

The Cairngorms National Park Elections (Ward No 5)

Candidate's Statement by PETER JOHN ARGYLE

I am delighted to be standing as a candidate for election to the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

It is a serious role in an organisation that has a significant impact of the daily lives of people living within – and outwith – the Park boundaries. It requires experience and commitment to deliver the collective aims of the CNPA by formulating and implementing effective policies. My 23 years' experience of public service as an Aberdeenshire councillor, combined with more than a decade as a member of the CNPA Board, means I will be very well placed to contribute strongly to the work of the organisation. I know at first-hand how things work, know many of the people and communities in Aberdeenshire, Angus and beyond, understanding the issues we face.

The CNPA is also the planning authority; I have a deep knowledge of planning policies and experience of taking decisions while balancing competing ambitions and expectations. The future holds many challenges for the Park; not just the budgetary pressures but over housing, transport, conservation, supporting rural businesses and climate change, many of which lead to intense debate.

As an experienced elected representative I have shown my strong commitment to helping people and ensuring their voices are heard.

I know and love the Cairngorms National Park and our communities. It is a massively important part of Scotland and the CNPA has a vital role in ensuring it develops to the benefit of all of us.

I would be proud and honoured to receive your support.

Candidate's Statement by MARK BAMBER

I live and work in the National Park and chose to move here 16 years ago because of its beauty. As a postman in the park I speak with a cross section of it's residents, from Landowners, business owners to local residents who enjoy living here. I would like to become a member of the board so I would be able to be part of the team that shapes & develops the park for all those who currently live in it & visit it.

I believe we have a wonderful place of natural beauty and it should be accessible to those who wish to enjoy it responsibly. I also understand that the park is owned and a business for many as well, so, relationships with "users" of the park, people who make a living from it & those who live in it need to be considered & taken into account. I believe that I would be able to be considerate of all views and help to broker understanding between all. Maintaining and development of the park are also of interest to me, the wild life and the flora & fauna should, in my view be a priority and development of habitat and ancient woodland I believe are also important.

I look forward to the feedback on my application and any subsequent discussion.

Candidate's Statement by KATHY DALE

I am an ecologist and I am passionate about the Cairngorms National Park, which is very special. I have lived in Tarland in the Howe of Cromar for nearly thirty years. I am an outdoors enthusiast and I have spent many hours walking, cycling, orienteering, canoeing, skiing and horse riding in the Park.

I have a Degree in Ecology, a Masters in Water Resource Management and thirty-five years' professional environmental consultancy experience. I am a Chartered Ecologist and I worked at Board level in the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) for seven years (2012-2019). I currently serve on the NatureScot Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) Expert Panel and I am the Coordinator for the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBiP).

My specialism is freshwater ecology and I have specific experience in river restoration. I have undertaken numerous projects in the Cairngorms National Park including in the River Dee catchment. I am currently Chair of the Tarland Wetlands Group, which aims to develop natural wetlands fitting within the farming system, for the benefit of wildlife, the environment and local people.

The twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss pose many questions about how we manage our freshwaters and alleviate flooding of our communities. Ballater in particular has suffered from several floods in recent storms. I would bring my knowledge and expertise to the Board to deliver sustainable nature-based solutions so that the landscape of the Park and people's homes and livelihoods are protected for future generations.

Candidate's Statement by PAUL EDWARD GIBB

Hello, my name is Paul Gibb, I am a long-time resident of Upper Deeside - you may remember I was your local Aberdeenshire Councillor too. My wife and I have two teenage children.

The CNPA plays a key role in shaping our communities and landscape.

Being a parent I understand the need for young people to enjoy the countryside and to appreciate their responsibilities too. Accessing affordable housing is a key priority for our young families and for the local economy.

As a geologist running my own small business, I have scientific and management skills and understand the challenges facing business owners in these difficult times.

My Council experience serves me well in understanding and appreciating the needs of residents and businesses as well as those of visitors to the area.

Please vote for me, Paul Gibb, to:

- Establish ways that make it easier for young people and key workers to get on the housing ladder, retaining and attracting people to our remote rural communities.
- Find solutions to our flooding issues.
- Encourage better transport links in, out and around the park.
- Support businesses.
- Identify solutions that help communities, businesses and visitors alike.
- Contribute a common-sense approach.
- Ensure the decisions made by the Authority are made in the best interests of all those who live, work and visit the Park.

Please vote Paul Gibb. Thank you.

Candidate's Statement by FERGUS MUTCH

The Cairngorms National Park is a treasured resource in which we all have a stake. I would relish the challenge of serving on the CNPA Board and would work tirelessly for the communities which comprise this special part of Scotland.

I am passionate about building a resilient, sustainable National Park for future generations to enjoy, where there are opportunities for young people to live and work in vibrant villages, plugged into the modern world. These must, in turn, sit within a natural environment and landscape which is properly conserved, resourced and restored.

My background is in law, followed by a decade working in the political sphere in senior roles within the Scottish Parliament. I now run my own strategic advisory firm, based locally, and specialising in communications, advocacy and public policy. We work with a number of organisations operating within the National Park, supporting economic development, food and drink and tourism.

Music and Scotland's cultural heritage are a huge interest of mine, and I have played the bagpipes since a young age. I am a trustee of arts centre St Margaret's Braemar and helped launch the now annual Braemar Folk Festival, creating a new event that brings the best of traditional and roots music to the heart of the Cairngorms each October.

If elected, I offer experience in delivery, new ideas and creative thinking and my complete commitment. Above all, I promise to be a strong voice on your behalf as we shape the future of our National Park together.

Candidate's Statement by SUSAN ELLEN STEWART

My story is rooted in the Cairngorm National Park. My family is from Blair Atholl. I spent my teenage summer holidays in the mountains surrounding Kingussie. I now live in the beautiful village of Ballater with my husband. I worked my whole adult life to be able to live in a place I simply love.

I am passionate about the Park, and believe it is our responsibility to sustain and enhance this incredible place for future generations.

This has been my focus for the last 3 years as I work as part of the local community. I am proactive in my role in the Business Association, as well as being part of the Community Action Plan Team and Housing Sub-Group. My priorities are working with others to identify creative solutions to:-

- sustain our local economy whilst managing the fine balance between visitors and the wellbeing of residents and the community;
- recruit and retain talented people to deliver our Sustainable Tourism strategy;
- address our need for affordable housing particular for younger people.

I have considerable experience to draw on. I have worked as Global HR Director in a range of international businesses including Tourism & Hospitality; as Executive & Company Director with international companies and charitable / community enterprises. I have run my own businesses and understand intimately the highs and lows of ensuring financial security.

I wish to join the Board simply to make a positive contribution.