

SUMMER 2023

NEWSLETTER

SCOTTISH CAMPAIGN FOR NATIONAL PARKS



CHAIRMAN'S OVERVIEW

BY JOHN THOMSON

From advocate to adviser – that is broadly the transition that SCNP has had to make over the past year or so as the process for selecting and establishing one or more new National Parks has gathered momentum. In this newsletter my comments reflect on some of the questions that this change of role has posed, whilst Nikki Sinclair's contribution outlines the path that we are travelling. Other articles report on the work of our two existing National Parks and on the activities of the two local groups campaigning for National Parks in the south of Scotland.

As all these pieces show, it is a time ripe with promise for all who wish to see Scotland's nature and landscapes cared for better. To make the most of this opportunity we are keen to draw upon as wide a body of relevant expertise as possible. We are therefore delighted to welcome to our Executive Committee Eric Baird, who has long experience not just on the Board of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and in the international protected area arena but also in community engagement and visitor management. His impressive credentials (Page 18), along with those of his fellow trustees, will shortly be spelt out on our newly revamped website, which we hope will itself provide a valuable source of help and advice to anyone interested in learning more about Scotland's National Parks and other protected landscapes and the benefits that they can bring.



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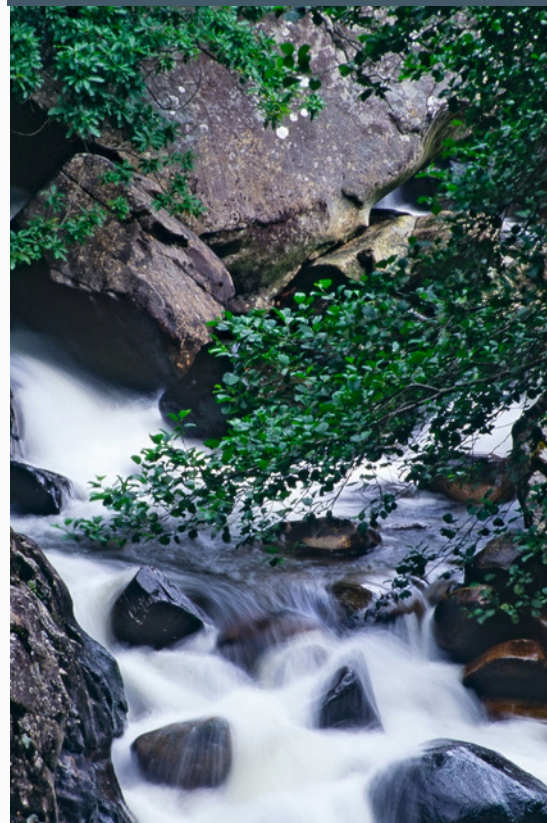
CHAIRMAN'S AGM REFLECTIONS

In the summer of 2021 years of campaigning by SCNP finally bore fruit and the Bute House agreement ushered in the prospect of at least one new National Park. How have things been since then? My summary assessment has to be “satisfying but challenging”. Satisfying it has been in a relatively obvious way: no longer hurling ourselves unsuccessfully and bruisingly against a seemingly immovable wall of opposition or at best inertia. More subtly and rewardingly, there has been a previously unknown feeling of our contributions actually being welcomed and valued in government circles – a positive engagement with officials in Scottish Government and relevant public bodies. This has come as quite a psychological shock after so many years of cold-shouldering even by those who might have been expected to be friends and of little short of downright hostility on the part of those dancing to the prevailing political tune.

But this abrupt reversal of overall fortunes has undoubtedly brought with it major challenges – some conceptual, some practical and some operational. To take these in order, first the conceptual. What is the future of Scotland’s National Parks to be? SCNP had spent years arguing the case for National Parks broadly as conceived and defined in the existing legislation – very much in the UK mould and in the jargon of the international conservation movement as examples of IUCN Category V Protected Landscapes. We had done so partly for pragmatic reasons: the legislation was what we had; as a relatively recent addition to the Scottish statute book it could be taken to reflect the expression of what contemporary society wanted and would support – or in some cases tolerate; and questioning the approach would play right into the hands of those who wanted nothing more than to kick the whole issue into some very long grass.

Underlying this, however, was always a rather more philosophical line of argument. European-style, and especially GB-style, National Parks had developed in the context of a continent long settled and for the most part shaped and often transformed by people. Much of what was valued in it bore a heavy human imprint.

“there has been a previously unknown feeling of our contributions being welcomed”





CHAIRMAN'S AGM REFLECTIONS CONT.

What was being conserved and celebrated was very much the product of that lengthy interaction between people and nature. More pragmatically, also, the current generation of these same inhabitants was still there and - entirely understandably - very much wanted, and increasingly expected, a say in the way that their surroundings were to be treated.

