



Annual Report 2012/13

A Foreword From The Chairman

COAT has come a long way in the last few years. We have developed technical expertise in working in the mountains, constructing long distance routes and community path networks.



These infrastructure projects provide opportunities for social and economic development within the area and we have responded with our Walking To Health initiative, to provide health benefits, and also through our Training Project, offering skills training and SVQ accreditation to enable successful graduates to take up employment generated by our path construction projects. It has been both interesting and gratifying to see our ex-trainees working out on the hill after they complete their course. Sustaining this in the longer term will be no easy task, but to this end the Board have approved an outline business plan to take our

Charity forwards from 2015 and it is up to Dougie now to fully develop that.

In order to sustain all that we achieve in future years it will be essential to harness the commitment and enthusiasm of volunteers and the wider public in providing input and donations to look after all these paths long after the big grants have gone. To these ends we have developed an Adopt a Path Scheme, and more recently our public appeal for upland path maintenance. Both initiatives ask people who have enjoyed Scotland's mountains to give something back, either in time or in cash to help us look after them in perpetuity. It is early days for both but we have high hopes that they will be successful.

Thanks are due to our Board of Directors who have given their time and enthusiasm frequently and without complaint to provide governance for COAT. Our staff complement is small, but they are all dedicated in their field and work tirelessly to ensure we achieve our objectives, and often a bit more too! We have a growing number of Volunteers through our Health Walk Leaders, and now 'Adopt A Pathers', and we thank them wholeheartedly for giving up their time to help. Our work on the ground is achieved with a small but select group of contractors. They and their staff work outside in all the weather that highland Scotland can throw at them all year round, and I hope you all spare a thought for them as you enjoy the fruits of their labour!



Cairngorms Wilderness Contracts, comprising ex-trainees from COAT's Training Project, have developed the technical business skills to develop a contract company ready and able to tackle the rigours of remote site working at Braeriach

PETER J. ORD, September 2013



COAT Update

The 2012/13 financial year saw COAT reach a new level with £1.47m of work achieved across our activity, and well ahead of business plan predictions.

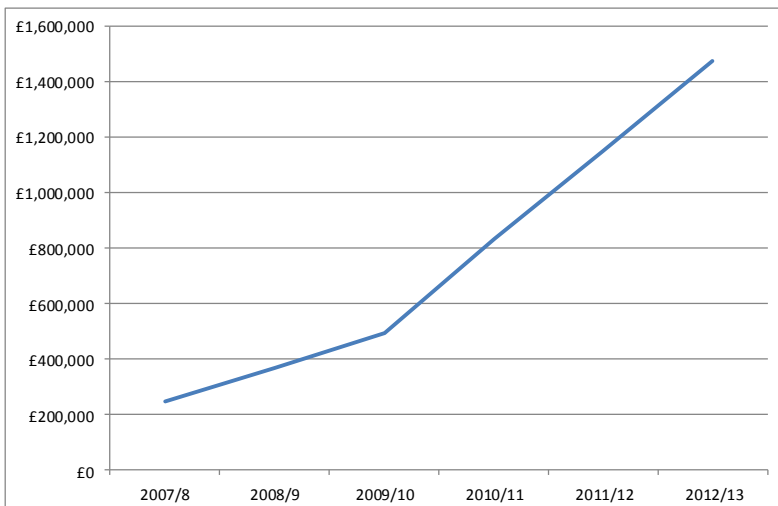
The mountain project continues to form the backbone of the business plan, with substantial community path and strategic routes work carried out via the 'Shovel Ready' funds sourced from Scottish Government via Cairngorms National Park Authority. The Training Project has had its first full year under ESF funding, and this will secure the project until April 2015. Linking the two together to enable young people to come through our scheme with national qualifications and into employment is something we should take pride in. This is a difficult time for young people trying to enter the workforce and it is right that we do our best to help them. It is an investment for the future!



Volunteering is becoming ever more important to COAT as we build up the outdoors access infrastructure in and around the Cairngorms National Park. The Adopt A Path membership continues to grow as they help keep an eye on our mountain paths. The Community Networks Volunteer programme is being piloted in Tarland and Kingussie. The Walking to Health volunteers are fundamental to the success of the project and it is humbling to see so many people prepared to give up time to help the people around them in their communities.

We have launched the Mountain Path Appeal to help maintain the routes we are building under the Cairngorms Mountain Heritage programme, and this will be a very important component to help underpin the progress made under this and related projects.

The growth in COAT over the years since 2008 has been strong, and perhaps is counter-intuitive to the backdrop of public sector cuts that the austerity drive has required since 2008. Perhaps this is when the value of partnership working through a Charity such as ours really comes to the fore? I hope so. Successes apart, we are coming towards the end of the current business plan and are developing work for 2015 and beyond. We are looking at ever wider partnership to ensure the grants received offer the best 'bang for the buck' possible.



The successes of COAT are down to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, contractors and Board, and I thank them all for the terrific effort put into COAT over the year. I am sure we have a good deal more to offer in the future.

Dougie Baird (CEO) - September 2013

Mountain Paths

The Cairngorms Mountain Heritage (CMH) Project completed a raft of upland path contracts, with work carried out at **Coire Domhain, Coire Raibert, Lairig an Laoigh, Lochan Buidhe, Cairngorm Plateau, North Coires Rim** and **Carn Ban More**.

The Remote System worked well at Shelter Stone, and it will also be deployed at Braeraich and Fords of A'An

The Adopt a Path scheme is developing well and this is very encouraging.

