

M I N U T E S

**of the ANNUAL MEETING of the
EAST SUTHERLAND DEER
MANAGEMENT GROUP held at
GOLSPIE INN, GOLSPIE on FRIDAY
29th October 2010 at 2.15 pm**

Present:	Mr C Whealing	Sutherland (Chairman)
	Mr P Voy	Bell Ingram (Secretary)
	Mr & Mrs V Ryan	Dalnessie
	Mr A Mackay	Dalnessie
	Mr I Smith	Dunrobin
	Mr A Murray	Lairg
	Sir Michael Wigan	Borrobol
	Mr J MacDonald	Borrobol
	Mr A Robertson	Clebrig
	Ms R Stickland	Clebrig
	Mr J McMorrان	Balnacoil
	Lord Joicey	Loch Choire
	Mr N Mackay	Loch Choire
	Mr T Chetwynd	Loch Choire
	Mr B Lyall	Badanloch
	Mr J Cruickshanks	Benarmine
	Mr R Rowantree	Gordonbush
	Mr A Grant	Kildonan
	Mr R Bain	Torrish
	Mr W Lamont	FES
	Mr D Macaskill	FES
In Attendance:	Mr S Coghill	SNH
	Mr R Rose	SNH

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr J Nicholson, Clebrig and Lord Strathnaver, Sutherland.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30th OCTOBER 2009

Minutes of the meeting held on 30th October 2009 were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Radio hire for the deer count had cost £400. It was suggested that radios might be borrowed from SNH if sufficient notice could be given.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Secretary summarised the financial statement. Subscription income was up from £5,736 in 2009 to £6,306 in the current year. Expenditure was significantly up on the previous year, mainly due to management and expenses which had increased from £2,541.88 in 2009 to £4,252.75 in the current year. The secretary explained that this was mainly due to the pre and post count Spring meetings, the habitat demonstration day and the extra habitat meeting in September. The Secretary was asked to produce a breakdown of the management fees and expenses.

6. CULLS AND COUNT 2007/ 2008

The cull and count information was circulated and discussed. It was suggested that the last SNH helicopter count had been an anomaly. Sinclair Coghill said that while a count is only a snap shot and may not always be accurate in terms of deer distribution, nonetheless regular counting does highlight trends in the deer population. Several members indicated that they had been satisfied with the SNH count on their ground.

On the question of cost, Sinclair said that, since there were several designated sites in the East Sutherland area, 70p/ha/annum is available from SRDP which could be used towards counting/monitoring. He said that applying for this grant would not put the sites under any further scrutiny. Applications had to come from owners, not the Group. Where a deer population is shared with a designated site, the owner of adjacent non-designated land could still apply using the Group's Deer Management Plan as the justification.

It was agreed that the Spring 2011 count be carried out on the same basis as the previous year and that the mechanics of the operation be discussed at a pre-count meeting.

7. ADOPTION OF DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

It had been agreed at the special September meeting that adoption of the Deer Management Plan be proposed at this Annual Meeting. Consequently, Lord Joicey moved that the Plan be adopted and this was seconded by Sir Michael Wigan. The Chairman pointed out that, although the DMP was now adopted, he was still happy to take any comments on it from SNH.

8. SNH UPDATE

Sinclair said that Craikaig was planting a new fenced woodland which it was hoped would reduce the number of deer getting onto the A9. Sinclair's view was that there would still be a requirement to shoot more deer otherwise the fencing would simply export the deer problem to an adjacent part of the road. SNH were talking to Morvich and Cambusmore estates about deer numbers affecting the Mound Alderwoods which were in unfavourable condition due to browsing and trampling. Sinclair confirmed that only the Mound and Craikaig situations were currently being followed up by SNH. There had been no complaints about deer from Community Councils, etc within the area.

9. ADMG

The Secretary said that ADMG were looking for the Group to support the proposal for a 1p/kg levy on venison to support the marketing work of the Venison Working Group. Following discussion, it was agreed that it was not the function of the Group to offer such support. It was agreed that ADMG should instead invite support from individual owners. It was felt that government agencies should be aware that owners are having to fund DMPs, habitat assessment, etc against a background where deer bi-product money had disappeared and the venison price was more or less unchanged over the years.

10. HABITAT ASSESSMENT

For SNH, Ronald Rose summarised how a practical system of habitat assessment and associated data collection could be set up. This would target designated sites and would seek to cover the basic habitat types most prone to deer impact with a minimum of 30 plots for each habitat type. May-June was the recommended time for carrying out these assessments. Individuals must have the confidence that they can select the representative habitat types. It was suggested that, within the 5-year life of the DMP, all sites should be monitored twice. There should be another training day in the third week in May.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

With reference to 6 above, it was agreed to hold a post-cull/pre-count meeting in early March.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 4:15pm.

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PV/ESDMG/2
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