

Cairngorms Capercaillie Project

Carrbridge Capercaillie Community Working Group | Meeting notes

Date & time: Thu 16 May, 6.30pm – 8pm

Venue: Carrbridge Village Hall

Attendees: *Carrbridge Capercaillie Community Working Group*; Alice Buttress, Becky Badger, Ewan Archer, Frank Law, Issie Inglis, Charlie Miller, Martyn O'Reilly. *Observer*; Fiona Angella. *Cairngorms Capercaillie Project staff*; Carolyn Robertson, Emma Rawling. *CNPA*; Andy Ford

Apologies: Justin Prigmore, Molly Doubleday

- The group discussed a summary of capercaillie lek survey data from the Carrbridge area 2014 to 2019. The data shows a decline in adult males (the focus of the survey work). It's estimated from this data that approximately 40 capercaillie now live in the woods around Carrbridge; this is compared to around 50 in 2014. The group agreed to share this information with residents via the first edition of the Carrbridge Capercaillie Newsletter to help residents better understand their local capercaillie population.
- A template for the Carrbridge Capercaillie Newsletter was discussed and an outline of the content was agreed. The group agreed to distribute the newsletter in hardcopy to all households in the village in addition to creating an online version to share via Carrbridge News on Facebook & Twitter. The group also discussed and agreed to provide an update about the project in The Strathy as soon as possible.
- The group discussed next steps for a basic website to host information about the project, specifically for Carrbridge residents to use as a one-stop-shop for project information & updates. The website and Carrbridge Capercaillie Newsletter will go live at the same time. The group agreed that the website should carry similar information to that provided through the newsletter but would allow room for more detail for those residents who want to find out more.
- The group discussed how they wish to work with the Community Council. They agreed to always send meeting notes to the Council for information. They also agreed to request that the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project become a standing agenda item at all Community Council meetings and the group will share responsibility for providing an update. It was confirmed that no members of the group are responsible for representing the Community Council and that all members are acting independently.
- Emma, the Carrbridge Capercaillie Community Ranger, provided an update on the activities she delivered as part of the Cairngorms Big Nature Weekend. Over 200 people visited the Village Hall over the weekend to take part in capercaillie related activities alongside the Woodland Trust and writer Merryn Glover who were also providing tree planting and creative writing activities. In the spirit of the community and to support existing good work Emma also helped to organise and deliver the community litter pick on 10 May.
- The group agreed that Emma should create a poster to be displayed on the village noticeboards highlighting the sensitive period we're now in for birds nesting and raising their young, including capercaillie. It was stressed that the poster should only reinforce and highlight existing guidance shared through the Tread Lightly campaign.
- Emma shared an example of the notices she's been receiving via the post box on the Carrbridge Nature noticeboard and other public noticeboards in the village. The notes have all been anonymous and critical of Emma's work and the Ranger role. The group expressed disappointment in these views and the associated behaviour. Emma confirmed that she's very happy to and actively wants to answer questions from residents but is reliant on people communicating with her in an open and constructive way.
- The group discussed the idea of collecting and analysing droppings from badger, pine marten and fox in Kinveachy in order to learn more about the impact of these animals which all known to prey on capercaillie. Within the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project a separate working group from the Carrbridge Capercaillie Working Group is responsible for advising and developing the project's work related to predators. The idea raised to collect and analyse predator droppings in Kinveachy will be taken forward for discussion with this group which is made up of staff from GWCT, Seafield Estate, SNH, Forestry Scotland, Forest & Land Scotland, the RSPB and CNPA and is able to provide specialist and working knowledge related to predator management.

- The group discussed the tender for an external facilitator to support next steps in Carrbridge. The group felt it was important that the facilitator was familiar with the local area and working with rural communities. It was agreed that the facilitator should work with all key interest groups in the village, including dog walkers. As noted in the previous meeting the facilitator will host a series of workshops, one to one meetings and meetings with key interest groups in the village to identify what residents would like to include in a capercaillie related action plan for the village. The group agreed that the tender for this work should go out w/b 27 May. The facilitator's work is currently scheduled to begin in June/July to be completed by November. The group will be involved in shortlisting, interviewing and appointing the facilitator to ensure a good community fit.
- Suggestions were made for improving the entrance ways to Ellan Woods and the riverside walk. It was confirmed that these sorts of ideas were within the scope of the project if there was community consensus to go ahead on the grounds that these actions would provide improved opportunities for people and capercaillie. These sorts of ideas will be invited as part of the facilitated workshops noted above.
- The date of the next Project Board meeting was confirmed as 17 July. It was agreed that the next Project Board agenda will be discussed on 20 June (the next working group meeting). At this time the group will also confirm who will attend the Project Board meeting to represent the group.
- The Community Council's objection to the planning application for a hut in Baddengorm Woods was shared with the group. It was confirmed that CNPA is now calling-in all planning applications related to Baddengorm Woods on the grounds of capercaillie.
- **Next meeting open to all is on Thursday 20 June, 6.30pm - 8pm in the Village Hall. Please contact any member of the working group as below if you'd like to join the meeting or call Emma on 0777 347 5559**
Alice Buttress, Becky Badger, Charlie Miller, Ewan Archer, Frank Law, Issie Inglis, Justin Prigmore, Martyn O'Reilly