

Sustainable Tourism Partnership

Tuesday 14 August 2007

Cairngorms National Park Authority, Grantown-on-Spey

Present

Tom Brock, Scottish Seabird Centre (Chair)
Steve Hunt, Scottish Natural Heritage
Penny George, Scottish Executive
Richard Arnott, Scottish Executive
Sandy Dear, VisitScotland
Richard Pinn, VisitScotland
Katrina Morrison, Scottish Enterprise
Bob Aitken, Scottish Environment Link
Paul Jennings, Sensation Science Centre (representing ASVA)
Terry Levinthal, Scottish Civic Trust
Chris Taylor, Cairngorms National Park Authority
Bob Kinnaird, Cairngorm Mountain
John Summers, Keep Scotland Beautiful
Jane Clark, SNH
Tony Mercer, VisitScotland
Lorraine Thomson, VisitScotland

Apologies

Jenny Hess, Historic Scotland
Ian Gardner, National Trust for Scotland
Paul Tetlaw, TransFORM Scotland
Mike Greig, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
Deborah Murray, Stirling Council (representing SLAED)
John Ward, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mike Callaghan, COSLA

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies	Action
Tom Brock (TB) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given as above.	
2. Minutes of last meeting	
The minutes of 15 May 2007 were accepted as a true record. A few points were followed up on:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Penny George (PG) said that the Executive's transport/culture research is due for publication in the next few weeks, and she will keep the group informed.• Richard Pinn and Tony Mercer from VisitScotland have a copy of the presentation from VisitBritain's recent research on sustainable	

<p>tourism. Since the meeting, it has been agreed that as the research is primarily qualitative rather than quantitative, the full report will probably be of little use to members of the group, and that we will therefore not purchase it. Presentation summary being sent out with these minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sue Crossman had sent through a recent update on the TIG carbon offset scheme – to be sent out with these minutes. It was agreed that Sue should be invited to future meetings to further increase private sector engagement. <p>3. Cairngorms National Park Activity – Presentation from Chris Taylor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris gave a short presentation on the Park, this is to be sent out with these minutes. <p>4. ‘Going Green’ – GTBS Entry Level Proposal – Tony Mercer/Lorraine Thomson, VisitScotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony and Lorraine presented the proposal for ‘Going Green’, the working name for the GTBS entry level. The attached papers give details. They are currently holding a consultation on the proposal, and Lorraine would welcome responses by 7 September (consultation questionnaire in attached papers). • Tony also drew everyone’s attention to an article which had appeared in the Independent the day before the meeting, about green hotels in the UK. The article acknowledged VisitScotland’s efforts with the GTBS, and referred to some recent research from the Travel Foundation. Tony agreed to try and track down this research – and has since done so (also to be circulated). <p>4b. VisitScotland Sustainable Tourism Unit – Sandy Dear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom suggested Sandy give the group an update on the STU as an extra agenda point. Sandy reminded everyone that his main role within VisitScotland has been to ‘green’ VS activity. Recently, Sandy has been successful in encouraging both the domestic and international marketing teams to incorporate the principles of sustainability into their marketing campaigns. A draft action plan has been drawn up for this. • Sandy also said that VS’s environmental policy is now complete, and monitoring of it is underway. • As we heard at the last STP meeting, the VS Corporate Plan has had to go through a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This process is nearly finished. <p>5. STP Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Hunt had drawn up a discussion paper which was circulated ahead of the meeting, and reminded everyone that the steering group 	<p>TB / PG</p> <p>ALL – to respond to VS ‘Going Green’ consultation by 7 Sept.</p>
---	--