So landscape conservation, and protected landscapes in particular, was and were always about more than simply the purely natural. In Scottish legislation that fact was explicitly reflected in the specification that National Parks could be justified not just in terms of natural heritage interest – a term that itself embraces the much more people-centred values of natural beauty and amenity – but also of a combination the natural and cultural. And this cultural heritage was generously defined – it included not just man-made artefacts but a much wider range of attributes such as “language, traditions, ways of life and the historic, artistic and literary associations of people, places and landscapes”. All in all, National Parks as thus conceived were designed to illustrate and tell us a much more comprehensive story about humans’ historic relationship with the land.

Though different individuals inevitably brought differing perspectives to this fundamental concept, and attached varying weights to the elements within it, all of them ultimately involved recognising that National Parks – in Scotland at least – were not and never could be about the preservation of pristine wilderness. Such wilderness simply didn’t exist. Even the remotest reaches of the country had been shaped to some degree by human hand. And where that hand was no longer much in evidence, it had very often, and within comparatively recent times, been forcibly removed – a fact deeply and understandably resented by many. Even in areas with less obviously troubled histories the human component of the landscape was frequently much valued as a contribution to the richness of the overall texture, whether in the form of physical features like drystone dykes and characteristic vernacular building styles or the historical associations and artistic connections mentioned previously.

It is true that in Scotland a strong-boned topography and relatively sparse and unevenly distributed human population meant that the natural was more prominent and somewhat more pervasive than elsewhere in the UK. That reality had sometimes been reflected in talk of the possibility of creating National Parks more along IUCN Category V lines in the Highlands and Islands. But overwhelmingly the allegiance of those carrying the spear for National Parks in Scotland had been to the conception of them not as large-scale nature reserves but as places where people and nature came together to produce something special.



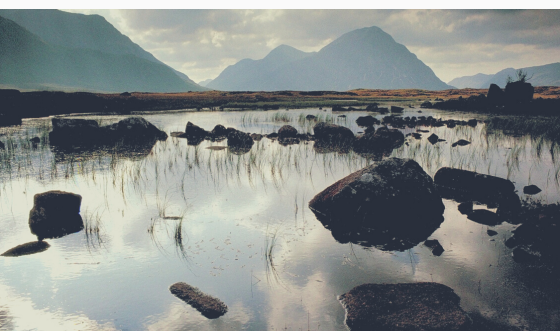


"we had been thinking hard about how National Parks could play a leading part in combatting climate change and do more to protect and enhance biodiversity."

CHAIRMAN'S AGM REFLECTIONS CONT.

Perceiving their role in this way did not mean that SCNP had ignored broader concerns about the deteriorating state of the environment or the re-ordering of public policy priorities to which these were, albeit far too slowly, giving rise. Well before the Bute House agreement committed the Scottish Government to establishing at least one new National Park we had been thinking hard about how National Parks could play a leading part in combatting climate change and do more to protect and enhance biodiversity. But at the same time we had been conscious that for at least 30 years the emphasis in environmental policy had lain much more on wildlife protection, not least through European designations with powerful statutory back-up such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). In these circumstances the more holistic ambitions embodied in past landscape protection mechanisms such as National Parks had taken a distant second place. Nowhere was this more starkly evident than in the dismal fate of the landscape conservation measure with the widest geographical coverage in Scotland - the National Scenic Area - which had recently been stripped of its international recognition as a bona fide protection mechanism for lack of effective management planning and action.

Given this past and enduring overshadowing by more specifically biodiversity-focused activity, it was hardly surprising that the sudden promotion of National Parks politically as potentially a key instrument in the tool box for achieving nature recovery came as a more than slightly disconcerting surprise. The 30x30 target for nature protection that underlay this sudden shift in emphasis in some respects compounded the dilemmas that the abrupt change of tack posed. How could the concept of protection - in itself intrinsically static, at least superficially - be reconciled with the growing acknowledgement that most of the existing natural resource was heavily depleted and that in most cases what was required was therefore enhancement? Moreover, even that enhancement had to recognise the increased dynamic introduced by climate change, which rendered at least questionable the term "restoration" which had traditionally been more commonly used.





