



Annual Report 2013/14

A Foreword From The Chairman

This has been an interesting and challenging time for COAT, as we must finish our existing commitments as laid out in the current Business Plan, and at the same time develop business to go into the new plan for 2015 onwards.



A good deal of work has been achieved, both in terms of building paths, and in engaging people in the delivery of our access initiatives. COAT has developed specialist skills in upland paths, strategic routes and training in particular, and it is gratifying to see that there seems to be increasing demand for this from an increasing range of public bodies. It is partly in response to this that we have developed a new initiative, The People and The Mountains. This is a wider partnership than in the past, involving work in both of Scotland's National Parks, that will fix erod-

ed mountain paths, deliver SVQ skills training to unemployed young people and engage the wider public through education, interpretation and promotion in looking after the mountain landscapes in the East and South Cairngorms as well as in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs. I am delighted to say the initiative has recently received a stage 1 pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £3.2m, a very significant milestone in developing the project. We hope to be able to start work on the ground next summer.

We continue to work with our key partners to identify the other priorities for our work in the Cairngorms.

Our work can only be achieved with the support and help of a wide range of people. Many are volunteers, including the Walking To Health Leaders, the 'Adopt A Pathers' and more recently the community path volunteer schemes being piloted in Kingussie, Strathdon and Tarland, and we are very grateful to all. The COAT board itself is voluntary, and is asked to contribute time and expertise to running a growing charity in an ever more complex world. Our staff work with dedication and commitment in the very tight ship that we run here at COAT!. I hope you see the rewards of the work that we achieve, whether it is through walking the hills, going on a health walk, using the paths around the villages or indeed accessing our website podcasts telling the stories of the Cairngorms.



P4 projects filming stories of the Cairngorms at the Cave of Raits

PETER J. ORD, September 2014



COAT Update

This has been the penultimate year of our 4 year Business Plan that started in the 2010/11 period. We have achieved a lot in the period, and are on track to over-reach the original target of £3.4m turnover during the 4 years by around 50%.

This has been achieved with a very small COAT team. We have been very careful not to build up core costs, and many of the people involved in the projects have been contractors or volunteers. At current capacity COAT has 5 full time staff members and around 20 contract staff per year engaged primarily in building paths, but also involved in areas such as Volunteer Coordination, Interpretation, Website Development and Podcasts. Through Walking to Health, Adopt A Path and the pilot Community Path Volunteer scheme we have just under 100 Volunteers actively engaged in the delivery of our outdoors access initiatives.



We have developed projects focused on Mountain Paths, SVQ Training, Community Paths, Strategic Routes, Walking to Health and Promotion of access. We have also developed new strands of consultancy work through COAT Trading Ltd, with all profits gifted back to COAT to support our project work, have developed a public appeal and continue to develop new ways of raising income towards our projects and to help pay for maintenance. We have recently agreed an extension to the lease of the Spittal of Glenmuick car park with Balmoral Estate, so vital to providing regular income over the years, and have very recently added the refurbished Car Park at Dinnert to help grow this. We hope that all will appreciate the need to contribute to the wonderful outdoors access opportunities that now exist in the Cairngorms

Dougie Baird (CEO) - September 2014

Cairngorms Mountain Heritage Project

The Cairngorms Mountain Heritage (CMH) Project completed a raft of upland path contracts, with work carried out at **Bynack More, Lairig an Laoigh, Lochan Buidhe, Cairngorm Plateau, and North Coires Rim**. The big set piece of the year was the Remote Site at **Braeriach** with work carried out on the *Sron na Lairig*, and realignment on the section between the *old Sinclair Hut* and the *Lairig Ghru*.

The Activity Plan is close to completion with a suite of initiatives developed through it. The Adopt a Path scheme has been a great success, and should be rolled out to a wider area in the next business plan. Information is fed back from our volunteers to the teams doing maintenance, and this makes best use of our resources. Podcasts have been developed to tell the stories of the Cairngorms, and these will be published on our revamped web site in the near future. A leaflet, and interpretive panels have also been developed.

The project is due to finish by the end of 2014, with the 17 paths, totaling 94km, due to go onto the maintenance roster next year. We have also launched and continue to promote our public appeal which is designed to help provide the much needed cash to keep these paths in good condition now that they have been built.

Maintenance works were carried out across the East Cairngorms, Mar Lodge Estate and Cairngorms Estate on the partnership initiative developed between COAT, Highlands and Islands Enterprise—and for the last year—The National Trust for Scotland, who will do this work in-house from 2014 onwards.



Cairngorms Connecting People to Landscape and Nature Project



Ballater Walking To Health group with Alan Melrose

This project combines the Walking To Health Scheme and Community Path Volunteer Scheme. It is all about supporting volunteers to engage directly with their communities to bring people into the outdoors for the benefit of all.

The Walking To Health programme has been a tremendous success over the year, and we are so grateful for the time and commitment from our Volunteer Leaders. The project is coordinated by Alan Melrose and his staff, and really has been a vindication of the long term work put in over the years to show that weekly structured health walking can make a massive difference to the health and wellbeing of people throughout the area.

