

Information pack for the appointment of a Member of the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board



The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands is seeking to appoint a Member to the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Board. The Minister values highly the benefits of having different points of view on the board and welcomes applications from people from all walks of life.

The appointments process for this Board vacancy follows the [Code of Practice for Public Appointments](#) and is regulated by the [Ethical Standards Commissioner](#).

Key dates for this appointment round

Closing date	6 March at 1pm
Sift of applications	17 March 2026
Date applicants will hear about the outcome of their application	20 March 2026
Interviews	21 April 2026, in person at CNPA Planning Office, 14 The Square, Grantown on Spey, PH26 3HG. It is unlikely that we will be able to offer alternative interview dates.
Ministerial decision	w/c 25 May 2026
Start date	1 November 2026



26 January 2026

Dear applicant

Appointment of a Member of the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board

Incoming Scottish Ministers will be looking to appoint a new Member to the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board, with the new appointee taking up their role on 1 November 2026.

The Cairngorms National Park is one of the most important areas for nature conservation in the UK. It is home to more than 18,000 residents and is visited by over two million people each year. The National Park Partnership Plan's vision is 'an outstanding National Park, enjoyed and valued by everyone, where nature and people thrive together', and that is what we are aiming to deliver.

The climate and nature crises are the biggest challenges we face and it is critical that the Cairngorms National Park is an exemplar in achieving net zero, developing nature-based solutions, and helping Scotland meet its targets while supporting the people who live and work in the Park.

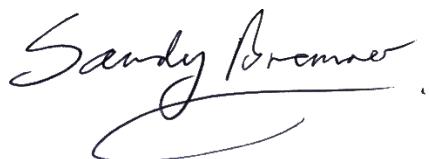
It is an exciting time to join the Board of the Park Authority as we look to deliver with partners all the actions across Nature, People and Place which are our three main strategic themes. We are also developing a new National Park Partnership Plan which guides the work of the Park Authority. The Board makes strategic decisions on how the CNPA contributes to delivering the aims of the Park, as well as acting as ambassadors representing the National Park and the CNPA.

Members attend a variety of board and committee meetings, such as planning committee attended by all members, and more focused committees such as performance, resources, and audit and risk attended by smaller groups of members. Scottish Ministers are especially keen to attract applicants with a background in financial scrutiny and a passion for restoring nature.

More information about the Authority can be found at [Cairngorms National Park | The Park Authority](#). **The closing date for applications is at 1pm on Friday, 6 March 2026.**

I hope that you will give serious consideration to submitting an application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandy Bremner".

Sandy Bremner
Convener

Information about the role

Remuneration	<p>£262.67 per day.</p> <p>Reasonable expenses incurred will be reimbursed. The role is non-pensionable.</p>
Time commitment	<p>Board members receive a daily fee for the provision of a minimum of 32 days each year. This time allocation covers preparation for and attendance at our key governance meetings. This may be increased to a maximum allocation of 36 days for which daily fees are paid, where members accept additional representational responsibilities on one of the range of external bodies and working groups where board members exercise their strategic and leadership responsibilities in representing the Park Authority. Details are in a Word document on the Public Appointments website.</p> <p>Board members will generally be expected to accept at least one additional representational responsibility, bringing their time commitment to three days each month. Our business meetings are scheduled on Fridays, with normally two scheduled meeting dates each month. Many meetings can be undertaken on a hybrid basis, combining in-person and video conference attendance. Some meetings are required to be in person only and some travel will be required.</p> <p>Demands on time and involvement of Park Authority board members can exceed the maximum allocation of time for which fees are paid. Board members are expected to prioritise the work required for our key governance meetings and maintain a high</p>

	<p>level of attendance at these meetings within the time allocation they commit to our business.</p> <p>Members may of course attend other meetings and events that have relevance to the Park Authority's business in addition to their paid time. The Park Authority is committed to equalities, diversity and inclusion across our organisation. We are open to discussions with any candidate on any adaptations we can make to accommodate someone becoming a member of our board, within the confines of our business arrangements set out here.</p>
Location of meetings	<p>Many of our in-person meetings take place at our offices at Grantown on Spey. Other meetings and visits are arranged for different locations around the National Park, with a requirement to travel. This is aside from those meetings which are hybrid, combining in-person and video participation, as described above.</p>
Length of appointment term	<p>The appointment is for four years from 1 November 2026.</p>
Disqualifications	<p>A member of the Scottish Parliament cannot also hold a public appointment for public bodies listed in the schedule of the Scottish Parliament (Disqualification) Order 2020.</p> <p>Former ministers and senior crown servants (director general level and above) should seek advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA) before applying for this role.</p>

Applicants will also be ineligible to apply for this appointment if they have already served a total of eight years as a Member of the CNPA Board.

Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Board

Scotland's National Parks were established by the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 to safeguard areas of outstanding and diverse landscapes, habitats and communities. They do this by working to co-ordinate the delivery of four main statutory aims:

- to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- to promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public; and
- to promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

This can mean being involved in developing key strategic documents such as:

- the National Park Partnership Plan, which sets out our priorities for the Park's development in association with partner organisations over a five year period;
- the Local Development Plan, which guides all future development and the use of land. It acts as a strong catalyst for change and improvement in the area, shaping the environment of the National Park; and
- the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan and the Active Cairngorms Action Plan.

Additionally, the National Park Authority has a statutory responsibility for planning . All board members are also members of the Planning Committee, which oversees preparation of the Local Development Plan and takes decisions to determine those planning applications for developments with issues of significance to the Cairngorms National Park aims, and which have therefore been "called-in" by the Park Authority. Planning applications not called in by the Park Authority are determined by the relevant local authority. Significant planning issues for the National Park area include provision of affordable housing, sustainable tourism development, rural economic development and ensuring climate resilient communities and businesses for the future.

The Scottish Parliament is currently scrutinising the Natural Environment Bill which is hoped to be enacted before the Scottish elections in 2026. The Bill proposes some changes to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 which include amendments to strengthen the four statutory aims, strengthening the duty of other public bodies both to have regard to the aims and to facilitate the delivery of National Park Partnership Plans; and to enhance enforcement powers to improve byelaw compliance by being able to issue fixed penalty notices. The Bill and a range of amendments being proposed by individual MSPs are currently being debated in Parliament and may lead to further changes being proposed and agreed.

The Board will help guide and shape the organisation's workstreams, including our work on a Net Zero National Park, Cairngorms Nature, the Cairngorms 2030 Programme (part funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund), , the Peatland Restoration Programme, and the wider challenges of delivering a broad portfolio of project actions delivering against national outcomes.

The role of a Board Member

The board members of the CNPA have a key role in ensuring that both the natural environment and the local communities in our Park are cared for and sustained for current and future generations to enjoy. Board members are required to:

- contribute to setting the strategic direction of the National Park Authority in a way which reflects Scottish Ministers' policies and priorities through the production and oversight of the strategic Corporate Plan;
- approve and oversee delivery of annual operational and business plans, ensuring activity and resource plans deliver against Corporate Plan objectives;
- set the design and strategic direction of major projects and programmes, for example the Cairngorms NPA Board has established the strategic direction of the Heritage Horizons – Cairngorms 2030 Programme, a collection of 20 projects putting the power to tackle the climate and nature crises in the hands of people who live, visit and work in the UK's largest national park (see [Cairngorms National Park Authority - Cairngorms 2030](#)). The Board has also approved the implementation of byelaws supporting management of wildfire risk in the Cairngorms, with those byelaws coming into force from 1 April 2026. The Board has previously approved the strategic direction of the Cairngorms Capercaillie Project; Tomintoul and Glenmore Landscape Partnership; Net Zero with Nature Strategy; and the Cairngorms Nature Strategy;
- contribute to setting the vision and objectives for the National Park, through the preparation and oversight of key strategic documents, including the National Park Partnership Plans and Local Development Plans and key supporting work such as the Cairngorms Economic Development Strategy, Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and Tourism Infrastructure Plan;
- take strategic lead in the direction of innovation around private finance investment in nature and climate projects;
- add value to the work of the organisation's staff through support and constructive challenge and advice in Board and Committee meetings, and other forms of joint working with staff, in particular the Board's standing Sub-Committees covering Planning, Audit and Risk, Resources and Performance;
- take collective responsibility for the Authority's decisions at board and on planning, development control and other matters, including participating in formal decision processes in the planning committee or other committees;

- act as champions for National Parks externally in dealings with the public and with national and local organisations;
- take collective responsibility for the performance the organisation including developing and promoting the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources in accordance with the principles of Best Value; and
- adhere to expected standards of conduct as set out in the Park Authority's [Code of Conduct](#) under the terms of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) 2000.