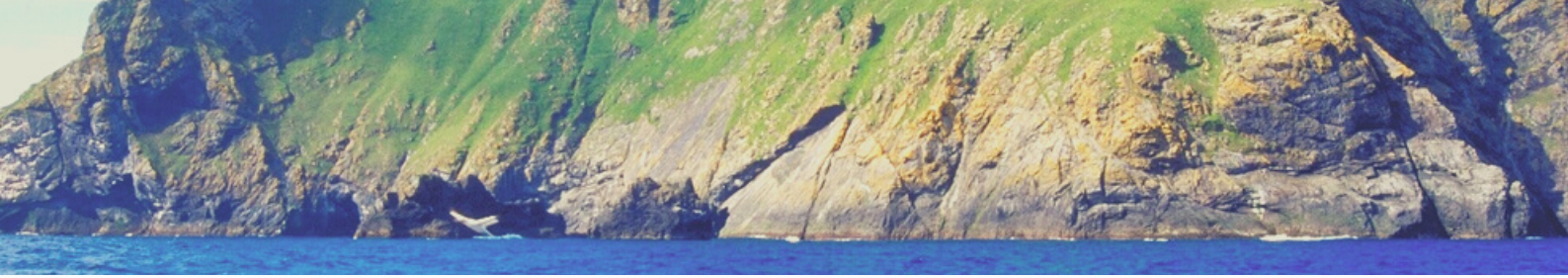
CHAIRMAN'S AGM REFLECTIONS CONT.

These then were some of the more theoretical issues with which SCNP has had to grapple. In the event it was not hard to conclude that the active planning and management and inter-agency co-ordination that have become increasingly central to the National Park model and ethos were in principle entirely appropriate to tackling the challenges presented by the twin goals of nature recovery and a just transition to net zero. But this is where the practical issues began to rear their head.

Experience not just in Scotland but internationally carried above all one clear lesson: National Parks, and indeed conservation measures generally, only succeed where they enjoy widespread community support. They involve – in all sorts of ways – working with people, not imposing upon them what are perceived as top-down prescriptions formulated elsewhere.

Furthermore the campaigns for new National Parks run by SCNP and the local groups that had sprung up spontaneously in some parts of Scotland had based their case on the existing statutory provisions. Suddenly presenting the argument in very different terms, with a much stronger emphasis on nature recovery objectives, even if it might not necessarily in practice entail major shifts in priorities on the ground, inevitably risked alienating, if not antagonising, some – and perhaps many – of those who had been painstakingly won over locally. For others, who had only just begun contemplating whether National Park designation might be relevant to their communities, uncertainty over future objectives and priorities might be enough to snuff out any emerging interest.

Even in relation to these more practical matters, and as always in this field, more philosophical questions once again began to arise. Community and engagement might indeed be vital. But which communities, at what scale? Designation as a national asset obviously signals significance at a national level, not a purely local one. But what if interests and objectives, and their implications, as perceived at these two levels conflict rather than coincide? What steps can be taken to help reconcile them if they do? Again SCNP has seen it as its role to try to inject into the debate about future National Parks some awareness of these crucial dimensions, which can all too easily get overlooked. This stance may sound overly cautious and dampening of the welcome enthusiasm that the cause is at last generating. But unless the potential pitfalls are anticipated and addressed they could only too easily prove its ultimate undoing.



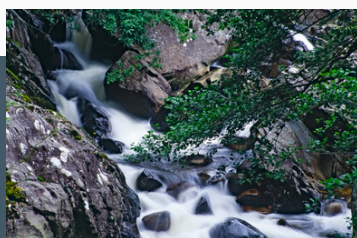
CHAIRMAN'S AGM REFLECTIONS CONT.

Finally, what are the operational challenges that have come with the transformed context in which SCNP has been working over the past 18 months? With the new policy commitment to more National Parks, the pace and scale of activity is much less of our choosing. Previously, beyond its role in monitoring and commenting upon the performance of the two existing National Parks (and even there to a fair extent), the organisation could pretty much decide for itself how much to do and where to intervene. Now much more is expected of it by others and even where it has a choice, the pressure to seize opportunities is intense and well-nigh irresistible.

We have thus had to boost our capacity – and thus increase our expenditure – in two different ways. First, we have bought a bit more of the time of our still very much part-time project manager. And, second, we have contracted in some administrative support. The project manager role has since early last year been filled by Nikki Sinclair, who has excelled in taking over the task so long and outstandingly well performed by John Mayhew.

On the administrative side we have been joined over the past six months by Pamela Paton. I can personally attest to the huge impact that she has already had in sorting out a bunch of predominantly elderly volunteers who, however competent they may have been in earlier times, are now not always fully up to speed with current ways of working. It has been a massive relief to the Executive Committee to have her support and I have no doubt that our membership at large and wider audience beyond it will also soon be reaping the full benefits in terms of better communications and more reliable engagement.

Huge thanks for all their efforts, therefore, to Nikki and Pamela and indeed to John Mayhew, who continued to supervise Nikki's work until the end of last year. Thanks too to my fellow officers and Committee members, who have all contributed invaluable to SCNP's endeavours, however long or short their involvement to date.





SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARKS STRATEGY PROJECT UPDATE

BY NIKKI SINCLAIR

Since January 2023 there has been continued progress with the process that will lead to the designation of one or more new National Parks in Scotland. Along with colleagues at APRS, the Joint Strategy Project has continued to do what it can to encourage and support this. We have organised regular liaison meetings with NatureScot and Scottish Government, as well as responding to consultations and publications and answering queries from the public. The development of a new SCNP website should help make keeping our communications up-to-date very much easier in future.

The start of February saw the delivery of [NatureScot's Advice on National Parks](#) to Scottish Government. We published our initial thoughts in response after the Advice was made public. In the main we are very supportive of NatureScot's proposed approach. Despite a slight hiatus and heightened political uncertainty during the SNP leadership election, the Scottish Government's work on new National Parks has continued with Ministerial responsibility remaining with Lorna Slater MSP, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity.

Despite political uncertainty the Scottish Government's work on new National Parks has continued



On the day of the SCNP AGM in April, we helped to organise a workshop on New National Parks and Nikki gave a presentation on how the Scottish Government's commitment to at least one new National Park by 2026 (made in the [Bute House Agreement](#) in 2021) has been taken forward and how the process has evolved in the time since. It looked forward to the various steps in the Scottish Government process still to come (which include confirming the appraisal framework; consulting on any legislative changes; the nominations process; selection of proposed National Park(s); statutory reporting and designation processes). We heard excellent speakers from RSPB Scotland (Isobel Mercer) and Historic Environment Scotland (Dr John Raven and Dara Parsons) talk about new National Parks from the perspective of enhancing biodiversity and that of protecting the historic environment. This led on to a lively discussion of both the potential successes and pitfalls of the ongoing process.



SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARKS STRATEGY PROJECT UPDATE CONT.

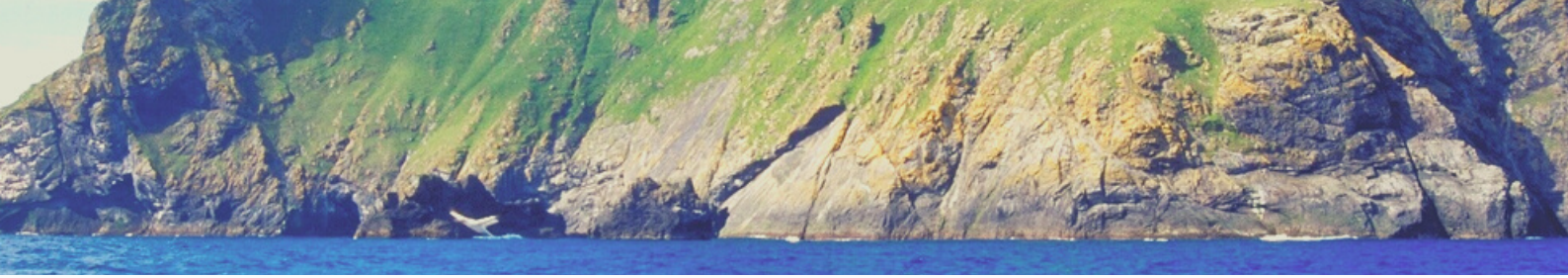
In May the Scottish Government launched a public consultation on the Appraisal Framework they plan to use to assess nominations for new Parks. The consultation period runs until 4 August and we are currently drafting a response from the Joint Strategy Project which will be available on the SCNP website once agreed.

Also in May, the Scottish Government announced that they were opening up pre-registration for groups and individuals interested in potentially submitting a bid for National Park status once the nominations process opens. Interested parties can email nationalparks@gov.scot to pre-register and they will then be kept informed of important dates and potential support for bids. Further information about this is available on the SCNP website and we are happy to answer any questions about the process if we can. The Scottish Government say that the nominations process will be launched in Autumn 2023 and be open for 5 months.

Before then, a further public consultation - on potential amendments to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 - will be run by the Scottish Government. We will put information on the SCNP website once the documents are published in the summer. It is currently expected that the Scottish Government will be consulting on changes to the range of powers of National Park Authorities and to relevant duties on other public bodies, as well as on proposals to amend the aims of National Parks to give a stronger focus on addressing the climate and biodiversity crises. It is anticipated that amendments to the 2000 Act could be put forward in the forthcoming Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill, preparatory work on which is underway.

We have had ongoing discussions with the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) comparing the new National Park process in Scotland with their advocacy work on updating the National Parks legislation at Westminster and the Welsh Government's intention to create a fourth National Park in Wales within the next few years. Plans for a CNP speaker to join us at our AGM in April were sadly thwarted by problems on the railway but Nikki later gave a brief overview of developments in Scotland at the CNP (online) Council meeting in May and we hope to continue the cross-border dialogue.





SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARKS STRATEGY PROJECT UPDATE CONT.

We have also participated in discussions led by the Blue Marine Foundation considering a framework for developing voluntary National Marine Parks (along the lines of the one established in Plymouth Sound). The results of Blue's work on this should be published later this year and hopefully this will be a useful resource for some coastal communities in Scotland whether or not they wish to put in a nomination for statutory NP status.

In March, Nikki attended a presentation by MSc students at SRUC at the Scottish Parliament hosted by Ariane Burgess MSP. The students presented their report "View from the City" about city dwellers's views on urban greenspace and National Parks.

Whilst based on research carried out over a short space of time they found both strong support for National Parks and that there could certainly be more awareness of the Scottish Government's plans for more NPs. We were really pleased that several of the students then attended the SCNP AGM in April.

More recently in June, Nikki and SCNP Chair, John Thomson joined APRS colleagues at their stand at the Royal Highland Show at Ingliston where we were visited by Lorna Slater MSP, the Minister with responsibility for proposing new National Parks, who was interested to hear more about our support for new National Parks in Scotland.



From left to right:
John Thomson, SCNP Chair
Nikki Sinclair, Scottish National Parks Strategy Project Manager
Kat Jones, Director APRS
Lorna Slater MSP - Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity.

Pictured at the Royal Highland Show June 2023.



CURRENT NATIONAL PARK CAMPAIGNS

CAMPAIGN FOR A SCOTTISH BORDERS NATIONAL PARK

Found: the final piece of the Southern Borders jigsaw

The Scottish Government (SG) plans to designate at least one more National Park (NP) by 2026, and is now calling for proposals from areas wishing to be considered. The Southern Borders now has a once in a lifetime opportunity to gain this internationally coveted and recognised designation. The economic benefits – as well as the potential of the NP to tackle the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss – would ripple out beyond the NP boundaries through the well-documented halo effect.

The NP's proposed boundaries could be based on the former County of Roxburgh but the final boundaries should ultimately be determined in consultation with communities.

As already confirmed by an independent feasibility study (see www.scottishbordersnationalpark.com), the Campaign for a Scottish Borders National Park (CSBNP) proposal meets each of the criteria of the National Parks (Scotland) Act, 2000. Crucially, the proposal already has extensive popular support. Also, it is important that the detail continues to evolve to reflect feedback, the experiences of recent years' extraordinary events, and the ever-changing political and economic landscape. A NP would be well-positioned to enhance and protect this area's important but threatened natural heritage and its unique, rich and lively cultural heritage. It would be governed by a National Park Authority (NPA).



Ridings © Jedburgh & District Community News Group - Dennis Laing

with majority local – and elected – board members (nine or 11 in total). There are already many local efforts to enrich and strengthen the area's biodiversity such as those supporting the iconic Atlantic salmon, the golden eagle, and extensive peatland restoration. All need support, extension and scale to be sustainable for future generations.

One priority for the region – and a new NP – is to identify genetic conservation units in the Southern Uplands and SE Scotland lowland river catchment areas. This would help the NP and its partners to support ecosystems and increase biodiversity as a means to mitigate the impact of climate change.

The unique cultural heritage of the Southern Borders has evolved through the centuries and lives on in song, story, the Ridings, and the visible architectural record from neolithic times down to the present. All, however, are a unique but under-appreciated asset which demands wider recognition and to be made more accessible to the Scottish and international publics. An NPA would be well positioned to deliver this.



CAMPAIGN FOR A SCOTTISH BORDERS NATIONAL PARK CONT.

An NP could help to shape and attract responsible tourism and sustainable development (including new and affordable housing) that will help to attract more young families and working age people to the Southern Borders. This, in turn, will support diverse local businesses including construction, professional and technical services, retail and hospitality, as well as the region's traditional sectors of farming, forestry and textiles to boost year-round local employment opportunities.



A family of mountain bike enthusiasts - Visit Scotland - Ian Rutherford

The Scottish Borders proposal is for a slimline model (no planning department) that could collaborate with other organisations - public, private and voluntary - to coordinate, support and source funding for diverse natural and cultural heritage activities. Core costs of about £3m annually (2023 prices) would be covered by a Scottish Government grant, with additional funds from public and private sources secured to support specific projects, as in other National Parks.

