

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Glenmoriston Deer Management Group

Held at Glenmoriston Millenium Hall, Invermoriston

on Wednesday 15th March 2017 at 7pm

Present

Martin Girvan	DMG Chair. Ceannacroc
Lynda Campbell	DMG Treasurer, Corrielaire
Linzi Seivwright	DMG Secretary
Steven Gray	Glenmoriston
Alan Common	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Jimmy Gibb	Balmacaan
Sinclair Coghill	SNH
Wat Forbes	Corrimony
Russell Cooper	Forest Enterprise

1. Apologies

Alison McKnight	Consultant
Doug Gilbert	Dundreggan, Trees for Life
Simon Mclaughlin	RSPB Corrimony
Mike Toms	Community Representative
Steven Miller	Achlain

2 Draft Minutes of Meeting of held on November 30th 2016

The Draft Minutes (Paper 2017/1a) were discussed and an issue was raised regarding a discussion held at the last meeting and the subsequent minuting of this discussion. The issue related to a report provided by the Chairman of Affric and Kintail under 10.2, in which a Member expressed concern that the Minutes had not fully captured the detail of the discussion. As the Affric and Kintail DMG Chair was not present to provide clarity, it was agreed that the Minutes could not therefore be signed off and that the matter would be discussed at the next meeting.

To avoid future misunderstanding, it was agreed by the Group that:

- Ad verbatim minutes would not be taken but that the Secretary would seek to capture a summary of the overall discussion and note any actions or points arising from the discussion;
- That if Members wish **not** to have a point/comment/discussion captured in the Minutes, they must make it clear at the time; and
- Comments and points captured in the minutes would not generally be attributed unless otherwise specifically requested by a Member at the time.

3 Matters Arising from Meeting held on November 30th 2016

Matters arising (Paper 2017/1b) were discussed.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
4.1 DMG to send written response to SNH regarding the use of South Ross deer count figures in the Deer Review	LS	Actioned
5.1 Main plan updated	AM	Actioned under Agenda Item 5
5.3 Working plan put together and work schedule circulated to Group	LS	Discussed under Agenda Item 8
5.4 Version control and page numbers added	AM	Actioned under Agenda Item 5
5.5 Wording in Constitution amended	LS	Actioned under Agenda Item 6
6.0 List of expenditure drawn up and subscriptions issue to Group	LS/LC	Discussed under Agenda Item 8
9. Chair of Affric and Kintail to speak to Forest Enterprise and Wester Guisachan added to circulation list/DMG invitation to attend meetings.	WF	Actioned January 2017

The Group asked about the outcome of the meeting between Affric and Kintail DMG and Forest Enterprise held in January 2017. As the Chair of the DMG was not present, LS as Secretary of Affric and Kintail DMG provided a short update on some areas that will be explored with A&K DMG namely:

- Opportunities to maximise In-Season shooting of stags and hinds should be further explored by the Group, including opportunities to share shooting across boundaries with neighbours. The current FE contract for deer management within the DMG area is due to expire in October 2018. To allow time for any procurement process to be implemented (if that is the selected course of action), FE will be actively reviewing the current arrangements and exploring options for the future management to be concluded by December 2017. There are several possible models from contract culling to a permission or part season -permission, and accompanied stalking Should the deer management go out to tender for the permission or contract , any applicants would have to be suitably qualified with a proven track record of managing deer.
- Further discussion is required with the DMG and neighbouring properties of FE to discuss on-going management of hinds. This could have the benefit of creating space elsewhere and potentially drawing stags away from South Affric during the winter.

It was asked whether notification of future A&K DMG meetings and an invitation to attend could be extended to all Glenmoriston DMG Group members. LS indicated that the next meeting would be held in April with date and time to be agreed.

4. Election of Office Bearers

The Group were asked for nominations for roles of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. In light of no other nominations having come forward, the Group agreed to reappoint Martin Girvan as Chair, Linzi Seivwright as Secretary and Lynda Campbell as Treasurer.

5. Deer Management Plan Sign Off

The Chair updated the Group on the status of plan and indicated that Ali McKnight had put in a tremendous amount of extra work to address some of the gaps in the plan identified at the DMG Assessment and also to restructure and reformat the plan slightly to help make it easier to use. The Chair wished to acknowledge

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the hard work and dedication of AM in getting the plan to this stage. Hard copies had been printed and were distributed at the meeting.

