

SOUTH WEST ROSS DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Monday, 7 May 2018, 10:30

Lodge, New Kelso

MINUTES

Present:

SM	Shaun Macdonald	(Conon Brae Farms, New Kelso) (Chair)
CM	Chris Mackenzie	(Achnashellach)
CH	Charlie Hill	(Glen Mhor)
DA	David Abraham	(Applecross)
NM	Neil Morrison	(Coulin)
SS	Simon Stewart	(Coulin)
KL	Kurt Larson	(Ardoch)
GP	Gillian Pattinson	(Lochcarron)
BS	Bill Stalker	(Lochcarron)
SC	Sinclair Coghill	(SNH)
TC	Tom Chetwynd	(Tullich)
AW	Iaision Hewitt	(Kinlochdamph)
TB	Troels Barvnhos	(Strathconon)
DM	Danny Mackie	(Strathconon)
BW	Bob Wilson	(Kinloch)
RM	Richard Munday	(Kinloch)
MP	Mark Pattinson	(Lochcarron)
LG	Louise Grey	(Ben Damph)
WF	William Fraser	(ADMG)
RC	Richard Curzon	(Tullich)
NW	Neil Wright	(Galbraith) (Secretary)

1. Welcome

SM welcomed all present to New Kelso.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Philip Smith (Coulin), Mark Adams, Malcom Willis, Russell Cooper (FCS), Terry Doe (Torridon & Kinlochewe Community Council), Hugh & Rosie Tollemache (Ben Shieldaig) and William Fooks (Fionnaraich).

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2017

Minutes agreed by all present as being a true reflection of the meeting.

4. Matters arising

To be dealt with through out the meeting.

5. Finance Update

MP commented at the year-end there was £345 left in the bank, but SNH had paid £1,800 which was to be used for training purposes and updating the DMP. SM noted that TC would put forward a proposal for an updated DMP.

6. Deer Management Plan Progress

TC ran through the background to the DMP and Professor Putman's plan. The Scottish Government identified short comings in the function of the DMG at the last review in 2016 but the DMG now starting to operate in a more satisfactory manner. The group will be re-assessed in spring 2019 and this will be part of the national DMG assessment. TC has been in discussion with SM regarding an update to the DMP and questionnaires were sent out three weeks ago.

TC ran through the results of the questionnaires and noted that the group have signed up to and adopted the existing DMP. It is proposed that there are four meetings a year, two with stalkers and two with owners. Further proposal to split the DMG into three sub-groups to improve management as all three groups have slightly different objectives. RM suggested that Ben Shildaig should be moved to group three due to boundary issues and deer movement coming into the woodland. It was agreed by all present that Ben Sheildaig would move to the West Sub-Group.

TC noted that the majority of decisions would still affect the whole group and there would not be three new DMGs.

TC commented that the DMG needs to update the population models and cull targets need to be agreed. TC proceeded to run through target culls for the three sub-groups.

SM noted that larder weights needed to be maintained and a protocol needed to be agreed. It was agreed that the weight should be measured with the head on but with the gralloch removed and weight to be recorded in Kg.

It was noted that the Central Sub-Group probably benefit from surplus stags moving in from the East Sub-Group given the stag cull of the former is not sustainable and if the east group decided to cull more it could cause issues. General discussion on cull rates was had.

SM suggested a helicopter count as it has been a bad year for survival, SC responded that it was unlikely SNH would fund the count as they only do them every five years. WF noted that some groups are doing them every three years and the cost is being spread-out in the subscriptions.

TC ran through Habitat Impact Assessment requirements and SNH have provided funding, training appears to be required. The potential to identify 180 HIA site over the DMG area was discussed. TC to organise training requirements with ongoing training commitment required.

WF noted that SQWV is important as the food standards agency is concerned that there is a risk from gut shot animals. Members were asked to consider not entering contaminated beasts into the food chain.

TC ran through the DMP update and proposed working plan with objectives being met but there is room for improvement with simple things like the minutes being lodged on the website.

SM thanked TC for all the work he had done to date and he asked the group to consider the cost of updating the plan and project managing it. SM proposed that the group be charged an equal rate to bring the plan up to date, with the estimated cost at £250 - 300 per estate. It was noted by the group that it has not been operating as well as it could and that data needs to be collated and analysed better.

SM suggested that if anyone has concerns regarding the plan or cost should speak to him. SM was to canvas members who were not present at the meeting regarding costs of the DMP. GP agreed to send reminders for deer counts and data to be sent to TC.

7. SNH Annual Cull returns

Discussed earlier.

8. Local Deer Issues

General discussion surrounding deer on crofts and lack of firearms available compared with historically. LG noted that the hill tracks have been repaired, but there is now evidence of mountain bike tracks. AG noted some bikers are doing repairs to tracks themselves.

9. Annual Cull Returns

Discussed earlier.

10. Any Other Business

GP commented that the DMG signs were stored and the estates should collect them. They were originally removed for wording reasons and should possibly be re-done. SM asked GP to send out the wording to the group and this should be included as an AGM agenda item.

SM suggested TC do a briefing note and send around the group. Meeting in August to discuss cull targets is recommend.

11. Date of next meeting

To be decided.

DRAFT