

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

EAST SUTHERLAND DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP held at GOLSPIE INN, GOLSPIE

22 OCTOBER 2015 at 2.00pm

Present:

Mr J McMorrان	Balnacoil	Mrs & Mrs V Ryan	Dalnessie
Ms R Stickland	Clebrig	Mr B Colvin	Kintradwell
Ms M Robertson	Forestry Commission	Mr M Grant	Kildonan
Mr R Rowantree	Gordonbush	Mr J Urquhart	Dunrobin
Mr A Mackay	Dalnessie	Mr A Grant	Kildonan
Mr L Hague	Gordonbush	Mr P Bakker	Altnaharra
Mr J Billett	Kintradwell	Lord Joicey	Loch Choire
Mr R Seaman	Tressady/Goldsmith & Co	Sir Michael Wigan	Borrobol
Mr G Symmers	Balnacoil	Mr T Clover	Savills
Mr J Cruickshanks	Ben Armine	Mr T Chetwynd	Loch Choire/Savills
Mr V Clements	Potential DMP Author	Mr D Patterson	SNH
Mr P Voy	Sutherland Estates (Chairman)	Ms H Deary	SNH

In attendance:

1. WELCOME

Peter Voy welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ms E Cameron ([secretary] Sutherland Estates); Mr A Nicholson (Clebrig); Mr N Mackay (Loch Choire); Mr B Lyall (Badanloch).

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2014 were circulated by email prior to the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 Mr R Seaman reported that Tressady Wind Farm has no connection to Tressady Estate.
- 4.2 A statement was read out from Andrew Lesslie, woodland manager for Rimsdale Forest, confirming their deer management policy.
- 4.3 A letter had been received from Andrew Nicholson, Clebrig concerning the cull and count between Vagastie and Clebrig and the relevance of their habitat assessment work which would be incorporated into the forthcoming DMP.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The current account balance is £5189.00.

Evelyn Cameron was having the financial statement prepared but it was not ready in time for the meeting.

6. ELECTION OF BEARERS

The Chairman reported that he would like to stand down and invited nominations for a new committee which was agreed as follows:

Chairman:	Mr T Chetwynd
Vice-Chairman:	Mr J McMorrان
Secretary:	Mr R Rowantree

It was agreed that the Committee would be elected on an annual basis and that a draft constitution would be circulated for adoption at the next meeting.

7. CULLS & COUNT 2014-15

It was noted that there was no identifiable change in the condition of stags and R Rowantree reported that hinds on Gordonbush had averaged 45kgs.

Discussion followed on the winter mortality suffered in the western half of the group in Winters 2009-10 and 2010-11.

8. DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

V Clements (VC) was introduced to the group and gave a presentation on the new Deer Management Plan (DMP) for ESDMG, summarised as follows:

- All 45 DMGs throughout Scotland are expected to have DMPs in place by June 2016. DMPs are expected to display transparency in the groups deer management objectives, provide for wider community involvement and deliver public interest where identified.
- Grant funding of 50% of agreed costs is available from SNH.
- Intended course of action by VC is to involve an experienced sub-contractor who would collect information from all estates in early 2016 to produce a draft DMP for consultation by Spring 2016. This would incorporate plans, population models and be put out to community councils within ESDMG as well as placed on the ESDMG website to invite wider consultation before being submitted to SNH for approval.
- VC would collect summary information and photographs to produce an ESDMG page on the ADMG website.
- Delivery of public objectives through measures such as long term forest plans, native woodland plans, North West Sutherland carbon storage, habitat monitoring would be identified and included with the DMP.
- Issues such as sustaining employment, RTAs, railway track deaths, immigration/emigration, crofter forestry schemes, displacement of deer, tree diseases and resultant forestry policy and sika hybridisation were all discussed in the DMP context.

9. SNH UPDATE

Holly Deary provided an update from SNH on the political situation in terms of RACCE, Land Reform, timeframes for production of the DMP and possible future lines of grant funding through ECAF.

10. AOCB

10.1 Robbie Rowantree requested that SNH circulate results of Site Condition Monitoring surveys to relevant landowners when available.

10.2 It was agreed that the Secretary would start producing a quarterly newsletter for electronic circulation amongst ESDMG members.

10.3 Lord Joicey proposed a vote of thanks on behalf of the group to Peter Voy for all he had achieved as Chairman of ESDMG.

11 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed to hold a meeting in Spring 2016 to take forward the deer management plan, date to be agreed.