Local farmers, foresters, game keepers and ghillies' knowledge, first-hand experience and practical advice and support has been critically important in shaping the current proposal, and will be essential if the NP is to meet its objectives. However, the benefits must flow both ways and there is much that the new NPA can offer land managers through collaboration and partnership working, and maximising publicly funded support which will be crucial on larger-scale carbon capture and biodiversity initiatives, and all aspects of visitor management (see [www.scottishbordersnationalpark.com/resources/How to Keep \(almost\) Everyone in the Countryside Happy](http://www.scottishbordersnationalpark.com/resources/How-to-Keep-(almost)-Everyone-in-the-Countryside-Happy)).

The NP would be in pole position to put the Scottish Borders on the map as a highly attractive place to work and live in - as well as visit.



Photo credit - Frank Wielbo

MARION LIVINGSTON
CAMPAIGN FOR A SCOTTISH BORDERS NATIONAL PARK



CURRENT NATIONAL PARK CAMPAIGNS

GALLOWAY NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION

Since the commitment to at least one more National Park in this Parliament GNPA has been working to ensure that Galloway is included in that commitment. We relaunched our website with new and simpler 'It's got to be Galloway' messaging to align with this which you can view at <https://www.gallowaynationalpark.org/>

The release of NatureScot's advice to Ministers has enabled us to look in more detail at the implications and opportunities arising from the previous consultation and work of the stakeholder group. The recent political changes have added frustrating delays to the process and we await with interest how the Minister responds to this advice and particularly how any changes to National Park legislation and the nomination and evaluation process can be tackled by May 2026. We are very appreciative of the insights that SCNP has been able to provide us with on this and for the informative workshop around the recent SCNP AGM. The increased profile of nature and nature recovery in NatureScot's

advice plays well to a key Galloway strength of a great range of habitats from sea to summit. To build on this our 2024 calendar, which is now in production, will major on this. Thanks to the 1300 people who bought our 2023 calendar - we hope you are enjoying our fantastic coastal scenes.

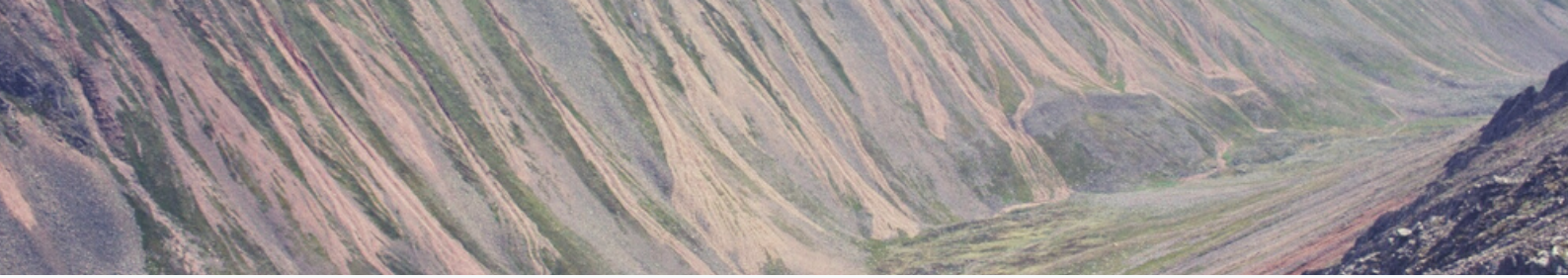
GNPA continues to meet with local politicians and MSPs where we continue to have very strong support. Our membership numbers, young supporters and business champions continue to grow along with our social media followers and are responding to requests from groups and community councils for presentations and updates on the campaign.

We feel GNPA is well positioned to put forward a strong bid with the support of our three local councils once the window for nominations opens. We hope by this time next year the Minister will have confirmed her intention to propose Galloway as one of Scotland's next generation national parks.

ROB LUCAS - GALLOWAY NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION



Photo credit - Paul Tarling



EXISTING NATIONAL PARK NEWS

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

UK's first outdoor dementia resource centre opens in Cairngorms National Park

On Friday 21 April, Alzheimer Scotland officially opened the UK's first dedicated Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre at its base at Badaguish, near Aviemore in the Cairngorms National Park. The new centre enables people with dementia, their families, and carers to experience the mental and physical benefits of spending time outdoors. The project is part of the [Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 programme](#), supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund thanks to National Lottery players.

Gillian Councill, Associate Executive Lead for Localities at Alzheimer Scotland, said "We are delighted to officially open the Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre today, and it was wonderful to have so many of our participants here. People with dementia can really benefit from engaging with nature. The Centre is the first in the UK and supports people with dementia, their families, and caregivers to have enriching outdoor experiences.



PHOTO CREDIT JAMES LEE / CNPA

"Anyone can get in touch with us and get support, and we look forward to welcoming people from across the National Park in the coming weeks and months."

