

BREADALBANE DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES

**Autumn Meeting
Friday 24th October 2014
at 2.00pm
at The Molteno Hall**

1 Welcome

Present were:

Richard Barclay (Chair), Emma Paterson (*Auchlyne, Vice Chair*), James Scott (*SNH*), Ian Dingwall & George Coyne (*Auchlyne*), Robert Dalglish & David Pirie (*Innerwick*), Alan Cory-Wright (*Auchessan*), Steven Macdonald, Michael Gates Fleming & John Sinclair (*Meggernie/ Lochs*), Ewen Kennedy (*Innischoarach*), Robert La Sales de Terriere (*Crossmount*), Calum Gillies (*Dalchosnie/ Kynachan*), Iain Wotherspoon, Ally McNaughton & Graham Gillimore (*Glen Lyon Estate*), Mark Duncan & John McNulty (*FE*), Alistair Riddell (*North Chesthill*), Paul Thompson (*NTS*), Lord Pearson & George Eveleigh (*Coire Carie*), Morven Frost (*Boreland*), Lochy Porter (*Cashlie*), Tim Fison (*HPCLT*), Liz Auty & Lester Standen (*John Muir Trust*), Victor Clements (*Secretary*)

2 Apologies

Gen & Charlie Ramsay, Hamish Rae, Gareth Taylor (*South Chesthill*), Roddy Billimore (*Roros*), David Brown (*Innischoarach*), Miller Harris (*Invermearnan*), Andrew Warwick (*NTS*), Colin Buchan (*Garth*), John Holland (*SRUC*), James Duncan Millar (*ADMG*).

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes were taken as read. Proposed by Alan Cory Wright and seconded by Iain Wotherspoon.

4 Matters Arising

The Chair and secretary had yet to meet to discuss Constitution and whether it was now fit for purpose.

5 Financial Report

Current balance was £7032, forecast to be £5998 at 31st March. All subscriptions for the year had been paid, and there were no outstanding bills to be paid.

6 Health & Safety

There were no incidents discussed.

7 **Section 7 Agreement**

Stag Cull progress & Season Report

Innerhadden had a good season, good weather, plenty of mature stags but few very old ones.

Crossmount: as per Innerhadden.

Auchlyne: Good season, just two wet days. Good condition. Stags fat.

Auchessan: as per Auchlyne

Boreland: good weights, although nos down. Shot more on Ben Lawers side.

North Chesthill: Good season, no lost days, but fewer hinds. Thanked PKC and SNH for their help re: access management issues/ website upgrade.

Dalchosnie: Good season.

HPCLT: No deer in woodland enclosure this year.

Innerwick: good nos once rut started. Fewer hinds.

Glen Lyon: Good nos/ weights/ weather

Corie Carie: As others. No deer in west winds.

Cashlie: Good season, but a lot less hinds on Cashlie North

Meggernie: Good rut. Fewer deer earlier on.

Innischoarach: Good season.

Hind Cull 2014-15 arrangements

The Chair welcomed back James Scott as our SNH contact. James was pleased to be back, and acknowledged the progress that had been made in the area. It was especially good to see the NE estates working well together last year.

The proposed 2014-15 hind cull would be broadly similar to last year, but with 30 fewer hinds in the north group, and 43 additional hinds in the middle group. Reporting requirements would be changed to fortnightly, with the first report to be received in mid November.

A number of properties in the North Group said they were now cautious about hind numbers, and this was noted. Cashlie reported that a bigger cull would be more achievable south of the Lyon.

2014 Habitat Impact Assessment work

The ground was largely looking fine, and a draft report is to be ready before Xmas.

There was some evidence of under-grazing.

Sheep were still a significant issue on Ben Lawers.

There would be a demand within the Group for training with habitat monitoring.

There was some discussion within the Group about how to progress after the Section 7 agreement came to an end in May, and this would be discussed in more detail at the spring meeting. The consensus among those present was that the structure and over view provided by the Section 7 was very useful, and it would be good to see this replicated again to see that the Group still had some support, albeit possibly in some sort of arrangement short of an actual Section 7 again. JS reported that it was viewed to have been a success that actions were targeted across the DMG as a whole, not just on particular properties or sub- areas. This allowed for flexibility and a joined up approach.

It was noted that Kinveachy had recently entered in to a partnership agreement following on from a previous Section 7, and that this seemed to be a good arrangement.

2015 Helicopter count

Although the helicopter count was scheduled for the spring, Group members needed to be prepared for a count any time after New Year when conditions were suitable.

The sub- group co-ordinators would be:

South: Morven Frost (Boreland)

Middle: Stephen Martin (Cashlie)

North Richard Barclay (Innerhadden)

8 DMG Assessment process

JS would undergo an assessment process of the BDMG with RB & VC on Tues 4th November, with results being distributed to Group. The purpose of the process is to establish how well the Group is operating, and how it is delivering a range of Public Benefit objectives. It is expected that BDMG will do reasonably well in the process, although in areas like coting and habitat monitoring, we have become a little bit over reliant on SNH for help.

The process will inevitably increase the running costs of the Group going forwards, and this will have to be planned for.

There will be a cost implication to providing a public benefit section within the DMP, although this would be a good opportunity to upgrade the current DMP at the same time. This should not require too much time.

9 Deer Management Plan

Changes in contact details

A number of changes to contact details have been noted.

10 Wider Deer Management Issues

SNH Update

SNH were no longer funding hill phones, although the Heading to the Scottish Hills website had been recently updated.

ADMG Comment

The assessment was the major initiative taking place at the moment. There had been some suggestion that deer legislation would be re-visited as part of the Land Reform process, but this looks much less likely now.

11 Next meeting

The next meeting would be Friday 17th April 2015, 2pm at the Molteno Hall.

12 AOCB

Invermearnan had now been sold to a consortium of businessmen, but Miller Harris is still the principle point of contact, and West Highland Hunting are still in charge of all arrangements for deer management.

Finnart had shown interest in re-joining the Group, and there was support from neighbours for this. RB to contact owner to encourage them to do so.

Venison prices were likely to remain strong.

The Rannoch initiative was working well. One of the Glen Lyon estates had joined. The greater the volume of venison supplied, the better the price.

VC to circulate contact list to Group members.