

By ZOOM on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 2pm.

### Present

Angus McNicol	Invercauld (Chairman)
Dr Linzi Seivwright	Caorann (Secretary)
Capt Mark Nicolson	Mar Estate
Arthur Fernie	Mar Estate
Ben Carter	Invercauld Home Beat
Will Reid	Invercauld
Richard Thomas	Invercauld
David Frew	Mar Lodge
Chris Murphy	Mar Lodge
Clive Meikle	Glenavon
Mary Bowman	Glenavon
Richard Greenlaw	Glenavon
Andrew Salvesen	Dinnet & West Tillypronie
Iain Wilkinson	Dinner & West Tillypronie
Edward Humphrey	Dinnet Estate
Stuart Jennings	RSPB
Mike Cottam	CNPA
Adam Smith	GCWT
Bruce Russell	GCWT

### Apologies

Richard Gledson	Delnadamp
Craig Barnett	Dinnet & West Tillypronie
Robin Leslie-Melville	Candacraig
Adrian Walker	Allargue
Iain Hope	Nature Scot

Item		Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Draft Minutes of Meeting of held on November 13<sup>th</sup> 2019</b>	
2.1	Minutes were approved by AM and seconded by MN.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising from Meeting held on November 13<sup>th</sup> 2019</b>	
3.1	<p><b>AP 1:</b> Minutes Uploaded and 2019 Report Circulated. LS reported that the website was up to date and asked for any photos and articles of interest from members.</p> <p><b>AP 2:</b> Data on Peatland Restoration. This is being done by CNPA and LS has had a discussion to get access to those data as soon as they become available.</p> <p><b>AP 3:</b> Mapping of deer movements and shelter to be done at the next meeting (Autumn). Covered under Agenda Item 8.</p> <p><b>AP 4:</b> Helicopter Count. In light of counts having been done in 2017 and 2019, CNPA have decided not to do a count in 2021. Group will make their own arrangement.</p> <p><b>AP 5:</b> Allargue to update at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>AP 6:</b> Training being undertaken and work completed by Colin Maclean. HIA to be covered under later Agenda Item.</p> <p><b>AP 7:</b> HIA report to be sent to MC.</p> <p><b>AP 8:</b> DVC App circulated.</p> <p><b>AP 9:</b> Cull data and larder records. LS indicated that there were a number of people who had indicated that they would be willing to share larder data and asked that information be sent to her directly if possible.</p>	LS

	<p><b>AP 10:</b> Population model target for Baddoch updated (30/6/20).  <b>AP 11:</b> Peatland data discussed with MC as per Action Point 2.  <b>AP 12:</b> Public meeting postponed until next year due to COVID-19.  <b>AP 13:</b> AM to prepare a press release on Peatland Restoration. MC to follow up with CNPA Peatland Officers for collated data on peatland restored.  <b>AP 14:</b> New Secretary appointed.</p>	
4.	<b>Working Plan</b>	
	<p>Plan started in 2016 and due to run out next year. Group will need to consider how to revise plan moving forward.</p> <p>LS took the meeting through the actions in the plan:</p> <p><b>Inter-DMG Issues:</b> Mar Lodge not now aware of any issues to the west. DF happy that issues are between the other two Groups. LS and MC happy to work together to keep an overview of any potential inter-group issues.</p> <p><b>Designated Sites, Peatlands and Woodlands:</b> LS to circulate a list of information required. Members to provide any updated on the situation with Designated Sites, woodlands and any completed or planned peatland projects.</p> <p><b>Woodlands:</b> Mar Lodge - Covid has impacted monitoring on Mar Lodge but woodland doesn't appear to have suffered significant damage. Group of about 250 stags up the top of Dubh Glen which seemed to be comfortable but have now disappeared. Woodland expansion mapping to be undertaken in 2021, (scheduled every 5 years) – identifies how much woodland creation has occurred. Results to be produced by next autumn.</p> <p>Invercauld- no additional measurement on woodland but a possible new area of woodland creation being considered at east end.</p> <p>Intern at CNPA mapping woodland and David Hetherington leading on project– MC to check if data could be provided to LS.</p> <p><b>Peatlands:</b> Projects that have already been started may be completed but unlikely that other projects in the pipeline will not now be completed. Uncertainty if these will now go ahead at all – will be due to funding.</p> <p>GWCT to provide details of AECS projects to the DMG.</p> <p>AM highlighted that there could be opportunities for private funding for peatland restoration in the future.</p> <p><b>Invasive species:</b> Report of 1 Sika stag shot on Mar Estate. FLS reported that 3 Sika hinds last winter in Strathdon seen on two separate occasions. Also sightings of individual Sika stags.</p> <p><b>Training:</b> Information is being updated and good record of high numbers of those with DSC Level 1 and Level 2.</p> <p><b>Access:</b> Invercauld has mapped hill tracks – to be tied in with the mapping exercise in the Autumn.</p> <p>Visitor survey about deer – CNPA has completed but couldn't incorporate any questions about deer.</p> <p>Estates to consider SQWV if they aren't already members of the scheme.</p>	<p><b>LS &amp; DMG Members</b></p> <p><b>MC</b></p> <p><b>AS</b></p>
5.	<b>Population Model</b>	

