

BREADALBANE DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

MINUTES

**Spring Meeting
Friday 11th April 2014
at 2.00pm
at The Molteno Hall**

1 **Welcome**

Present were:

Richard Barclay (Chair), Emma Paterson (*Auchlyne, Vice Chair*), Linzi Seivwright (*SNH*), Ian Dingwall (*Auchlyne*), Robert Dalglish & David Pirie (*Innerwick*), Alan Cory-Wright (*Auchessan*), Steven Macdonald, Adam Jamieson, Phil Robinson & John Sinclair (*Meggernie/ Lochs*), Ewen Kennedy (*Innischoarach*), Ian La Sales de Terriere (*Crossmount*), Jeremy Robinson & Calum Gillies (*Dalchosnie/ Kynachan*), Hamish Rae (*South Chesthill & Inverinian*), Gareth Taylor (*CKD Galbraith*), Iain Wotherspoon (*Glen Lyon Estate*), Mark Duncan & John McNulty (*FE*), Alistair Riddell (*North Chesthill*), Paul Thompson (*NTS*), John Holland (*SRUC*), Roddy Billimore (*Roros*), Jimmy Barrie (*Glen Lochay Estate*), Ian La Sales de Terriere & Mark Mackenzie (*Crossmount*), Lord Pearson & George Eveleigh (*Coire Carie*), James Duncan Millar (*ADMG*), Victor Clements (*Secretary*)

2 **Apologies**

General & Charlie Ramsay (*South Chesthill*), Leo Barclay (*Innerhadden*), David Brown (*Innischoarach*), Lochy Porter (*Cashlie*), Michael Gates Fleming (*Meggernie & Lochs*), Donnie Broad (*Glen Lochay Estate*), Ally McNaughton (*Glen Lyon Estate*), Andrew Warwick (*NTS*), Robert La Sales de Terriere (*Crossmount*), Robbie Kernahan (*SNH*), Colin Buchan (*Garth*), Lester Standen (*JMT*).

3 **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes were taken as read. Proposed by Ian La Sales de Terriere, seconded by Alastair Riddell.

4 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising other than we should make a point of not forgetting how to engage the farmers along Loch Tay side.

5 **Election of Office bearers**

The Chair and vice Chair were elected in 2013, and did not need to be elected again this year.

Victor Clements was retained as Secretary/ Treasurer.

6 Proposed Changes to Constitution

It was proposed that a number of changes should be made to the Constitution, to include the ADMG principles of collaboration, a dispute mechanism, and some details of the business to be carried out at each meeting.

Lord Pearson suggested that the document was still light on public interest and wider engagement, and that Community Councils and other relevant interests be added to the circulation list.

It was proposed that the changes put forward be accepted and that the Chair and Secretary would revisit these other elements of the constitution to provide a wording that could be incorporated at the next meeting.

With this, the proposed changes to the Constitution were unanimously approved.

7 Accounts & Budget for 2014- 15

We have a current balance of £5597.10. We made a small operating loss of £253.90 on the year, closely aligned with the projected budget. The bank balance is about £600 more than the one year of ADMG subscription we aim to have as a buffer.

Keeping the subscriptions at £9 per stag would give us another small operating loss of £231 in 2014- 15, while a £10 subscription would give us a £511 operating profit.

It was agreed that we should increase the subscription rate to £10 in anticipation of needing future funds to help with habitat monitoring when the Section 7 is removed or reduced in extent. SNH were likely to continue to monitor the designated sites, but Group members should be trained to monitor the non-designated areas in between. The new rate would allow us to build our reserves again for the necessary training, and was proposed by Alastair Riddell and seconded by iain Wotherspoon. There were no objectors.

8 Reviewing the 2013-14 season

It had been a very difficult hind season with very poor and wet weather, and the Chair thanked everyone present for their hard work in achieving the necessary culls, especially those in the northern part of the Group who undertook a very significant collaborative effort. Robbie Kernaghan of SNH passed on his congratulations to the Group.

Alan Cory Wright reported 3 X the normal mortality rate, and increased instance of liver fluke in hinds. Lord Pearson reported on the very wet weather in the west, the worst in living memory. This will

have a significant affect on herd health. Ewen Kennedy was anticipating high mortality and low recruitment rates at Innischoarach.

9 Section 7 Agreement

SNH acknowledged all the very hard work put in this year, and that the Group were on schedule to achieve target densities by 2015.

There would be habitat monitoring this summer, although it would likely be next spring before the results of this were properly analysed. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Group's preference was to conduct a helicopter count in late July/ early August. Linzi Seivwright would report back to SNH to establish whether this would be possible.

Linzi would shortly be moving to a new role within SNH and would no longer be our point of contact. The Chair thanked her for all her work and for the calm and assured way in which she moved things along.

10 Recruitment Counting 2014

It was agreed that recruitment counting should take place last week of April/ first week of May, and all results reported back to the Secretary as per usual. These would inform the population model.

11 Health & Safety

No incidents were reported.

12 Wider Deer Management Issues

SNH Update

No further comment from SNH

ADMG Comment

ADMG had replied to a number of consultations, including those on SRDP and CAP/ SFP reform. With the latter, a case was made for including deer numbers in calculations for minimum stocking densities. It is unlikely this argument will gain any traction, but it was important to make the point of principle that we are looking at the total grazing pressure in an area.

ADMG are contributing £12,000 to a new PACEC study to determine the current contribution of deer to the Scottish economy.

The Rural Affairs Committee turned out to be very fair and balanced. They were concerned about poor progress in many areas, and wanted deer management plans to be in place by the end of 2016. WE needed to keep progress under review.

The Wild Deer- A National Approach document was being reviewed at the moment.

Linzi was leading on the Collaborative Deer Management (CDM) project.

ADMG are looking to establish a benchmark for deer groups, and will be discussing this at meeting on Monday 14th April.

Heading for the Scottish Hills was lacking funding at present and would not be rolled out any further. Current operations would be severely restricted.

The Scottish Venison Partnership was continuing to raise awareness . Waitrose reported sales of venison up 92%, and demo farms were being set up. Butcher's evening were also being organized. The SVP levy would be increased from 1-2 pence per kilo, although ADMG? SVP were currently looking at the best way to implement this.

There will hopefully be opportunities for deer managers under the new SRDP.

13 Next meeting

The next main Group meeting would be on Friday 24th October, 2pm at the Molteno Hall.

14 AOCB

There was a discussion about DMQ levels 1 & 2. Level 1 should be regarded as the minimum required for unaccompanied stalking. Level 2 should be regarded as the professional standard of competence, and all employees taking out people stalking should be encouraged to get this. Problems arose with farmers and crofters who shot deer by themselves but who did not hold any qualifications at all.

Lord Pearson spoke about deer forest owners who did not participate, and how best to put pressure on them to contribute more. Most of them seemed to live south of the border.

Alastair Riddell said it would be very detrimental to lose Heading to the Scottish Hills, and that ramblers of other access groups should be making a contribution.