

**MINUTE OF THE EAST GRAMPIAN DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP SUB AREA 1
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 10th JUNE 2019 AT GLENISLA VILLAGE HALL 10AM**

PRESENT:	Doug McAdam, Chairperson
	Deirdre Stewart, Secretary/Treasurer
	Gary Coutts, Balmoral
	Richard Gledson, Balmoral
	Angus McNicol, Invercauld
	Ian Robertson, Auldallan
	Liam Donald, Glenshee
	Andrew Reid, Glencallater
	John Smith, Lednathie
	Andrew Ogilvy-Wedderburn, Auldallan
	Rob Mearns, Balintore
	Barclay Dougal, Lednathie and Balintore
	Andrew Gammel, Auchavan
	Bill Mearns, Tulchan
	Florian Kuhnle, Tulchan
	Brian Smith, Airlie West
	Nicholas Gibb, GlenIsla
	Mark Mitchell, Scottish Water Backwater/Lintrathen
	Kevin Peters, Forestry and Land Scotland

1.	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES	ACTION
	<p>Doug McAdam (DM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for asking him to be chair, a challenge he is delighted to accept. DM summarised existing circumstances as a difficult situation, high profile with the end of S7 looming and final SCL report still awaited. It is however a real opportunity to get DMG members back in the driving seat and produce an updated approach that will properly balance private and public interest. DM also provided details on his background, involvement with SNH & Scot Govt, estates and the deer sector, and Chair to Wild Deer Best Practice. DM explained the need to navigate a path through what could be a political minefield. DM stressed that this will not be a short-term fix and will require support and engagement from all DMG members as we develop a new long term Vision, approach and an updated Plan. Most crucially progress will demand a real commitment to deliver on actions and activity to be agreed together and signed up to. This is a collective challenge and we need to work together to get a positive outcome.</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Hugh Niven, Wayne Johnston and Bruce Cooper.</p>	
2a	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	
	<p>The meeting was recognised and agreed as being an Annual General Meeting for the East Grampian Deer Management Group Sub Area 1. It was also agreed that this meeting was to recognise the formal restructuring of the formal East Grampian Deer Management Group Sub Area 1, to be administered under a new name, constitution and appointments from hereon.</p>	
2b	APPOINTMENTS	
	<p>i – Chair</p> <p>Deirdre Stewart (DS) explained that the proposal to appoint Doug McAdam as independent Chairman for the new Group had been explained and circulated to all Group members previously. This had been given unanimous approval. Formal appointment was made by:</p> <p>Proposer – Richard Gledson Secunder – Florian Kuhnle</p>	
	<p>ii – Vice Chair</p> <p>Doug McAdam explained that Bruce Cooper had sat in the position of Vice Chair up to now. It was proposed that he continue in that role.</p> <p>Proposer – Angus McNicol Secunder – Richard Gledson</p>	

	<p>iii – Secretary/Treasurer Doug McAdam proposed that Deirdre Stewart continue to fulfil the role of Secretary/Treasurer.</p> <p>Proposer – Florian Kuhnle Seconder – Nicholas Gibb</p>	
2c	ACCOUNTS	
	<p>i – Statement of Accounts Deirdre Stewart presented the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. This reflected the Group costs, mainly being Galbraith Secretarial/Treasurer costs and technical support to Deer Consultancy Services. Member contributions are gathered as income for group funds.</p>	
	<p>ii – Draft Budget DS presented a draft budget for 2019/2020. The draft budget was approved by the Group.</p> <p>DM thereafter raised the fact that a further draft budget for specific project funding would be prepared to cover the additional costs for the procuring and developing of a revised Group Plan. This will cover third party costs of consultants, project management etc. DM will be looking to secure funding partners for this so that the burden is not borne by just the DMG members.</p>	<p>DS</p> <p>DM</p>
2d	CONSTITUTION	