<p>were encouraging the wider group to participate and contribute to the work being carried out to develop an action plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve stressed that it is now urgent that we identify specific projects to be taken forward by the STP otherwise we run the risk of missing out on the earmarked funding for this year and not being included in future budgets. • Jane Clark echoed Steve’s words, and said that SNH need the STP to present a structured proposal to be able to consider releasing the earmarked funds. • Tom highlighted the problem of the STP preparing budget proposals and implementing actions to achieve TFFC targets due to the absence of any staff. The STU was fully occupied with “greening VS” and recent VS Board minutes (March 2007) stated that “it is not appropriate for VS to take responsibility for delivery and that, while supporting STP, “VS’s” STU should not be regarded as the “executive arm” of the STP”. Tom remarked that that there is a greater need than ever to improve the sustainability of Scotland’s biggest industry yet it is extremely frustrating that the STP, as a key delivery mechanism, has no staff resources to achieve this (in contrast to our previous incarnation as TEF). Tom reminded the group of an earlier STP meeting, when it had been identified that there was a need for a dedicated member of staff based within the offices of the STF to take forward projects for the STP. He stressed that STP’s remit – of promoting sustainable tourism to Scotland’s tourism businesses – is massive, and requires changing the whole culture of the industry. • Katrina Morrison expressed some concern about this proposal however, pointing out that SE and HIE are working within various restrictions, which makes employing individuals very complicated. She reminded the group that the original agreement had been that VS’s STU would be the executive arm of the STP and would co-ordinate projects, but that Sandy’s time is so tied up in internal VS activity that he is unable to devote time to the STP. Tom stated that he hoped that ways could be found round this and he confirmed that the STF had confirmed, in principle, that a member of staff could be based within their offices to more effectively engage with the private sector to achieve TFFC targets. • The group agreed that there needed to be resolutions , and a meeting should take place between the funding partners asap to iron out what should happen. <p>6. Future Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TFFC website – PG informed the group that some progress has been made with developing a website for the TFFC and the various implementation groups. An internal team within the Executive are happy to put together a site at no cost, and PG reassured the group that it would not look like ‘an Executive site’, but could have its own design and identity etc. Because the site would be hosted on the Exec’s internal system, it would mean that only Exec staff could input information into the site. The tourism team are happy to take 	<p>Funders to meet asap to arrive at solution for funding/projects etc. S Exec to arrange.</p>
--	---

this on, as it is probably not a hugely onerous task, and they would not have responsibility for *producing* the content, only for uploading it. The chairs of the 5 implementation groups are currently to come back to PG with their thoughts on this proposal, and if everyone is in agreement, we can go ahead and commission the designing of the site.

7. Scottish Enterprise Sustainable Tourism Conference

- Katrina Morrison told the group about this conference which is being held on 2 October in the Radisson SAS Hotel in Edinburgh. It will be hosted by Muriel Gray, with speakers including Justin Francis from Responsibletravel.com, Sarah Rooney from Radisson, Peter Grant from Global Trees, and Auden Schendler from the Aspen Ski Company. To sign up, please contact Katherine@starkeventsuk.com or look on www.scottish-enterprise.com

8. AOB

- John Summers told the group that Keep Scotland Beautiful are to present their Cleanliness Award next month to Highland Area, which of course incorporates the Cairngorms National Park.
- Jim Mather, Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, recently sent letters to all the chairs and members of the TFFC Monitoring and Implementation Groups, stating his commitment to the TFFC and congratulating members on their work in the groups. The letter made reference to a stakeholder event which Mr Mather is hosting on 27 August, but unfortunately the wording has caused some confusion and a few people have thought that they were being invited to the event. PG apologised for the confusion caused and clarified that this was not an invitation, rather a reference to the event to show what action the Minister is taking to progress his tourism commitment.
- Steve Hunt informed the group that he was due to leave his post with SNH at the end of the week, and will become programme manager for the South of Scotland Alliance, an economic development set-up. Tom expressed his thanks to Steve for his hard work and contribution to the STP and previously the TEF. Steve will continue to receive STP minutes.
- Terry Levinthal informed everyone about the ‘Doors Open’ days taking place across Scotland in September. More information can be found at www.doorsopendays.org.uk (click on ‘Area Programmes’ and check by area or city).

9. Date of Next Meeting

- The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 13 November. Exact time and venue to be confirmed – suggestions/offers of a suitably sustainable venue welcome!