Grant Moir, Chief Executive at the Cairngorms National Park Authority, said: "The new Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre is a truly inspiring place that will make a huge difference to the people and communities of the National Park. The centre and the service it offers will contribute to making this a [Park for All](#), where everyone is welcome no matter what their background or circumstances.

"People with dementia can really benefit from engaging with nature"



CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CONT.

"The Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre project and what it delivers is an important part of the Cairngorms 2030 programme and its group of health and wellbeing projects. I'm proud that this first-of-its-kind centre has been opened here in Cairngorms National Park."

Caroline Clark, Scotland Director at The National Lottery Heritage Fund said: "We work to ensure that heritage is inclusive and that our funding benefits the whole community. We are very proud to be supporting the UK's first outdoor dementia centre as it pioneers a new way of enabling enjoyment of our natural heritage, demonstrating the benefits that engaging with heritage can have for our collective wellbeing."

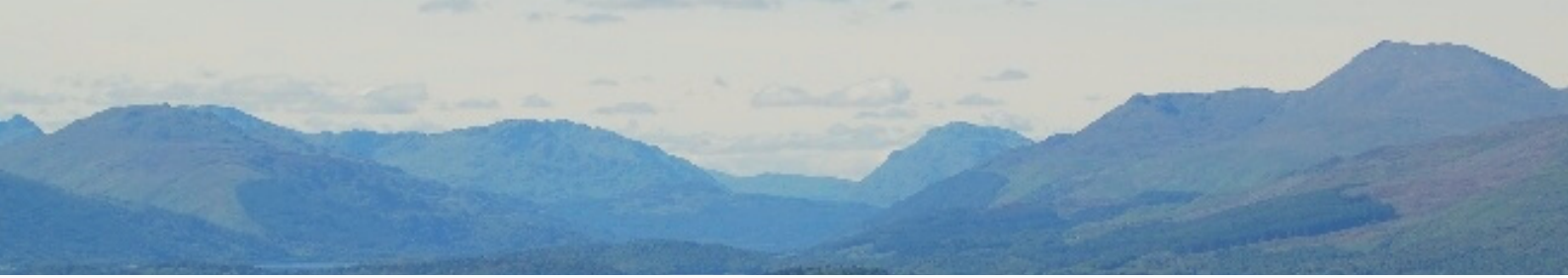


PHOTO CREDIT JAMES LEE / CNPA

**The Outdoor
Dementia Resource
Centre is an
important part of
the Cairngorms
2030 programme**

Martyn Crawshaw, Speyside Trust Chair of Trustees said: "Speyside Trust is pleased to be able to work with Alzheimer Scotland to allow a wider variety of people to access the Glenmore forest. Speyside Trust is keen to encourage wider community use of our facilities for groups who would otherwise not be able to benefit from this unique outdoor environment."

Anyone living with dementia, their families and carers are welcome to participate in the Centre's programme of outdoor activities. They can self-refer, making access to participation a quick and easy process. Some of the activities include gardening, walking, outdoor learning, and cycling. To learn more about the Centre's programme of activities and how to get involved, please [visit the Alzheimer Scotland website](#).



EXISTING NATIONAL PARK NEWS

LOCH LOMOND AND TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Reshaping the National Park as a climate-resilient place where people and nature thrive together

Scotland's first National Park has a special place in the heart of millions of Scots, whether they live and work in the Park or visit with family and friends to enjoy the stunning landscapes on a sunny day.

Now, with the impacts of the twin climate and nature crises becoming ever more apparent, while local communities and businesses adjust to changes from the pandemic, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is at a crossroads.

With change happening at a rapid pace, there is a small window of opportunity to tackle these huge challenges and to find ways to shape a new, positive future for the National Park's people and environment.

A conversation about the future of the National Park is currently underway, offering everyone with an interest in the Park an opportunity to help shape the response to issues such as climate change, nature loss and local housing.

In April, a new Draft National Park Partnership Plan was published and a 12-week public consultation was launched.

The draft five-year plan puts forward a 2045 vision and a wide range of proposals to prompt discussion, driven primarily by the scale and urgency of the nature and climate crises.

A conversation about the future of the National Park is underway offering the opportunity to help shape its future



GORDON WATSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, LLTNP



LOCH LOMOND AND TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CONT.

It highlights opportunities to set a new direction for the National Park as a ‘climate-resilient place where people and nature thrive together’, focusing on three key areas:

- restoring nature
- creating a sustainable, low-carbon visitor destination
- enabling a greener economy and sustainable living

Some of what needs to happen is non-negotiable. Now more than ever nature and climate need to be at the forefront of our minds.

The impacts of the climate emergency are becoming increasingly real to those living, working and visiting the National Park with more frequent flooding and landslips seriously damaging people’s homes, communities and businesses.