While Board members' tasks will vary, the list below provides some examples of the type of work that members may be called upon to:

- participate in working groups, discussion forums and open meetings as required to promote Park interests;
- deal with planning matters relating to the planning functions for which the Parks have responsibility;
- assist in the development, approval and monitoring of the Authority's Corporate and Business Plans, (in line with the policies in the National Park Plan);
- monitor financial and budget performance and other key financial targets and initiate and authorise corrective action where that is required;
- monitor, scrutinise and constructively challenge the delivery of strategic objectives, ensuring an appropriate and robust corporate performance framework is in place;
- lead on identification of the Park Authority's strategic risk environment, ensuring appropriate risk management strategies are in place, approve appropriate mitigation plans and monitor the management of the park authority's risk environment;
- lead in policy setting and by example on embedding the organisation's values and on embedding our equalities aims and ambitions;
- elect the Convener and Deputy Convener;
- serve on appointment panels for senior staff, as required.

Further Information

For further information about the Cairngorms National Park Authority and the role, please contact the Convener, Sandy Bremner at SandyBremner@cairngorms.co.uk. You can also find more information at www.cairngorms.co.uk/.

The selection panel

Chair	Donald Henderson, Deputy Director, Nature Division, Scottish Government (panel chair)
Panel member	Sandy Bremner, Convener, Cairngorms National Park Authority

Independent panel member	Marie Fallon, Board Member and Chair of Audit and Risk Committee, Environmental Standards Scotland.
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Please note that applicants will be asked to declare if they know any members of the selection panel. The selection panel will also declare if they know any applicants. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be managed in line with the [Ethical Standards Commissioners Code of Practice for Public Appointments](#).

Person specification

The person specification sets out the skills, knowledge and experience Ministers are seeking for this Member role and indicates how and at which stage in the process each of the criteria will be tested. You may have gained your experience through work, by being active in your community, in a voluntary capacity or through your own lived experience.

The priority criteria is weighted over the general criteria, and the candidates who provide the strongest evidence against the priority criteria will be considered most able to fulfil the role. In the event that the candidates provide evidence of equal merit against the priority criteria, the selection panel will then take into account the strength of the evidence presented against the general and desirable criteria in determining the candidate most able to fulfil the role.

Priority Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate evidence of **one or both** of these criteria in their application form.

Priority Criteria	Example indicators	How this will be assessed
1. Knowledge and understanding of organisational financial and risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of leading successful financial and risk management for a large organisation;• Experience of effective design and implementation of internal control systems within a large, multi-purpose organisation;• Experience of working with internal and external audit in securing effective internal control systems and efficient financial management systems;	<p>In your online application: Please demonstrate how you meet this criterion. Your response should be no more than 400 words.</p> <p>This will be assessed at the application stage and at the interview stage.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and understanding of the public sector financial environment. 	
2. Knowledge and understanding of landscape scale nature restoration and landscape scale change management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of landscape scale nature restoration activities and landscape scale change management; • Experience and capacity to speak with authority and influence on these subject areas; • Understanding of the national policy environment within which these areas of work must fit and to which the conservation, landscape scale change and peatland restoration work of the Park Authority must contribute. 	<p>In your online application: Please demonstrate how you meet this criterion. Your response should be no more than 400 words.</p> <p>This will be assessed at the application stage and at the interview stage.</p>

Essential Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate evidence of all four criteria:

Essential Criteria	Example indicators	How this will be assessed
1. An understanding of the role that National Parks play in Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an understanding of what role the National Park plays particularly around the following: 	<p>In your online application: Please demonstrate how you meet this criterion. Your</p>

<p>– both now and the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ landscape scale change ○ economic transformation and the well-being economy; ○ climate mitigation and adaptation; ○ landscape-scale conservation and biodiversity; ○ natural capital; ○ a park for all; ○ community empowerment; ○ health and wellbeing. 	<p>response should be no more than 400 words.</p> <p>This will be tested at the application stage and at interview (if you are invited).</p>
<p>2. The ability to contribute effectively to organisational strategy and development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● experience of influencing the development of a successful strategy or business plan; ● able to identify a range of priorities, challenges and risks within different timeframes and evaluate their impact from a strategic perspective; ● able to demonstrate focus on a clear informed picture of the long-term aim of an organisation when considering issues and a basis for decision making. 	<p>This will be tested at interview (if you are invited).</p>
<p>3. The ability to analyse and evaluate complex issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● comfortable working with both numerical and written data; ● evidence of making decisions which have had a positive impact at an organisational level; 	<p>In your online application: Please demonstrate how you meet this criterion. Your response should be no more than 400 words.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of using 'hard' evidence as well as seeking the views of others when reaching decisions; • evidence of making decisions when the information available is complicated, complex and/or conflicting. 	This will be tested at the application stage and at interview (if you are invited).
4. The ability to communicate effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience of representing and/or promoting an organisation to a wide range of stakeholder – acting as an ambassador; • evidence of influencing senior level colleagues and stakeholders successfully; • ability to work collaboratively and constructively with others; • able to be confident, creative and engaging when representing the organisation to engender respect in all situations. 	This will be tested at interview (if you are invited).