<p>A draft constitution for the new Group had been circulated prior to the meeting. There was some discussion on the former Group boundary, and that for the Section 7. DS explained that within the existing Deer Management Plan there remains an action point for the Group to continually seek to amend the boundary and continually incorporate new Members where appropriate. SNH had been asked to provide information on landholdings particularly to the south-west that were submitting cull returns, and therefore should be appropriate members to the Group.</p>	<p>Follow up with SNH on new membership</p>
<p>It was thereafter agreed that the Group should be named the South Grampian Deer Management Group. All paperwork will be amended to reflect this.</p>	<p>DS</p>
<p>Deirdre Stewart to add Invercauld (Glenshee) to the Member list within the Constitution.</p>	<p>DS</p>
<p>DM went on to explain that in order to be effective in our delivery of the existing DMP, but crucially also to help drive forward the development of a new approach and updated DMP, we would like to appoint an Executive Steering Group (ESG). A specific agreed remit for this group will be worked up as well as rules as to how it will operate, but essentially it will be a group of DMG members which reflect the diverse nature of interests of the Group. They will have the delegated authority of the whole DMG and this will allow us to make progress with the job in hand. As well as helping work up and procure the new updated DMP, the ESG will also have a role in monitoring progress in delivery of the DMP and driving forward progress and collaborative action across the Group.</p> <p>Although DM will lead on the issues of communications, Scot Govt agency liaison and political engagement for the group, he would look to the ESG to inform his position and provide support as needed.</p> <p>As it will be crucial for the wider DMG to be kept updated of the work of the ESG and to provide input, DM proposed that each member of the ESG would adopt several other fellow DMG member estates and be responsible for on-going liaison with them – effectively a buddy system. This way the network should function and communicate well.</p> <p>Members proposed for the ESG through previous discussion are: Tulchan, Invercauld, Balmoral, Glen Isla, Glen Clova and Glen Prosen. SNH will also be represented, with representation requested at the appropriate decision making level. Both DM and DS will also sit on the ESG, with DM as Chair.</p> <p>The meeting approved appointment of the Executive Steering Group as proposed.</p> <p>ESG meetings are anticipated to be held at least every two months, maybe monthly initially.</p>	<p>DM, DS</p>

2e	EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP	
	<p>DM briefly revisited the proposal for the Group to have an Executive Steering Group to stress that the ESG would have delegated executive decision-making powers on behalf of the entire Group.</p> <p>SNH will also sit on the Group. The Group will have responsibility to establish requirements of new plan, the budget, appointments and procurements of the plan.</p> <p>Appointment of the Executive Steering Group was agreed.</p>	DM, DS
3.	SEASON 2018/2019	
	<p>Members approved the cull figures previously circulated, with one amendment made to the Bachnagairn hind cull.</p> <p>NG said that there had been good collaboration between Group Members. Angus McNicol also welcomed the collaboration and said that this must be encouraged.</p> <p>Florian Kuhnle said that this season had seen the best level of collaboration for many years, but it has never been recognised as having happened in such an institutional way, as it had this past season.</p> <p>Colin McLean (CM) raised the relative cost of this huge cull, which he compared to being only 50 less beasts than the last Deer Commission for Scotland cull. He felt it important to note that this cull in the public interest was delivered without public funding. There was general agreement on this point.</p>	

4.	FUTURE PLANNING AND DELIVERY – SEASON 2019/2020	
	<p>a. SNH Assessment</p> <p>DM introduced the SNH Assessment exercise, which he sat in on with Deirdre and Colin. DM stated that while it was not a perfect process, it is extremely useful and enables us to track our performance on key areas we should be measuring ourselves on and which others do measure us on. It was also explained that the results are viewed across the sector and so poor performance can pull the whole sector down. Equally, improving performance can lift the sector.</p> <p>DS provided an overview of the ADMG and SNH (criteria to deliver public interest) assessments carried out at the beginning of May 2019.</p> <p>A copy of the final Assessment and analysis will be sent to SNH and ADMG.</p>	DS to circulate assessments and analysis
	<p>b. Strath Caulaidh Report</p> <p>DM reported that both SNH, and the Group still await publication of the full report by Strath Caulaidh, upon the survey work carried out in 2018. DM is liaising with SNH on aspects of the expected report and has asked about availability of data sets/mapping etc from the report. DM also provided the political background to the importance of publication of this report this summer. Kevin Peters asked about the future requirement to have to revisit the Strath Caulaidh survey work in the future. An important point given it brings in new methodology and techniques to what has gone before.</p>	

c. 2019/2020

i - Population Modelling

CM presented his draft data, as per the report circulated:-

His paper provided two scenarios for forecasting the population, with the base line being the SNH count from January 2018, and cull and mortality data thereafter, and foot count carried out in Spring 2019. Using different calving rates, the resultant deer densities were predicted.

