

# NORTH WEST SUTHERLAND DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Note of Annual General Meeting held in Lairg Community Centre

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015

## Present:

Pieter Bakker (PB) – Altnaharra & Vice-Chair

Angus MacCurrach (AMC) – West Shinness

Annette Parrott (AP) – West Shinness

David Allison (DA) – Reay Forest

Derick Macaskill (DM) – FCS

Duncan Shaw (DS) - Gualin

Iain Robertson (IR) – MOD Cape Wrath

Peter Voy (PV) - Sutherland Estates

Richard Osborne (RO) – Rhiconich

Roddy Watt (RW) – Merkland

Ross Peters (RP) – Achnabourin

## In attendance:

April Conroy (AC) – Secretary

Holly Deary (HD) - SNH

Jessica Sandison - observing

Valerie Wilson (VW) – SNH

Victor Clements (VC) – DM Plan Author

## Apologies:

Andrew Marsham – Chairman, Rispond & Polla

George Woods - Merkland

James Clark - Eriboll

Sebastian Green – North Loch Naver & Syre

Thomas MacDonell – Wildland Ltd

Heather Gow – Strathmore

David Campbell – Poole

Robert McHardy –Poole

Don O' Driscoll – Sandwood JMT

Martin Mackay –Keodale

James Nall-Cain –Gualin

## **1. Welcome**

The Vice-chairman PB welcomed everyone to the AGM. Apologies were noted as shown above, and due to the absence of the out-going & proposed new Chairman, proceeded to chair the meeting.

## **2. Previous Minutes**

The Minutes from the last meeting were reviewed, and were proposed by PB, seconded by DA.

## **3. Matters arising**

Matters arising were invited. None were raised.

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## 4. Treasurer's Report

AC provided a brief overview of the status of current payments of the DMP Levy, 2014/15 Levy and the invoices now due. RO, DM and IR all agreed to make payments shortly. AC agreed to re-issue their invoiced in support of this.

Account statements/overviews were handed out, which showed an account balance of £7913.95 at present, however invoices due shortly are the ADMG annual levy, Secretary Costs & Lairg village hall hire.

## 5. Election of office bearers (Chair/Vice Chair and Secretary)

PB reported 3 nominations have been received for George Woods. PB invited any further nominations. None were received. PB asked whether all were in support of electing George Woods as Chairman. All present agreed to elect George Woods as Chairman.

PB reported that two nominations had been received for Secretary: Jessica Sandison and David Campbell. PB noted that as a paid position the selection and appointment should be carried out by assessing the requirements of the role and a further assessment of the capability and availability of the individuals, (as recommended by VC) PB suggested that the steering group carry this out with urgency via email. All agreed.

DS noted that he would like to step down from the steering group, upon which the group was asked for any additional nominations for people to join the steering group, none received.

Therefore the steering group at present is made up of: George Woods/Pieter Bakker/David Allison/Roddy Watt/Thomas MacDonell & Valerie Wilson and Holly Deary.

And CC'd to Secretary & Victor Clements.

DM asked whether the role of Secretary was impartial. PB confirmed it was. In this case, the role was a paid role to carry out the administration including the meetings notifications and minutes, gathering cull returns, creating and issuing invoices, and reminders.

<b>ACTION 2.1:</b> Steering group to appoint a secretary ASAP
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## 6. DMP update and future work program

VC led a review of the Actions from the previous minutes:

Action 1.1 – constitution accepted.

Action 1.2 and 1.3 – all members to review contact list as appropriate.

VC asked that all members notify the secretary of any changes required via email, without delay, and that they review their details at every meeting. VW asked that the ADMG website be updated with the details of the newly appointed Chairman and Secretary, when confirmed.

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VC reported that the ADMG will be providing a free website to all DMGs so they can update their own pages / details. Training to be provided on the 25<sup>th</sup> November. VC, PB and DA will attend and the new secretary will be invited.

Actions 1.4 – DMP was formally endorsed at spring meeting.

Action 1.5 – Chairman now elected.

Action 1.6 – Recruitment

Only a very small number of recruitment counts took place in spring 2015. This is the single most important piece of data used in the population model, and all members need to carry out these counts from 2016 onwards.

**ACTION 2.2:** All group members to carry out a thorough recruitment count in late April/ early May 2016.

## a) ECAF funding/Heli count update

All confirmed need for a sound baseline based on a helicopter count in order to underpin all the work of the DMG. It is felt a helicopter count is very much desired in Spring 2016.

VC encouraged a foot count be planned to provide a plan B should some members not be able to participate in the helicopter count.

RP asked that additional alternatives be investigated such as using satellite imagery, high resolution photography from aircraft, or UAS/ROVs/drones. (To be taken up by the steering group).

**Action 2.3** Steering group to explore all the options for a group wide count(Heli/Drone/Satellite/Foot)

## b) ECAF Funding/HIA

Holly encouraged applications for ECAF Funding and highlighted that a low level of applications now may impact on future funding availability.

VC cautioned that timescales for application may be very tight given the commitments expected of the applicant in terms of their commitment.

**The current funding window will be open to mid January 2016.**

Questions for Holly to confirm:

- Whether ECAF funding covers 50% or 100% for habitat monitoring and deer management?
- Whether the £4,400 limit per holding would apply to the group as a whole or the 19 holdings individually?

VC took members through the DMP Working Plan, discussing progress to date, and which actions were still outstanding. The Working Plan document has been updated to reflect on these discussions and progress already achieved.

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**Action 2.4:** Holly to advise the Steering group on item 6 B (as per above)

**Action 2.5:** Steering group to explore option for group wide HIA application for discussion at spring meeting.

## 7. AOCB

DM noted that Charlie Brook (MidFearn) had been looking into using Drones for habitat surveys.

DA noted thanks to PB for driving forward the activities of the DMG in a very commendable and business-like manner. DA asked that credit be noted in the minutes. DS concurred.

DMA notes some recent poaching incidents. DA raised the issue of sharing information about incidents and make a commitment to let each other know. PB noted success in emailing the local wildlife officer and getting an immediate response.

Holly Deary introduced herself as the wildlife officer taking over from Lindsey.

RO thanked Pieter and Victor for their contributions to the board.

RP reported a poaching incident.

PB thanked Victor.

## 8. Date of next Meeting

Date set for 2pm on Wed 13 April in Lairg Community Centre

CLOSE 16:18