

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

EAST SUTHERLAND DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP held at BEN BHRAGGIE HOTEL,
GOLSPIE on MONDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2013 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Mr A Mackay	Dalnessie	Sir Michael Wigan	Borrobol
Mr I Smith	Dunrobin	Mr A Leslie	Rimsdale
Ms R Stickland	Clebrig	Mr J McMorran	Balnacoil
Lord Joicey	Loch Choire	Mr N Mackay	Loch Choire
Mr T Chetwynd	Loch Choire	Mr J Cruickshanks	Ben Armine
Mr R Rowantree	Gordonbush	Mr R Seaman	Tressady
Mr J C Billett	Kintradwell	Mr B Colvin	Kintradwell
Mr P Bakker	Vagastie	Mr N Mackay	SSER
Ms E Ahart	SSER	Mr G Symmers	Balnacoil
Mr L Nicol	Tressady	Mr P Bakker	Vagastie
Mr P Voy	Sutherland Estates (Chairman)	Ms M Robertson	FCS
Mrs E Cameron	Sutherland Estates (Secretary)		

In Attendance:

Mr S Coghill	SNH	Ms Linzi Seivwright	SNH
Mr D Patterson	SNH	Fran Michelmore Root	Consultant

1. WELCOME

Peter Voy welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Andrew Leslie, Rimsdale Forest, Richard Seaman, Tressady, Linzi Seivwright, SNH and Fran Michelmore Root, Consultant

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr J Nicholson, Clebrig; Mr & Mrs V Ryan, Dalnessie Mr B Lyall. Badenloch

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2012 were circulated. Any changes to be notified to Chairman or Secretary.

4. MATTERS ARISING

None

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The current account balance is £394.00. A full financial statement was not available as the transfer of the bank account from Bell Ingram to Sutherland Estates is still on going. A financial statement update will be sent when this has been completed.

5. CULLS AND COUNT 2012/13

Figures indicate there is a general increase in hind numbers (but not in all areas).

Peter Voy suggested each area should consider their numbers and look to increase the cull of hinds. Sinclair Coghill told the group there was a "Population Density Management Tool" for deer on the SNH website.

6. HABITAT MONITORING

Linzi Seivwright said that ESDMG has been selected for a potential pilot scheme for an integrated map based Habitat Monitoring scheme. Fran Michelmore Root gave a presentation on how the monitoring and data capture could be achieved in a practical way based on work she is doing in Africa. SNH & ADMG have asked her to look at how this could work with here using the data that has been collected from the habitat monitoring from 2 or 3 estates. Badanloch has offered their data for this. Loch Choire, Clebrig and Gordonbush also have some data.

7. WINDFARM

Various windfarms proposed in the ESDMG area: Dalnessie, Gordonbush, Balnacoil, Kilbruar some still at the consultation stage.

Richard Seaman pointed out that the windfarm at Tressady is separate from Tressady Sporting Ltd which he represents.

8. WOODLAND DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman introduced Andrew Leslie representing Rimsdale Estate which is owned by Summerleaze Ltd. This is a renewable based company with an emphasis on timber production. The company own three woodlands in Scotland and four in Devon. They have produced a Deer Management Plan as part of their Forest Plan. While they are committed to controlling deer as part of woodland management, they were happy for this to be achieved through a sporting lease. They had advertised the Sporting Lease for the ground on the open market but had no response from neighbouring estates. The lease is held by a local tenant. Deer would only be culled within the woodland not on the open range. They are repairing/replacing fences. The fence along the Badanloch- Syre boundary does need replaced around the restock area. Mr Leslie stressed that they wanted to be good neighbours and he is willing to discuss any part of the plan for the area with anyone. He will send a copy of their DMP to Peter Voy to circulate to group members.

9. ADMG/SNH

Linzi is on the executive committee of ADMG and is closely involved with the ADMG/SNH Joint Collaborative Deer Management Project which aims to achieve an effective voluntary approach to deer management within the two year timeframe set by government. Linzi is also involved with DMG assessments which look at how individual DMGs are performing against the DMG Benchmark. To this end, she will be contacting ESDMG at some point to carry out an assessment.

Robbie Rowantree stressed the need for land owners to be able to prove compliance with the Code of Practice for Deer Management whilst this was still voluntary. The need to include other interested parties including farmers, crofters, local councillors etc. was discussed.

10. AOCB

Sinclair Coghill mentioned a proposal to bring the area between south Strathfleet and the Kyle of Sutherland into a deer management area, possibly as a sub group of ESDMG. Sinclair is to keep in touch with Peter Voy regarding how this might be taken forward.

Date of next meeting - TBA