Desirable Criterion

It would be desirable if applicants demonstrated evidence of the following criteria:

Desirable Criterion	Example indicators	How this will be assessed
Experience of climate mitigation and adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of the application of policies and approaches to mitigate and adapt in the 	This will be tested at interview (if you are invited).

	face of climate change challenges.	
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How to Apply

Please follow these instructions step by step to apply for these roles.

1. You will be asked to supply some personal information and then complete the questions relating to political activity and any conflicts of interest. This information will not be made available to the selection panel.
2. You will then be asked to supply evidence to answer **one or both** Priority Criteria questions.

You must answer these questions otherwise your application will not be considered.

- Knowledge and understanding of organisational financial and risk management **and/or**;
- Knowledge and understanding of landscape scale nature restoration and landscape scale change management.

There is a limit of up to **400 words** for each of the two criteria.

3. You will then be asked to supply evidence to answer Essential Criteria 1 and 3. **You must answer this question otherwise your application will not be considered.**

- your understanding of the role that National Parks play in Scotland – both now and the future
- The ability to analyse and evaluate complex issues

There is a limit of up to **400 words** for each of the two criteria.

Desirable Criterion

You do not need to provide evidence of the desirable criterion in your application.

Please also provide a tailored career history. This should be no more than two A4 pages and should set out organisations you have worked for, the roles/positions you have held and the dates that those roles/positions were held. Full details of the evidence to be submitted are set out in the application form.

Please note that late applications will not be considered by the selection panel.

The assessment process

The assessment process will happen as follows:

1. The selection panel will assess all application forms against the criteria for appointment (see the person specification). Those who demonstrate evidence that most closely meet the criteria tested at this stage will be shortlisted for interview.
2. The selection panel will interview candidates, the questions they ask will relate directly to the criteria for appointment. There will also be an exercise where candidates will be asked to provide a five minute presentation on a topic relevant to the Member role. The topic will be set to candidates in advance of their interview.
3. The selection panel will also ask questions relevant to the fit and proper person test (see below) which will include questions about [the Principles of Public Life](#).
4. The selection panel will review the evidence provided and agree on which candidates are most meritorious. The most meritorious candidates will be recommended to the appointing Minister.
5. The appointing Minister will make a decision about who to appoint based on evidence from the selection panel. They may request to meet with candidates before making their final decision.
6. Appointees will be asked to complete pre-appointment checks which will include a Disclosure Check (there is no charge for this). Appointment is conditional on satisfactory completion of these. (there is no charge for this).

Guaranteed interviews

This appointment round will provide guaranteed interviews for disabled people who meet the criteria being tested at the application stage. To be eligible for a guaranteed interview you must have a physical or mental impairment or a health condition which has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities. The selection panel will not know which applicants have requested a guaranteed interview until the shortlisting is complete.

Fit and proper person checks

In the context of public appointments, a fit and proper person is someone who is suitable because they meet the requirements of the role, and their past or present activities and behaviour means they are suitable. Tests are built into different stages of the appointment process to ensure that:

- Conduct to date has been compatible with the public appointment.
- Membership is not barred by the body's constitution e.g., criminal record or bankruptcy (see disqualifications).
- There are no unmanageable conflicts of interest.
- Political activity is declared.
- There is agreement to abide by the Principles of Public life in Scotland. Please read the principles here: [Code of Practice | Ethical Standards Commissioner](#).
- There is confirmation that the time commitment required for the role can be met.

Social media checks for candidates invited to interview

The selection panel may consider publicly available information about candidates which is posted by candidates on social media. Any findings that the selection panel agree are pertinent to the role or that may call into question suitability for the appointment, credibility of the appointments process or the public body, will be discussed with candidates at interview. Consideration of any issues will take place openly and transparently to establish the facts. Candidates will be given an opportunity to respond to any concerns. This information will be handled in line with the [Privacy Notice](#) for public appointments.

Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018

Revised statutory guidance on the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 (“2018 Act”) was published on 26 June 2025 following the Supreme Court Judgment dated 16 April 2025 on the definition of “Man”, “Woman” and “Sex” in the Equality Act 2010, and consequently in the 2018 Act.

