

The Cairngorms National Park Elections (Ward No 3)

Candidate's Statement by KEITH JOHN BALLAM

A Grantown resident since 2008, moving here with my wife & two young children, having identified the area as one of the best places in the UK to live, work & raise a family. Work was investment in an outdoor centre with accommodation & hospitality venue, which developed & grew into a multi-award winning business, playing a significant role in the local community, & contributing to the local economy, before selling last year. We have now reinvested in long-term rental properties in the town. Our children attended the town's excellent schools, & have had wonderful 'outdoorsy'-based upbringings in a safe & supportive community.

There is much that is positive about our town & the wider National Park environment, but having lived & been in business here for 15 years, equally one can see areas of opportunity for further development & enhancement. These include the key challenges of housing, jobs & recruitment, public transport, & achieving practical balance in the Park's aims of conserving & enhancing the natural environment, & promoting social & economic development in our communities.

My personal outlook is always to be positive & 'can-do', objective & pragmatic, & to employ 'common sense' to achieve best available outcomes to balance varied & sometimes competing perspectives. I believe that allied with this, the business & people skills developed in my career in the leisure & tourism sector, & personal experience of our local community, will enable me to make a strong contribution as your representative on the CNPA Board.

Candidate's Statement by DECLAN GALLACHER

I wish to represent you on the National Park board so I can continue to give back to my local community.

I volunteer as treasurer for Grantown Community Council, and as vice-chair of Grantown Initiative, the group responsible for re-opening Burnfield toilets, for supporting projects like the Dulaig Park renovation, and for events like Hogmanay. I invest a lot of my time volunteering to help our community. I ask that you vote for me so I can support our communities in new ways.

We need to fix the housing situation. Locals struggle to buy or rent here. Planning in the Park needs to provide more affordable housing, available only to locals, not as second homes or short-term lets. This needs to be a place to live, first and foremost, as well as a National Park.

For seven years, I worked in tourism for Landmark Press in Carrbridge. More recently I bought Smarty Art with my wife and work in the family-owned Royal Fish Bar on Grantown's High Street. I know tourism is vital and that small businesses are at the heart of our communities. The Park must promote tourism and ensure the success of our businesses that provide us with jobs.

The natural environment makes this area a fantastic place to live, work and raise a family. Let's strike the right balance between this being a place for people and a place for nature. A vote for me is a vote for someone who has your best wishes at heart.

Candidate's Statement by JOHN KIRK

I am John Kirk a local farmer and business man with 45 years of employing local people.

I have done 4 years on the park board which I have enjoyed.

I understand that we need low cost houses to help keep our young people in the area doing good quality jobs with a future.

We were promised a park which would help local people this has not happened we are heading to be a playground with expensive houses and businesses that cannot get staff. We do not want to see businesses buying up the park land and clearing the glens to get carbon credits this has already happened in Dorback and Kinrara the farms have gone to be replaced by trees.

The wildlife is constantly disturbed by people with dogs and bikes the capercaillie is struggling to survive due to the amount of predators and the ground nesting birds are also struggling to rear their young it is a sad situation.

The park board needs more local people to help get the park working for us but unfortunately the Scottish office does not see it this way.

People need good jobs and our old people deserve good care in our community and be able to enjoy their retirement in such a wonderful area. Young people are our future so the park has to work harder to keep them in the area and secure a good future for them.

If you give me your vote. thank you John Kirk