The Group agreed to formally sign off the plan but it was also agreed that the Plan should be seen as a working document and that should any further amendments be required, these could be raised and changes agreed at future meetings.

6. DMG Constitution

The Draft Constitution (Paper 20017/2) was formally adopted by the Group subject to a minor amendment under Section 12 (removal of reference to Auditor).

7. Culls, recruitment counts 2016/17 & Public Interest

7.1 Cull targets and reporting. There followed discussion about whether the cull targets in the plan should relate just to hinds as it was leading to too much confusion to have a joint Hind and Calf Target. The Group agreed that moving forwards, cull targets would be set simply as Stags and Hinds and that no target would be set for calves specifically. In terms of reporting, all members were asked to report on:

- Red Deer (stags, hinds & calves)
- Sika (stags, hinds & calves)
- Roe (bucks, does & kids)
- Any feral pigs/boar shot.

Action DMG members

7.2 Cull updates 2016/2017. The following cull updates were received.

Property	Cull Target (Plan)		Actual 2016/17 (as of March 2017)			Roe	Sika	Sika	Feral Pigs
	Stags	Hinds	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Bucks	Stags	Hinds	
Corrielaire	20	50 (Hinds plus calves)	18	45	19	0	0	0	0
Ceannacroc	31	50 (Hinds plus calves)	31	36	14	0	0	0	0
Wester Guisachan	31	50	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tomcrasky	31	50	25	6	0	0	0	0	0
Balnacarn	7	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	151	73	42	14	0	0	0	0
Dunreggan	25	50 (Hinds plus calves)	18	33	15	0	5	2	0
Hilton	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corrimony	10	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corrimony (Girvan)	10	10 (Hinds plus calves)	8	7	3	0	0	0	0
Glenmoriston	35	45	38	41	17	1	0	1	8
Balmacaan	35	40	45	40	9	0	0	0	0
Total	120	160	109	121	44	1	5	3	8

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7.2 Population Models. The Group discussed the purpose of Population Models (included in the plan) and it was agreed that the count conducted in 2016 should provide a good baseline. Given that annual foot counts would not be possible across the whole Group LS asked if members could provide information on Recruitment counts carried out in March/early April where the number of hinds/calves are counted in sample groups. It was agreed that once all information had been collected from the Group on Counts, LS would update the population models in order that hind culls could be agreed at the next DMG meeting in August.

Action LS

7.3 Setting of Culls for 2017/2018. The Group agreed that the stag targets for 2017/18 would remain as last year but that hind numbers would be agreed at the meeting scheduled for August.

7.4 Future DMG Density Targets. The subject of overall population density targets for the whole DMG was discussed in relation to updating the population models. It was noted that the current number of stags counted within the DMG area during a winter/spring count was in theory unlikely to sustain the overall harvest required by the Group however, it was agreed that stag movements were difficult to quantify and likely to be considerable both across the Group and throughout the South Ross area as a whole. The issue of hind numbers across the Group was discussed and it was suggested that where hind numbers are too high, this could lead to stags being displaced. The issue of habitat type was discussed with hinds tending to prefer different vegetation types to stags. Some in the Group argued that hind numbers weren't high enough and needed to be maintained or even increased to attract/produce stags. The issue of natural shelter was raised and Forest Enterprise were asked if they would be likely to open up woodlands specifically for deer shelter. FE responded that this was unlikely as they would prefer to see a better balance between deer and habitats outside of fences, however gave recognition to the fact that once many of the Woodland Schemes come to maturity throughout the DMG area, these will be a great habitat for deer in future.

8. Glenmoriston DMG Schedule, Costs & Subscriptions

The Group discussed the paper tabled at the meeting (Paper 2017/3), which had been prepared by LS and which set out the roles and responsibilities of the Chair and the Secretary, a detailed Schedule for the Group of anticipated actions and meetings and finally a breakdown of the subscriptions required from members. LS apologised to the Group for the delay in getting the previous meetings minutes out and agreed that she would get minutes out as soon as possible following the meeting (ideally by the end of the week). The Group agreed that the next meeting should be scheduled for August (16th at 7pm) and that this meeting would be used to agree hind culls.

