally recommended by Scottish Natural Heritage) and consideration of the size of the membership of the two Park Boards. From a meeting we attended with the Environment Minister, Michael Russell, it also seems likely that Stage 2 will also include some consideration of the role of Regional Parks for which we have sought better protection from wind turbines and other inappropriate industrialisation.

The Minister has been as good as his word and met with the 'Save Your Regional Park' representatives on 11 September and offered a further meeting in the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park in the Spring after the National Parks Review.

### Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and Cairngorms National Parks.

Both parks are now heading towards public inquiries next year into their local plans. Given the scale and nature of the responses to consultation, it now seems inevitable that Public Local Inquiries are the only way forward. For SCNP, some of the key issues will be sustainable communities, housing - affordable, local need, open market speculative provision etc., - infrastructure provision and its impact on the wider environment together with getting proper recognition for the importance of

conservation of landscapes and habitats.

Further liaison meetings have been held with LL and TT NP (12 November) and the Cairngorms NP (23 October) and it seems inevitable that we will have to be represented at both inquiries because issues of principle that could affect the futures of both parks are at stake.

### **Possible Harris National Park.**

When he spoke at our 2008 AGM, the Minister, Michael Russell, encouraged us to offer help to the Harris Community where interest had been expressed in having a national park. This we have done and our submission can be seen on our web site at [www.scnp.org](http://www.scnp.org) as can our response to public consultation on a Scottish Marine Bill. Whilst Harris might not be the highest priority across Scotland for National Park Designation, we would be supportive if the Scottish government and the community wished to proceed. It is important to add valid areas to a family of national parks in Scotland and it might encourage others to come forward more positively.

### **Campaign for National Parks**

On 5 November, we had a meeting with Ruth Chambers, Acting Chief Executive of the Campaign for National Parks (England and Wales) as part of our regular efforts to share knowledge and experience. The items discussed included:

- Joint Project with APRS.
- Possible name change (like CNP).
- Scottish National Parks Review.
- Possible Harris National Park.
- Scottish Marine Bill.
- Role of SNH.
- National Park Local Plans and future PLIs, 2009.

CNP had done some innovative work to increase their membership and had advertised nationally for further trustees with an interest in and commitment to national parks. This initiative had been supported by substantial (in our terms) grant aid and had paid off handsomely.

We also discussed more effective ways of influencing government thinking by trying to establish an all-party group of MSPs with known support for or interest in national parks.

### **SCNP Fundraising for "the Project".**

We are delighted to say that the De Freitas Trust has contributed £3000 to our joint project with APRS to promote the case for and cause of National Parks in Scotland. This brings the sum raised or committed to £18,800. We have also made a first stage application to the Esmee

Fairbairn Foundation and have been invited to take the application to the next stage over the next two months or so.

### **Annual General Meeting 2009.**

The 2009 AGM will be held on Friday 17 April 2009 at the Smith Art Gallery and Museum in Stirling. We have been very fortunate to get Michael Dower as our speaker this year. He will talk about:

#### ***"National Parks and national landscapes: a European Perspective"***

*Michael Dower is the son of John Dower, who wrote the White Paper in 1945 on which the legislation for National Parks in England and Wales was based. Michael has served as National Park Officer of the Peak District (being successor bar one to John Foster); as Director General of the Countryside Commission; and as co-author of the European Landscape Convention, to which the UK became a signatory on 2007. Since 1996, he has been Visiting Professor at the University of Gloucestershire, in which capacity he wrote two reports for Scottish Natural Heritage, on 'The socio-economic benefits of national parks and protected areas in Europe' and on 'Protected National Landscapes in Europe'.*

This promises to be a very interesting occasion and we urge everyone to put the date in their diaries now. The usual notices will come out in due course but diaries get booked up so early in this hectic lifestyle of ours, that we hope you will keep this day free now that you have this early warning.

### **Consultations.**

*Scottish Marine Bill – responded.*

*Cairngorms NP – revision of boundary.*

*Management Risk from P.Ramorum and P. Kernoviae – responded.*

*Possible Harris National Park – responded.*

### **Executive Committee.**

We are pleased to say that James Fraser has agreed to join the Executive and has attended his first meeting. James held senior positions with the various titles given to tourist boards over the years particularly covering the Loch Lomond and Trossachs NP area. He is also very familiar with the Cairngorms NP as he comes from Nethy Bridge. James acted as our expert witness on tourism at the recent Kelburn windfarm inquiry and made an important contribution to our case.

Since the Spring/Summer Newsletter, the Executive has met on 2 September, 7 October and 4 November. There is no meeting in December and a further meeting is scheduled for 13 January 2009.

SCNP The Barony, 2 Glebe Road, Kilbirnie, KA25 6HX.

Tel: 01505 682447

E-mail: [info@scnp.org.uk](mailto:info@scnp.org.uk)

website: <http://www.scnp.org.uk>