

Cairngorms Capercaillie Project

Carrbridge Capercaillie Community Working Group | Meeting notes

Date & time: Thu 20 June, 6.30pm – 8pm

Venue: Carrbridge Village Hall

Attendees: Carrbridge Capercaillie Community Working Group; Becky Badger, Ewan Archer, Frank Law, Issie Inglis, Charlie Miller, Justin Prigmore. Cairngorms Capercaillie Project staff; Carolyn Robertson, Molly Doubleday.

Apologies: Alice Buttress (Carrbridge Capercaillie Community Working Group), Andy Ford (CNPA), Emma Rawling (Cairngorms Capercaillie Project), Fiona Angela (Observer).

- The group reviewed how the new project newsletter (Carrbridge Capercaillie News) has been received. More people have signed up to volunteer with the project, including joining the community working group, in response to the newsletter. The analytics behind the new project website (cairngormscapercaillie.scot) suggest around 150 residents visited the site after receiving the newsletter. The group felt this was a really positive start and discussed and agreed the content for the July edition. The group went on to discuss the project website where the 'Get Involved' and 'Carrbridge' pages are amongst the most visited to date. The group discussed concerns raised by a resident re some of the information on the site related to capercaillie around Carrbridge and its potential to encourage disturbance. The group agreed to revise the information and include more detail re the legal implications of disturbing capercaillie.
- The group discussed the visit in early June by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The visiting party included members of the UK and Scottish Committee who were keen to learn more about the Cairngorms National Park and the Lottery funded projects in the Park including the Badenoch Great Place Project, Mountains & People Project and the Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership Project. The visiting party also made time to meet members of the Carrbridge Capercaillie Community Working Group and visit Baddengorm Woods to understand more about the challenges of enabling people and at risk species to prosper alongside each other.
- The group discussed the tender that's now been advertised for an external facilitator to enable Carrbridge residents to create their own community-led action plan to help capercaillie around the village. The tender is advertised on the Public Contracts Scotland website and the tender documents are also available to read on the project website. The working group agreed to meet on 10 July to review and shortlist all the applications received in response to the tender and to make arrangements for interviewing the shortlisted candidates. The group stressed that the ability of the successful candidate to bring as many residents together as possible and to operate in the most inclusive way is of paramount importance. The National Lottery Heritage Fund have also expressed interest in observing the process.
- The group discussed the proposal put forward to collect predator droppings in Kinveachy to help gain an insight in to what predators are eating in the area which is used by capercaillie. This could complement the work currently being undertaken by the Cairngorms Connect project where predator droppings are being collected in Glenmore in order to understand the diet of predators and the extent to which predators eat predators in the area. In contrast to Kinveachy where foxes and crows are managed, predators are not managed in Glenmore. The idea of a comparative dropping analysis in Kinveachy is supported in principle but is subject to approval from the National Lottery Heritage Fund as this work was not included in the original project plan.
- The group reviewed the summer work plans for Emma, the Carrbridge Capercaillie Community Ranger. All agreed that Emma should continue to be present in the woods around the village to talk to people on the trails as capercaillie as now raising their young and particularly vulnerable to disturbance. Emma will continue to reinforce existing guidance regards dog walking around the village; encouraging people to voluntarily keep their dogs on leads in the woods north of the village and for those wishing to exercise dogs off lead Emma will continue to signpost them to Eilan Wood & Carr Plantation.
- The group agreed that alongside a presence in the woods, Emma should also prioritise being present at all major events in the village over the summer months including Carve and events in neighbouring villages in order to continue getting to know people and raise awareness of the project's activities in Carrbridge and beyond. The group also felt it was important for Emma to attend events for key interest groups related to capercaillie including dog walkers at the Top Dogs Day Out event in Glenmore.

- The group revisited the idea of Emma having some form of base in the village, for example a mobile unit in the carpark or space in a business property. The group agreed it was still important for people to know where to regularly find Emma and are keen to invite ideas from the community. If you have an idea about how and where to provide a ranger base in the village please contact Emma on 0777 3475559 / emmarawling@cairngorms.co.uk
- The group discussed the potential to increase the amount of habitat for capercaillie around the village on Seafield land and how the community could potentially get involved by planting native trees and removing non-native saplings. This work would form part of the project's wider work across the Park to provide more habitat for capercaillie whilst loss of habitat is one of the reasons capercaillie numbers have fallen.
- The next working group meeting is Wednesday 10 July, 6.30pm - 8pm in the Village Hall. Please contact any member of the working group if you'd like to join the meeting or contact Carolyn on 07967 762015 or carolynrobertson@cairngorms.co.uk Alice Buttress, Becky Badger, Charlie Miller, Ewan Archer, Frank Law, Issie Inglis, Justin Prigmore, Martyn O'Reilly are all members of the working group.