9. Habitat Impact Assessment

The Group noted the paper on Habitat Impact Assessment methodology (Paper 2017/4). The issue of Habitat Monitoring had been raised at the recent ADMG AGM and this was now a priority for all Groups to undertake as soon as possible. Following the monitoring conducted by Alan Boulton in 2013, which set up 27 baseline plots across 7 properties across the DMG, the Group agreed that it would be useful to repeat this exercise this summer with the addition of new members. The issue of who should be responsible for conducting the monitoring was discussed with some properties wishing to carry out their own, whilst others felt that it would be useful to have an independent consultant to do the work. The Group agreed that SNH to be approached to see what funding might be available and if the Group is able to access this, the Group would approach a consultant to carry out the work.

Action: LS

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10. Treasurer's Report

LC provided an update on current funds £605.66 in the bank as of 15/3/17 with the only expenditure of £25 for the hire of all hall incurred since the last meeting.

The Group discussed the break-down of subscriptions and agreed that in addition to the subscriptions for each member which were based purely on actual culls (£3 per stag and £1.50 per hind/calf) an additional sum of £135 be asked for from each member to cover the Secretariat and additional expenses such as the website and the recent updates to the plan, the cost of which was unknown. This was agreed.

The issue of subscriptions from Forest Enterprise was raised and it was agreed that subscriptions would be sought to be included in the 2016/2017 contribution to ADMG (which is calculated from the 2015/2016 cull).

Action: LS and FE

It was agreed that at the moment only the areas of Port Clare and Altsigh would be included/covered until further boundaries for the DMG could be agreed. There was discussion about the inclusion of Achlain and additional areas being included to the DMG boundary and it was agreed that a third sub-population area could be formed to include Inverwick (part of Glenmoriston Estate), Achlain and Port Clare. The Group also agreed that MG should meet with WF and FE to clarify and agree DMG boundaries moving forward.

Action: MG, WF and FE

11. SNH Update

SNH updated the Group on the outcome of the SNH Review and the Work Programme of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, who has recently taken evidence from a range of stakeholders on Deer Management. The Committee are due to report to the Environment Minister in the next couple of months with recommendations.

The Group were informed that it would be likely that SNH would be looking to carry out a repeat DMG Assessment in 2 years' time, when DMGs will be expected to demonstrate how they are delivering on their plans. In the meantime, SNH as an organisation are getting smaller with fewer resources available. The main source of funding for Group in the future would likely be the Environmental Cooperation Action Fund (ECAAF) which will hopefully be available at the end of 2017. In the meantime, SNH had been given £175 k for the coming year to support deer management however, it was unclear as yet how those funds would be allocated. The Group were advised that the latest window for AECS Moorland Management applications would only be open until the end of March 2017.

12. ADMG Update

LC provided an update on the recent ADMG AGM where the need for Groups to undertake Habitat Monitoring had been emphasised. Topics such as Sporting Rates had also been discussed and ADMG were advising all those submitting applications to make it clear if they were part of a DMG with an active Deer Management Plan that has been endorsed by SNH and to challenge/appeal charges regardless. The topic of Peatland Restoration was discussed and it was noted that not only are there considerable funds for this work available from SNH through the Peatland Action Fund (£9m) but also grants for woodland creation had also been improved and had been significantly increased both for payments and fencing costs.

13. Affric and Kintail DMG Update

LS indicated that the DMG would be meeting in April (date, time and venue to be confirmed).

Action: LS

14. Any Other Business

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The issue of frequency of helicopter counting was discussed. SNH indicated that their programme tended to count every 5 years, but that other members of South Ross (Glen Strathfarrar and Affric and Kintail) had made a commitment to count in 2019. Given the level of deer movement across the South Ross area, the Group were encouraged to think about also counting in 2019 to provide a wider picture of deer densities.

It was agreed that a copy of the DMP should be sent to the Community Council.

Action: MG

15. Date of Next Meeting

August 16th at 7pm in the Millenium Hall. Invermoriston.

Summary of Action Points

<i>Action</i>	<i>Who</i>
7.1 Cull figures for all species to be provided and cull targets for hinds only to be agreed	DMG Members
7.2 Working plan put together including updated culls and revised population models	LS
9. Opportunities for funding for Habitat Monitoring for the Group to be explored	LS
10. Cull figures for FE for 2015/16 to be calculated	LS & FE
10. Chairs of Glenmoriston and Affric & Kintail to meet with FE to agree boundaries	MG, WF & FE
13. Details of the next Affric and Kintail DMG meeting to be confirmed.	LS
14. Hard copy of DMP to be sent to Community Council	MG