The Gender Representation on Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 sets a ‘gender representation objective’ that a board should have 50% of non-executive members who are women. In circumstances where there are two or more equally qualified candidates (a tie break), at least one of whom is a woman and one who isn’t, then section 4(3) of the 2018 Act requires the appointing Minister to appoint a woman if doing so will result in the board achieving (or making progress towards achieving) the gender representation objective.

In a tie break the appointing Minister can choose to appoint a candidate, who is not a woman, on the basis of another characteristic or situation and can give preference to that candidate (section 4 (4) of the 2018 Act). In this case, the appointing Minister will ask the Ethical Standards Commissioner to make an exception to the Public Appointments Code of Practice.

In order to comply with the 2018 Act Scottish Government must now request data on biological sex as registered at birth from all applicants for Public Appointments on Boards which are captured by the 2018 Act. Following your application you will receive a request from the Public Appointments Team to request this data from you.

The Scottish Government is committed to dignity, fairness and respect for all and actively invites applications from all.

Common questions and answers

Who can I contact to speak about this role?	Please contact the Convener, Sandy Bremner at SandyBremner@cairngorms.co.uk . You can also find more information at www.cairngorms.co.uk/ .
Who can I speak to about a disability related reasonable adjustment?	Please contact the Public Appointments Team by email at public.appointments@gov.scot Deaf, deafblind and BSL users can contact the team via contactSCOTLAND-BSL .
I am having a problem with the application process who can I speak with?	Please contact the Public Appointments Team by email at public.appointments@gov.scot
Do you have any advice about how to complete an application form?	Yes. More information is provided here: Introduction - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) .
Do you have any advice for candidates attending interviews?	Yes. More information is provided here: Introduction - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) .
I can't attend the interview in person, can I attend remotely?	Yes. You can request to attend the interview using MS Teams. Please contact the Public Appointments Team by email at public.appointments@gov.scot
Will you reimburse expenses for attending an interview?	Yes. You can claim reasonable expenses. Further information will be provided with the invitation to interview.
What does 'appointed on merit' mean?	Appointed on merit means that the people who are appointed most closely meet the criteria that is sought for the board vacancy at a point in time. People are assessed on the evidence that they present in the appointments process and the findings of the fit and proper person test.
What role does the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC) have in the appointments process?	The ESC regulate and monitor the public appointments process . The Commissioner plays a role in ensuring appointments are made on merit and use fair methods. More information about the Commissioner's role is provided here: Public appointments Information leaflet Ethical Standards Commissioner .

Can I apply if I am not a British citizen?	Yes. You can apply for and be appointed to the Boards of Public Bodies if you are not a British citizen. However, you must be legally entitled to work in the UK.
Would remuneration for a public appointment impact on my benefits?	Possibly. Taking up a remunerated public appointment may affect benefits payments. This will depend on individual circumstances and you should seek advice from your benefits provider. More information is provided here www.gov.uk/browse/benefits .
Do the selection panel see information from the diversity monitoring form?	No. Diversity monitoring information provided by applicants is not shared with the selection panel. Sometimes information about a reasonable adjustment is shared with the selection panel to ensure that requirements are met (e.g., if a BSL interpreter is required).
How will my personal information be handled?	All personal information will be handled with great care and in line with UK GDPR and data protection requirements. Further information can be found in the Privacy Notice here: Privacy notice
Can I get feedback on my application or interview?	Yes. You can request feedback.
Is any training provided if I am offered and take up an appointment?	Yes. Each board has their own induction process and training offer. New appointees are also invited to attend an induction day hosted by the Scottish Government.
Is it possible to hold more than one public appointment?	Yes. It is possible to have more than one public appointment. You should check that you can make the time commitment for an additional appointment and that there are no unmanageable conflicts of interest.
Are public appointments announced?	Yes. Every appointment is announced here: Public appointments: news releases - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) . The board may also announce new appointments on their own website and social media platforms. Information published will include a biography and details of any political activity within the last five years.
What standards are expected of board members?	The conduct expected of board members of Scottish public boards is set out here: Members of devolved

	<p>public bodies: model code of conduct - December 2021 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)(this includes the Principles of Public Life) or in the Park Authority's Code of Conduct.</p>
How can I complain about the public appointments process?	<p>Further information about the complaints process for public appointments can be found here: How to apply - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot).</p> <p>Anyone concerned about public appointments can raise a complaint and have it independently investigated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner.</p> <p>Investigation process public appointments Ethical Standards Commissioner</p>

For further information

Please contact the Public Appointments Team, Scottish Government

Email: public.appointments@gov.scot

Deaf, deafblind and BSL users can contact the team via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)

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