Forecasted increases in extreme weather events and rising temperatures mean that we will continue to see more of these impacts - more blue-green algal blooms in lochs, more tree diseases affecting our forests, challenging conditions for agriculture and more storms, wildfires and drought.

Our damaged peatlands are emitting carbon instead of absorbing it and some of our most precious native woodlands remain isolated and unable to regenerate due to pressures from animals grazing and preventing the growth of young trees.

Our warmer and wetter climate also threatens nature, with some habitats and species struggling to adapt to these rapid changes.

Despite this being a National Park, nature is in real trouble here with nearly a fifth of even our most special, designated sites for nature being in decline.

Tackling the nature and climate crises is not separate to supporting the rural economy and communities.

In fact, working together to address these crises will provide a range of wider benefits, including more investment, business and employment opportunities. Low carbon local living, more affordable homes and opportunities for jobs in sectors such as woodland creation and ecotourism can all help us transition to a



LOCH LOMOND AND TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CONT.

greener economy and help future-proof the National Park for people, climate and nature.

The National Park is also a heavily visited landscape so going forward, we need to look at transforming the Park into a more sustainable visitor destination, supporting people to access the outdoors in a way that is more in harmony with nature and supports the reduction of emissions.

And whether it's providing better public transport, expanding our woodlands or providing green jobs, collective action will be key. The National Park Authority does

not have all the answers and the vision we are proposing for the future is too ambitious and wide-ranging to be achieved by a single agency.

The draft National Park Partnership Plan is available to read on the [National Park Authority website](#) and will be refined after the 12-week consultation period, using the feedback from partners, stakeholders and individuals to finalise the plan before it goes to Scottish Ministers for approval before coming into effect in 2024.

**GORDON WATSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL
PARK AUTHORITY**





IN BRIEF

DON'T FORGET OUR REGIONAL PARKS

BY GRAHAM BARROW

Welcome progress is being made to identify areas suitable for National Park status by the end of this Holyrood Parliament in 2026. But what of our three Regional Parks?

The three areas – Clyde-Muirshiel, the Lomond Hills, and the Pentland Hills – are possibly too limited in area to be considered as future National Parks but are nevertheless important national resources deserving of greater emphasis than they have been receiving in recent years.

They have been abandoned by central government and allowed to drift downhill

as far as financial support and staffing are concerned, and yet they could play an increasingly important part in the drive to tackle climate change, having extensive areas of upland bog and heath. They are of course some of the most accessible areas of hill country for the bulk of the Scottish population in the central belt and can play an important part in providing an upland experience for those who cannot easily reach the Highlands or the Southern Uplands.

SCNP and APRS carried out a review of the Regional Parks in 2019/20, and our report can be seen viewed on our [website](#).

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT

A very warm welcome to Eric Baird, who has recently joined the SCNP Executive Committee.

Currently Head Ranger on Glen Tanar, in the Cairngorms National Park. For 7 years, from its inception, Eric has served as Vice-Convenor of the Cairngorms National Park Board, as a Ministerial Appointee. Eric was awarded a Churchill Fellowship, in 1991, for his study of the Access/Conservation interface, in protected areas of Northern Europe and has undertaken conflict resolution work, at the invitation of the Portuguese Minister for Environment, in the Tejo protected area.

Eric is a co-opted member of the Council of the European Federation of National Parks and Protected Areas.

Co-author: the original 'Cairngorms Forest and Woodland Framework'.





IN BRIEF

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN NOMINATING AN AREA FOR NATIONAL PARK STATUS?

Would you like to nominate a new National Park?”

The Scottish Government will launch the nominations process in Autumn 2023 but in the meantime anyone even beginning to consider putting forward an area for consideration can email nationalparks@scot.gov to pre-register interest.

Registering interest will keep you informed of relevant information and dates. Further information about the process is available in the [news section of SCNP's website](#).

Remember that National Parks in Scotland can be entirely land-based or include coast and marine areas.



CALL FOR SUPPORT

Would you like to renew your membership? Do you know anyone who may be interested in supporting the work of SCNP? Please spread the word.

Members receive newsletters and updates about the Campaign and the work of Scotland's National Parks. Membership fees support SCNP's work to protect more of Scotland's finest landscapes.

SCNP membership is £20 per annum for an individual membership, and £30 per annum for a double/family membership.

Donations are also very welcome, with all donations going toward supporting the work of SCNP.

If you are involved with, or know of any businesses who may be interested in supporting the work of SCNP please let us know at info@scnp.org.uk.

Online membership forms and payment facilities are available on our website www.scnp.org.uk.

Thank you for your continued support!



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Postal Address - c/o Dolphin House, 4 Hunter Square, Edinburgh EH1 1QW