The deer density represented by the Spring 2019 foot count is considerably lower than the population model predicts at 9.7 deer per sq km, vs 16.1 or 16.7 deer per sq km, as predicted by the scenarios 1 and 2 respectively. There was some discussion upon suitable timing for a count and also subsequently on the proposals for North Clova to be incorporated as a Group member.

ii – Helicopter Count

James Gammell raised what is done to account for deer over the boundary, when a count is carried out and made a plea for cross boundary liaison to mitigate risks of this. We need to be able to get a full picture and data to be able to validate the population. Nick Gibb said we ought to still push for a winter count. James Gammell asked if we could not appeal to neighbouring groups to count at the same time. Andrew Reid asked that time not be spent doing keeper pickups on the day, to keep the helicopter moving. DM sought and received agreement from the Group that the count should be planned and executed in the most efficient and effective way. There was discussion on the merits of a summer versus winter count. Angus MacNicol said that on the back of the early Strath Caulaidh data implicating summer impacts, we need to understand summer densities. Bill Mearns also appealed for a later count, for example in October. DM said that it was important to obtain the best data we can to inform the current position and to plan this winter hind cull. DM would liaise with SNH and bring this back to the ESG.

	<p>iii – Habitat Impact Assessment Work CM has been undertaking individual Estate HIA work. Barclay Dougal reported that their work revealed impacts from sheep. Nicolas Gibb reported that their impacts identified 2018 grazing, so he considered this to be before the higher mortality and culls of 2018/2019.</p> <p>iiii – Deer Movements There was general consensus that the movement of deer is something we need to understand better. DM stressed it was important that we understood this as best we could and had a consensus. The proposal was raised to tag calves. Kevin Peters agreed that we need to understand movements and so tagging calves would be very worthwhile and would also demonstrate how much we are trying to understand deer patterns. CM reported that it is a very labour intensive exercise but that you can gain very valuable data. General consensus was that this should be built into the future plan.</p> <p>v – Stag Cull DS gathered everybody’s proposed stag cull numbers. James Gammell then asked if the stag cull is actually feasible once we considered Colin McLean’s population model. We need to be able to generate a sustainable stag cull, taking into account individual Estate objectives and stocking income. The stag cull would therefore be considered as a proposal at this time and revisited in due course. DM raised the matter of collaboration between individual Estates and cited the example of the potential to share larders.</p> <p>vi - Hind Cull it was generally agreed that it would be hard to sustain the 2018/2019 cull level, but a maintenance cull is likely to be important (everybody agreed). Nicholas Gibb asked if everybody present is at all willing to change their stag cull proposals. Angus MacNicol felt that the proposed stag cull numbers were sustainable.</p>	<p>To be revisited for tagging of calves to be revisited.</p>
	<p>d. Political Update/ADMG DM provided a report on the current politic arena surrounding deer management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNH Assessment Report & Use of Powers Review – September 2019 • Deer Working Group – been delayed – September 2019 • Werrity Review into Moorland Management – September 2019 • Our Section 7 – November 2019 	

	<p>e. New/Updated Deer Management Plan Process The Group have now approved appointment of the Executive Steering Group. The Group will drive the development and monitor the delivery of the Plan, provide a budget for building the Plan and collaborate widely within the Group. The ESG will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work up scope and budget for updating plan and approach • Monitor and drive delivery • Facilitate collaborative actions – culls, counts, tagging, peatland restoration etc • Provide reference and support for Chair • Project management by Deirdre 	
	<p>f. Competence/Best Practice DM, as chair of WDBP, updated the Group on the current work of WDBP and advised that the suite of Guides are currently being reviewed and updated where appropriate.</p>	
	<p>g. Website DM reminded those present that the Group has it's own dedicated website (hosted on the Association of Deer Management Groups website). It is the intention of the Group that this portal be used more widely in the future for presentation of Group documents. Group members are invited to contribute to this hosting of information, including links to independent Estate web sites.</p>	
	<p>h. Forestry DM stressed the importance of sharing any Estate plans for afforestation and harvesting works, given both the difficulties and opportunities posed by forest restructuring, and influences upon deer.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p>	
	<p>James Gammel raised the associated costs for the running of the Group and asked how these would be split. DS explained that in the past Group costs have been split either by Estate area, or evenly. Bill Mearns believed that the costs should be split on the basis of cull. Richard Gledson commented that other Groups use the area-based proposal. Barclay Dougal suggested that we model both ways either on area, and cull, and opt for a mid-point. DM said that sounded like a valid and pragmatic approach and we would look at it.</p>	
	<p>Finally Florian Kuhnle asked for meeting dates for the Executive Steering Group to be proposed as soon as possible.</p>	<p>DS</p>