Strategic Routes

A good deal of work has been developed in the field, with work carried out on a range of paths included on the list of 'Scotland's Great Trails'. The first of these started on the **Speyside Way Extension**, with the Allt na Criche bridge constructed. The next phases of work have recently been completed at Kinrara and Alvie, with more work scheduled for this year provided funds are secured.

Elsewhere COAT has carried out work on the **Dava Way and Moray Coastal Trail** for Moray Council, **The West Highland Way** at Conic Hill for the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority, and given advice on the proposed **Hebridean Way** on Lewis and Harris. This work has been carried out through COAT Trading Ltd, our commercial arm, and the profits provide much needed income to COAT for match funding and maintenance.



Newly refurbished path at Conic Hill, West Highland Way



COAT Board visit a newly built section of the Speyside Way Extension at Kinrara



Machine Work on the Moray Coastal Trail

Training Project

The ESF Skills Training Project continues to be heavily oversubscribed with 120 applications for the 6 places on offer in 2013/14. It is good to see there is such a level of demand for training from people for this type of training, and highly gratifying for all involved to see course completers take up work on contract teams, and in other organisations involved in countryside work

COAT is now an approved Scottish Qualifications Centre (SQA) to carry out accreditation of national awards to Scottish Vocational Qualification Level 2 in Environmental Conservation. Gordon MacDonald, (COAT Training Officer), and Lizzie Cooper (Projects Coordinator) have qualified as Assessors and Verifiers to handle the awards process. This is a significant step forward and will allow us to develop skills training further in future years.



COAT Trainees in action at Coire na Ciste, Kingussie Boardwalk and Creag Bheag



Community Paths

Funding was secured from the Brown Forbes Memorial Trust to carry out work at the Minister's Path high up in the Angus Glens. This path was originally used by the Minister to travel between parishes to give sermons.

Other work was done at the 7 Bridges—Ballater, Bacnagairn Bridge—Angus Glens, and the Tarland Showground.

Maintenance was carried out across the network, with work focussed on strimming to maintain the line, bridge inspections where required and minor repairs



Ministers Path, Angus Glens

Income		Expenditure	
<i>Grants</i>		<i>Charitable Activities</i>	
SNH	58,141	Community Path Networks	113,661
Cairngorms National Park Authority	210,000	Mountain Heritage Project	364,713
Scottish Executive SRP Funding	15,000	ESF Training Project	34,461
Heritage Lottery Funding	146,613	SRP Projects	87,707
Highland Council ESF Project	8,000	Walking to Health	36,051
Brown Forbes Memorial Trust	-500	Visitor information and interpretation	81
Moray Council	20,000	Community Volunteer Scheme	5,963
NHS Change Fund	20,167	Path Maintenance	66,691
Paths To Health	10,000	Staff costs	161,273
Lochlomond & Trossachs National Park	20,000	Office and Running Costs	22,571
Aberdeenshire Council Upper Deeside Access	12,148	Publicity, PR and meeting costs	4,500
Cairngorm Leader	-759	Car Park Rent and Maintenance	5,332
Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER	-478	Vehicle donated	7,000
Moray LEADER	55,477	Business Development	25,137
RSPB	8,000	Joint National Parks Mountain Path Development	27,143
Sport Scotland	38,940	Depreciation	11,259
Scottish Development (WTH)	1,800		£973,543
Scottish Executive ERDF Project	148,092		
Scottish Executive ESF Project	79,903	<i>Governance Costs</i>	
Scottish Mountaineering Trust	2,500	Management and Administration	39,229
	£853,044	Office Running Costs	15,940
<i>Donations</i>		Accountancy	0
Landrover	7,000	Professional Services	4,871
COAT Trading Ltd donation	5,557	Bank Charges	431
Balmoral Estate	3,000	Auditors' remuneration	9,441
Others	8,265		
	£23,822		£69,912
<i>Income Generated</i>		Total Expenditure	£1,043,455
Path Maintenance	35,833		
Spittal Of Glenmuick Car Park Ticket Sales	36,465		
Interest	512		
	£72,810		
Total Income	£949,676	Net Funds	-£93,779

Thank You To All Who Support Our Work:

COAT would be unable to carry out the level or standard of work we do without financial support from a wide range of bodies. The work within this business plan has been supported by wide range of public bodies, NGOs, private companies and private individuals.

Balmoral Estate not only supports us with a donation but the arrangement with Balmoral Estate for Spittal Of Glenmuick Car Park is of the highest importance to COAT, providing income that we can use to leverage grants for projects. Thanks also are due to Jaguar/Landrover who provide a support vehicle to help COAT work over such wide area.

Our Mountain Path Appeal continues to grow and we are so grateful to our growing number of donors who continue to support us

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COAT is a company limited by guarantee, Company No. SC186301 and is a recognised Scottish charity SC028028.

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