Maintenance works were carried out by Upland Access Ltd across the East Cairngorms, Mar Lodge Estate and Cairngorms Estate on the partnership initiative developed between COAT, The National Trust for Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

COAT launched the Mountain Path Appeal to contribute to maintenance of the upgraded and repaired routes developed through the CMH Project, and this was launched in summer 2013. We hope that people who have enjoyed and valued the Scotland's mountain landscape will see the value in this work and be prepared to give something back to ensure the mountain paths do not fall back into disrepair.



Community Paths

A good deal of Community Network paths were built or upgraded during the winter months thanks to the injection of Shovel Ready Scottish Government money sourced through CNPA. Work was carried out at **Creag Bheag—Kingussie, 7 Bridges—Ballater, Cemetery Path—Carrbridge, Braemar Road Loop, Strathdon Return, Hill Path—Kincraig, Minister's Path—Glen Clova, Bachnagairn Bridge, Glenfeshie and Cinder Path, Ballater**. Aberdeenshire LEADER also funded works at **Torphins and Lumphanan**.



New Bridge at '7 Bridges' walk, Ballater



Winter work on Creag Bheag, Kingussie



Dyking at the Lumphanan path

Walking To Health

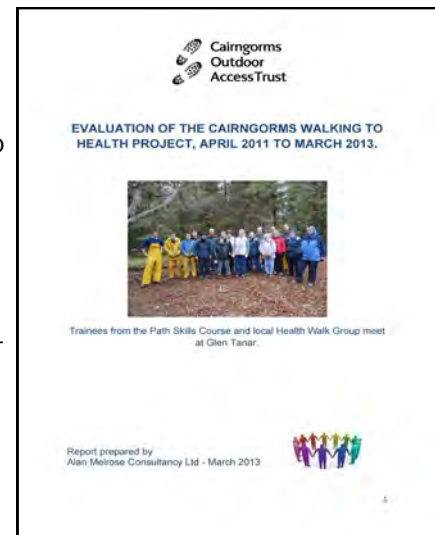
The Walking to Health programme completed its 2011-13 phase with a great deal of success. The Volunteer Leader response has been overwhelming and they have been admirably supported by Alan Melrose and his team.

Funding is proving difficult for this initiative, and we must redouble our efforts to attract future funding but in the meantime we can support the existing walks until April 2015 on what is effectively a consolidation phase, though further expansion will have to be put on hold.



Glen Tanar Walk Group

The evaluation report was published in April 2013 and gives an excellent quantitative and qualitative appraisal of the scheme. It will continue to be circulated to policy decision makers in the coming months and years.



Training

The Path Skills Training Project attracted a 3 year European Social Fund grant, with match funding from SNH, CNPA and Highland Council. This will provide a training project until April 2015 and is recognition of the high level of success from the pilot scheme in 2011/12.

6 Trainees completed the course and achieved their SVQ Level 2 in Environmental Conservation, and a good proportion of them have gone on to related employment since then.

The course continues to be massively oversubscribed with over 120 applications for the 6 places available, and so there is clearly a demand for this specialised training. It is a great feeling to see the graduates working on the hill afterwards, and some of them have set up their own business, becoming employers in their own right.



COATs 2012 trainees on Coire na Ciste, Cairngorm

Strategic Routes

A section of the Speyside Way was upgraded at Dalfaber utilising the Shovel Ready funds available during the winter.

The Kincardine O'Neil to Aboyne phase of the Deeside Way was completed with the exception of a short section next to the village where there is some disagreement over alignment.

COAT managed a major upgrade of the West Highland Way at Conic Hill, near Drymen in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.



Speyside Way, Dalfaber

Income

Grants

Scottish Natural Heritage	68,097
Cairngorms National Park Authority	158,000
Scottish Executive SRP Funding	561,000
Heritage Lottery Funding	168,949
Brown Forbes Memorial Trust	8,000
Bancon Homes Ltd	2,750
NHS Change Fund	9,334
Paths To Health	8,333
Angus Council	10,000
Aberdeenshire Council	17,000
Highlands & Islands Enterprise	30,000
Highland Council ESF Project	10,000
Cairngorm Leader	9,051
Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER	43,153
Scottish Government CCF	134
RSPB	8,000
European Regional Development Fund	173,545
European Social Fund	83,927
Scottish Mountaineering Trust	2,500
	£1,371,773

Donations

Landrover	7,000
Balmoral Estate	3,000
COAT Trading Ltd donation	17,954
Others	1,287
	£29,241

Income Generated

Sale of publications	2,392
Map Sales	52
Other income	2,540
Path Maintenance	37,000
Spittal Of Glenmuick Car Park Ticket Sales	33,648
Interest	188
	£75,820

Total Income £1,476,834

Expenditure

Charitable Activities

Community Path Networks	572,528
Mountain Heritage Project	454,375
ESF Training Project	37,674
Walking to Health	42,948
Visitor information and interpretation	9,442
Community Volunteer Scheme	4,763
Path Maintenance	64,788
Staff costs	167,490
Office and Running Costs	4,150
Publicity, PR and meeting costs	5,818
Car Park Rent and Maintenance	7,284
Vehicle donated	7,000
Depreciation	9,950
	£1,388,210

Governance Costs

Management and Administration	44,927
Office Running Costs	18,175
Professional Services	3,893
Bank Charges (inc cash handling)	244
Auditors' remuneration	3,460
	£70,699

Total Expenditure £1,458,909

Net Funds £17,925

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.

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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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