	<p>Useful to get complete return on Roe deer culls which seem to be increasing in the Group.</p> <p>Update of recruitment rates required to help inform the plan. Group to provide summer calving counts.</p> <p>Deer movements are important to understand moving forward – mapping exercise to look at deer movements and deer distribution – will look to do this in the autumn.</p> <p>Full helicopter count would be useful at the end of the plan to help gauge where we are. Aim will be to do a heli count at the end of the year – ideally Glenavon and Mar would also participate.</p> <p>All Estates reported that condition of hind in very good condition and either seeing plenty calves or high calving expected. Mar estate reported a high recruitment last year despite poor heather growth.</p> <p>Population model to be updated to include the March 2020 count figures and recirculated. Although the population model is on target overall, suggests that hind numbers may fall below target. LS also to forward project the model beyond 2021. Members agreed that it will be important to keep pressure on the hind cull to ensure that numbers don't build up.</p>	<p><b>DMG Members</b></p> <p><b>DMG Members</b></p> <p><b>LS</b></p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Cull Planning Programme and Venison</b>	
	<p>Members have provided proposed cull targets for 2020 -2021. Group reported that as far as possible every effort will be made to ensure that let stalking goes ahead as planned and that culls will be achieved regardless of any restrictions.</p> <p>It was noted that Corndavon, Allargue and Delnadamph have all noted very low numbers of deer – to be kept under review.</p> <p>There was a discussion about venison collection restrictions and low venison prices. ADMG are in discussion about possibly extending the stags season to help with flow of venison into the market. LS reported that ADMG had also been working behind the scenes during the outbreak to secure discussions on venison and the letting of stalking both of which were vital for the industry. LS to ask ADMG for clarification.</p> <p>Game dealers likely going to be tight on collection arrangements. Members were advised to check with their own game dealer to clarify arrangements.</p>	<p><b>LS</b></p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Habitat Impact Assessment</b>	
	<p>DMG has completed one HIA Report and would have ideally looked to be completing Blanket Bog this year. Data more powerful if everyone can do things at the same time but it is recognised that some may have to postpone until next year. If everyone could concentrate on Dwarf Shrub Heath next year – that would be useful. DMG to ensure that training in place. Colin Maclean has completed HIA on Homebeat and Corndavon which will be mapped and sent to LS.</p> <p>NTS to postpone monitoring until next year.</p> <p>Baddoch confirmed that they are happy to complete this year – MC to action.</p> <p>Mar Estate to confirm monitoring plans for this year.</p> <p>Dinnet Moor not completing HIA due to lack of capacity.</p>	<p><b>MC</b></p> <p><b>MN</b></p>

