



CAIRNGORMS  
CAPERCAILLIE  
PROJECT



## Promoting responsible enjoyment of the Cairngorms National Park: Business community workshop notes

On 4 March and 8 December 2020, open workshops were convened by the Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP) on behalf of the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project. The aim of both workshops was to explore a potential role for businesses and the CBP in promoting responsible enjoyment of the National Park, including capercaillie areas.

### **The key questions explored in the workshops were:**

- Do businesses and the CBP through VisitCairngorms have a role to play in promoting responsible enjoyment of the National Park?
- What might we consider in order for us to do that?
- What role can businesses play in promoting responsible enjoyment of the National Park?
- What should we do to attract more businesses to get involved in helping to promote responsible enjoyment?
- What assets and resources do we need to help the CBP, including through VisitCairngorms and businesses to promote responsible access?

### **The following businesses including estates, accommodation providers, wildlife guides, visitor attractions and outdoor activity providers, all attended the workshops:**

- Ardverikie Estate
- Balneden Steading
- Bluefolds Highland Holiday Cottages
- Brooklyn Guest House
- Cairngorm Canoeing and Sailing School
- Cairn Hotel
- Carrbridge Studio
- Crown Estate
- Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland
- Forestry & Land Scotland
- Gaskbeg

- Hillgoers
- In Your Element
- Invercauld Estate
- Laggan Wolftrax
- Landmark Adventure Park
- Police Scotland
- Rothiemurchus Estate
- RSPB Abernethy
- Scot Mountain
- Speyside Wildlife
- Visit Scotland

**The points raised and discussed in the workshops fell broadly into the following themes:**

- Audience research - the need to ensure actions delivered by the business community are evidence-based.
- Visitor engagement - to make it easier for businesses to promote the area's natural heritage and ways to enjoy it responsibly.
- Business to business support and coaching - to encourage and enable more businesses to get onboard.
- Business development - to help more businesses benefit from promoting the area's natural heritage and ways to enjoy it responsibly.

**In more detail, the points raised and discussed were as follows:**

- All businesses in attendance felt they had a role to play in promoting responsible enjoyment of the National Park.
- The landscape quality and wildlife in the National Park is a USP for businesses - there is a business case for protecting it.
- Positive messages are more likely to inspire people to do the right thing - the majority of visitors want to help and want to have a positive experience.
- Embedding the message and sharing the load - promoting responsible enjoyment of the National Park needs to be part of core business and the load shared across the business community.
- Re-connecting / connecting members - businesses and their staff need to be connected with the natural environment and wildlife to enable genuine and consistent messaging.
- Lack of training - to help businesses develop a better understanding of the natural environment and wildlife in the National Park and responsible access.

- Collaboration and communication - room for more joined-up working and regular dialogue between landowners and businesses operating on estates, and businesses operating outside the National Park promoting experiences within the Park.
- Lack of consistency across all visitor touch points - the message and quality of delivery is variable across the business community. More business to business support could help to maintain standards.
- Managing expectations before visitors arrive - it's too late, in some cases, to promote responsible enjoyment once visitors arrive. Effective pre-arrival information is essential, through own business and third-party channels.
- Lack of information / mixed messages - more up to date and accurate information needs to be available and exchanged between those working directly to conserve the natural environment and wildlife in the National Park and businesses working with visitors to the Park.
- Lack of understanding regards visitors - the business community could be more targeted in the messages it shares with visitors if there was a better understanding of audiences and more opportunities to test and develop messages.