

**EAST GRAMPIAN DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP
SUB AREA 1
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, GLENISLA VILLAGE HALL
10AM, THURSDAY 28TH JULY 2016**

Present: Bruce Cooper – Glenprosen Estate
Katy Roberts – Scottish Water
Kevin Peters – FCS
Iain Hope – SNH
Shona Smith – SNH Corryfee
Andrew Gammell – Auchavan & Alrick
Rob Mearns – Ballintore & Lednathy
Liam Donald – Invercauld
Major Gibb – Glenisla
Colin McLean – Deer Consultancy Services
Florian Kuhnle – Tulchan
Deirdre Stewart – CKD Galbraith, Secretary/Treasurer

Apologies: Nicholas Gibb
Andrew Ogilvie Wedderburn
Angus McNicol
David Laird
Barclay Dougal

1.0 Welcome

Provided by Deirdre Stewart.

2.0 Apologies

As noted above.

3.0 Minutes were circulated previously for the Caenlochan Section 7 Control Agreement Meeting from 31st July 2015. No comment was provided upon the previous minutes.

4.0 Deer Culls/Deer Counts

IH offered that all Section 7 count & cull data has been previously circulated by Jimmy Irvine. This however does not cover all group members to the south. BC mentioned that numbers of mature stags seem to be increasing, and hind numbers upon Glenprosen Estate. It is believed that these may be coming from Invermark. RM said that where they had held stags over the summer, they have now moved out, possibly into Mildewan. LD agreed that he found hind numbers had increased. Major Gibb said that he had experienced less marauding stags during the spring.

5.0 Section 7 Update

Iain Hope from SNH commended the group on the progress that they had made. Status with the existing Section 7 Agreement is that all but one of the member estates has signed the agreement. This agreement is for the period to run from 2014 to 2019, previous period being 2003 to 2013. The objective of the agreement was to prevent damage to the natural heritage by deer. A herbivore impact assessment had been carried out in 2015, and results can now be circulated. This is considered an important piece of the monitoring for the agreement. Full count data was also carried out by helicopter in early 2016. A steering group meeting is now due. At this, SNH will consider what progress both sub-group 1 and 2 have achieved.

Iain Hope went on to add that SNH are carrying out a review of deer management across Scotland, and in doing so they will also be reviewing control agreements. He had said that there had had to be massive and dramatic changes to achieve those objectives for a public interest and in order to reduce deer numbers. SNH will acknowledge the work done by the group in working towards this. Iain Hope went on to say that the question is really how do we move forward, to sustain reduced herbivore impact, across such a diverse area. He noted that several of the qualifying habitats were not yet in favourable condition, and questioned how this will be remedied. This will obviously be a question for the Deer Management Plan, and how it will run and meet its own objectives. Iain Hope added that the draft Deer Management Plan at this stage does recognise the importance of the Section 7 Control Agreement, and the plan previously prepared by Rory Putman.

Iain Hope added that he was unsure as to when the SNH review of control agreements will be published, and as to its circulation. The SNH review on deer management will cover control agreements, the repeat assessments done on Deer Management Groups, favourable condition of habitat being delivered by SNH, and estimating/forecasting population trends. The findings of the report expect to be issued in September 2016, and these of course will be shared directly with the Association of Deer Management Groups.

6.0 Deer Management Plan

Update was provided by Colin McLean of Deer Consultancy Services. He reiterated the early origins of requiring deer management plans for each group, particularly quoting the document Scotland's Wild Deer, A National Approach, issued in 2014. This provided the basis for deer management in terms of meeting the public interest, of which 14 different aspects were identified.

The draft Deer Management Plan has now been prepared, circulated, and the Public Consultation exercise is underway.

FK asked what the remaining timeline is. Colin offered that 8th August will be the end of the Public Consultation period. It would then take two to three weeks after that to incorporate the public comment, with an end goal of 1st September for a second draft of the plan. Iain Hope agreed that that was a suitable timeline. The SNH re-assessment of the Group had been conducted by SNH in May. Some of the findings of the re-assessment require to be acknowledged within the Deer Management Plan.

Iain Hope went on to discuss the re-assessment carried out by SNH. Originally the Government had requested that this be carried out in 2013. Most were carried out in 2014 (the sub group 1 assessment being carried out in late 2015), and all assessments were now being repeated in 2016. Many groups have now produced Deer Management Plans and improved both group structure and communication, and that the trend was in the right direction overall. Iain Hope added that he believed that the repeat assessment would highlight priority areas for action. He emphasised population modelling and dynamics.

Colin McLean said that population modelling within sub area 1 had not worked. He believed that the modelling needed to be conducted on an East Grampian level, and not at sub area level. Ultimately this population modelling will assist in deciding cull levels.

It was discussed that there are other influence in terms of herbivore impact, such as mountain hares.

Iain Hope added that the Section 7 Control Agreement only covers the control of deer.

8.0 Finance

Deirdre Stewart provided a proposed split of costs for group members, in order to meet existing advisory fees.

It was agreed that member estates would be invoiced as follows:

- i) Each paying a basic charge of £200 towards preparation of the Deer Management Plan, splitting the remainder of the cost for the Deer Management Plan by area, secretarial costs to be split according to area, and a further £40 contribution from each member estate in order to provide a cash fund.
- ii) Deirdre Stewart added that a client account had been opened by CKD Galbraith, and money would be collected to that account, to permit payment of existing invoices.
- iii) It was explained that SNH funding for 50% of the Deer Management Plan can only be claimed once a receipted invoice is provided by Deer Consultancy Services.
- iv) The balance of contributions required to pay the final instalment for the Deer Management Plan will be invoiced upon completion.

9.0 Constitution – Appointment of Office Bearers

Deirdre Stewart explained that at an earlier working group meeting proposals had been made for office bearers. She now put these to the floor. Position of Chairman proposed to be Florian Kuhnle, the proposer being Major Gibb, and seconded by Andrew Gammell. Position of Vice Chairman proposed to be Bruce Cooper, proposed by Deirdre Stewart, and seconded by Andrew Gammell. Position of Secretary/Treasurer proposed to be Deirdre Stewart/CKD Galbraith, proposed by Bruce Cooper, and seconded by Florian Kuhnle.

Deirdre Stewart to prepare draft Constitution for circulation.

10.0 Date of Next Meeting

In context of both imminent completion of the Deer Management Plan, and requirement to have a Section 7 Steering Group meeting, it is proposed that a meeting be held during the week of 5th September. Deirdre Stewart to co-ordinate as necessary.