<b>8.</b>	<b>Mapping - deer movement, peatland restoration and paths.</b>	
	<p>It was agreed that it would be useful to build up maps of things like peatlands, woodlands &amp; tracks etc. This will be collected from CNPA and also through a mapping exercise with individual estates in the Autumn.</p> <p>The Chair still intends to do a PR exercise for peatland restoration. AM to circulate a draft Press Release for comment.</p>	<p><b>LS</b></p> <p><b>AM</b></p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Review of Deer Management Plan</b>	
	<p>Deer Management Plan completed in 2016 and due to run out in 2021. AM recommended that a rewrite not required at this stage and that it was probably best to simply have a light-touch refresh of what we already have. Members urged to think about and identify key areas that could be added. One area might be in identifying numbers of other herbivores including hares and sheep in order to be able to calculate Livestock Units. The Group also discussed the possibility of moving towards a Land Management or Habitat Management Plan. Short proposal to be put to the Group in November for decision. ADMG to be asked to provide a steer as to what plans will need to address.</p>	<p><b>DMG Members and LS</b></p>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Financial Position</b>	
	<p>The Group discussed the accounts for 2019 -20 and agreed the proposed budget for 2020 -2021.</p> <p>In light of concerns from Mar Lodge about the splitting of the Group finances, the Group considered an alternative way of determining subscriptions and agreed that an average of 4 calculations be used along with a 3-year rolling cull average. LS to update the spreadsheet based on rolling average culls (up to Spring 2019) and circulate along with subscriptions.</p>	<p><b>LS</b></p>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Website and Public Information Review – UDD Website and Heading for the Scottish Hills</b>	
	<p>UDD website has been updated and Members were asked to check information and supply photos and information to LS to provide as much information as possible as this is the DMG’s shop window. MC offered to produce an alternative website at no cost -AM and LS to discuss. Useful opportunity to think about a possible future website to include information wider than just deer– important to keep it simple.</p> <p>Group agreed that the Annual Report should provide the most up to date information on the actions of the Group. LS to circulate a draft report for 2020.</p> <p>Group was reminded to check their information on the Heading for the Scottish Hills to ensure that it is up to date.</p>	<p><b>AM/LS</b></p> <p><b>LS</b></p> <p><b>DMG Members</b></p>
<b>12.</b>	<b>AOCB</b>	
	<p>GCWT kindly offered to host a visit from the Group to the demonstration farm at Auchnerran Demonstration Farm. Project is developing a Lowland Deer Management Plan and GWCT would be interested in feedback. LS to arrange with AS as soon as circumstances allow. AM thanked GWCT for the offer.</p>	<p><b>LS/AS</b></p>
<b>21.</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>	
	To be arranged.	

## Summary of Action Points from Meeting on June 30th

AP	Actions from June 30 <sup>th</sup>	
1.	Circulate HIA report to MC.	Secretary
2.	DMG Members to provide updated information on Designated Sites, Woodlands and Peatlands (completed schemes or proposed projects). LS to circulate a summary of information required.	Secretary & DMG Members
3.	Check what information is available on woodland from CNPA.	M. Cottam
4.	Information on AECS projects to be sent to DMG.	A. Smith
5.	Update information on Roe Culls.	DMG Members
6.	Summer recruitment count to be completed.	DMG Members
7.	Population model to be updated with 2020 Count figures are recirculated.	Secretary
8.	Ask for clarification from ADMG on stags season and venison.	Secretary
9.	CNPA to liaise with Baddoch regarding Blanket Bog HIA	M. Cottam
10.	Mar Estate to confirm plans for Blanket Bog monitoring.	M. Nicholson
11.	Group to complete a mapping exercise in the Autumn.	Secretary
12.	Draft Press Release on Peatland to be circulated to the Group	Chair
13.	Prepare short proposal for Plan refresh. Members to suggest areas of focus for future planning.	Secretary & DMG Members
14.	Revised subscription and Invoices to be circulated to the Group.	Secretary
15.	Updates to web site to be discussed.	Chair & Secretary
16.	Draft Annual Report to be circulated to Group.	Secretary
17.	Members to check information on the Heading for the Scottish Hills website and update where required.	DMG Members
18.	Organise a visit to GCWT Auchnerran Demonstration Farm.	Secretary and A. Smith