

**SCOTTISH COUNCIL
FOR NATIONAL PARKS
NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2002**

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Lady Isabel Glasgow steps down as Chairwoman of SCNP

Isabel Glasgow has stepped down as Chair of SCNP after more than a decade as either Chair or Vice Chair. Isabel has made a tremendous contribution to the campaign to establish National Parks in Scotland and as well as being on the SNH main Board also chairs the western area Board. She has now been appointed to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs Park Authority and is a member of its Planning Committee which has such a vital role to play in establishing clear policy guidelines for the Park and overseeing their implementation.

We wish Isabel well in her new responsibilities and thank her for all her efforts on behalf of SCNP.

At their meeting on 22 October, the SCNP Executive has appointed me as Acting Chairman until the AGM next year. I shall do my best to carry on Isabel's good work and look forward to your continued support at a critical time for the establishment of the Cairngorms National Park. There is much still to be fought for if the Park is to be set up properly with a sensible boundary and appropriate powers and resources.

Yours

Robert Maund, Acting Chairman

John Arnott.

It is sad to report that we lost John Arnott on 7 October 2002 after several months illness. John made an important contribution to a wide range of environmental matters throughout his working life. In particular, when he was Vice Chairman of the Countryside Commission for Scotland, he chaired the Advisory Panel set up by CCS to advise on the conservation and management of Scotland's mountain areas which led to the current proposals for National Parks in Scotland. John was a member of SCNP's Executive Committee since the Council was re-established more than ten

years ago and was at the forefront of carrying the case for National Parks, including the need to see that they had the necessary powers and resources, through to government and other influential bodies. John brought quiet humour, intellectual rigour and clarity of purpose to our discussions in SCNP. His professional contribution will be sorely missed and particularly, he will be missed as a friend.

Cairngorms National Park

We reported in our summer newsletter on the serious flaws in the Draft Designation Order for the proposed Park concerning boundaries and arrangements for Planning. Since then, there have been several important meetings with MSPs, Allan Wilson, the Minister responsible and involving the Cairngorms Campaign and other concerned organisations such as the National Trust for Scotland, all of whom have adopted a consistent line in condemning the DDO.

The Rural Development Committee held a meeting in Kingussie on 11 October 2002 to hear evidence and Brian Parnell, our Hon. Secretary and Vice Chairman represented SCNP. Bill McDermott our Hon. Treasurer was also present in a personal capacity.

The overwhelming view arising from those discussions was that the DDO was wrong over the boundary and as a result the Rural Development Committee has written to the Minister recommending unanimously, that the boundary should follow that recommended by SNH with the addition of Laggan Parish. SCNP supports that view.

On the question of Planning Powers, the outcome has been most unsatisfactory. We argued at the meeting, that the National Park Authority should be the Planning Authority. This is even more important now that there seems a reasonable chance that a rational boundary will be adopted and that five Local Authority areas will be affected. However, for reasons that seem very difficult to fathom, the Rural Development Committee has sent unclear advice to the Minister which if agreed, would leave the real influence on Planning with the local authorities and make it very difficult for the Park Authority to achieve the aims laid down in the National Park Act.

The one dissenting voice in the Rural Development Committee's consideration of the Planning issue was Mike Rumbles who at least got material inserted in the letter to the Minister pointing out that in the latest

consultation on the DDO, 80% of respondents wished the Park Authority to be the Planning Authority!

SCNP will continue to argue the case on this issue but there does seem to be the sour smell of a political deal having been struck between powerful Ministers in the ruling administration, rather than a rational consideration of how to run the Park to the best effect.

We are now sending letters to the four Ministers who have a direct responsibility for and interest in Cairngorms National Park.

A copy of SCNP's evidence to the Rural Development Committee is posted on our Web Site (www.scnp.org.uk) as is a copy of the Rural Development Committee's letter to the Minister.

SCNP Executive

Since the Summer Newsletter, the Executive has met on two occasions, 17 September and 22 October and a further meeting is scheduled for 26 November 2002.

Executive members have also been involved in the meetings described earlier. Timescales to get proper consideration of the issues are getting very tight indeed.

SCNP Web Site www.scnp.org.uk

Our Web Site has been up and running since 3 August and our PRO is learning the hard way how to make additions and alterations to keep it up to date. Robert says he's sure it's very straight forward really - after all computers always do exactly as you tell them, don't they?

We are always anxious to receive views - and help - so feel free to contact us with queries or suggestions.

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