

## Meeting of Upper Deeside and Donside Land Management Group

By ZOOM on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 2.30pm.

### Present

Angus McNicol	Invercauld (Chairman)
Dr Linzi Seivwright	Caorann (Secretary)
Capt Mark Nicolson	Mar Estate
Ben Carter	Invercauld Home Beat
David Frew	Mar Lodge
Mary Bowman	Glenavon
Richard Greenlaw	Glenavon
Richard Gledson	Delnadamph
Andrew Salvesen	Dinnet & West Tillypronie
Iain Wilkinson	Dinnet & West Tillypronie
Ben Faulkner	Dinnet & West Tillypronie
Adrian Walker	Allargue
Mike Cottam	CNPA
Iain Hope	NatureScot

### Apologies

Craig Barnett	Dinnet & West Tillypronie
Robin Leslie-Melville	Candacraig
Clive Meikle	Glenavon
Arthur Fernie	Mar Estate
Will Reid	Invercauld
Richard Thomas	Invercauld

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 19<sup>th</sup> 2020</b>	<b>Paper 3</b>
2.1	Minutes were approved by MN and seconded by RG subject to two minor corrections.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising from Meeting held on November 19<sup>th</sup> 2020</b>	<b>Paper 3</b>
3.1	<p>MC to check for woodland information from CNPA- <b>Actioned</b></p> <p>MC and LS to liaise on HIA for next Spring- <b>Discussed under Item 7.</b></p> <p><b>Meeting to be arranged at Auchnerran early summer.</b></p> <p>Complete count to be undertaken in Spring 2021. <b>Count planned for week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> March.</b></p> <p>AM to liaise with Glenavon to undertake a coordinate count. <b>Joint GA and HB heli count planned- will count the march of Mar Lodge also. Will tie in with wider group count if possible.</b></p> <p>Complete Blanket Bog and Dwarf Shrub Heath HIA Spring 2021- <b>Discussed under Item 7</b></p> <p>Update on feature status on Designated Sites. <b>Maybe plans for SCM -national programme details being finalised. IH to check and report back to LS.</b></p> <p>Complete deer movements map. <b>LS to check with Jos Milner regarding what mapping is available.</b></p> <p>Complete a matrix of all HIA monitoring to date- <b>Actioned.</b></p>	<p>AP1: LS</p> <p>AP 2: ALL</p> <p>AP3: IH</p> <p>AP4: LS</p>

	<p>Produce detailed costings for plan refresh for Chair to circulate- <b>Discussed under Item 9</b></p> <p>Website to be updated with changes to constitution.</p> <p>LS to circulate a copy of the Report to the Community Councils.</p> <p>LS to contact Edingassie to invite them to the next meeting and to discuss becoming members of the Group. <b>Actioned</b></p>	<p>AP5: LS</p> <p>AP6: LS</p> <p>AP7: LS</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Population Model and Culls</b>	<b>Paper 4</b>
	<p>LS updated the Group on the culls achieved in 2020/21. It was noted that the West Sub Area had achieved the proposed hind cull despite the challenges. There was a discussion about the Out of Season stag cull on Mar Lodge which had been higher than usual. It was noted that neither Homebeat nor Glenavon had noticed a loss of stags. CM indicated that the bulk of the Out of Season stags had been young to middle-aged stags and had been undertaken in the Quoich (88 stags compared to 54 in the Derry regeneration zone). CM also indicated that Mar Lodge was losing a percentage of sporting stags to Glenfeshie. Following discussion, it was still not clear where the stags were coming from. MC indicated that he would be able to gather data from neighbouring DMGs.</p> <p>LS discussed the population model which was now indicating that the population is somewhere around 3.5 deer per km<sup>2</sup>. However, given the issue with deer movements with neighbouring DMGs, it was more likely that the population was closer to the target of 4.3 deer per km<sup>2</sup>.</p>	<p>AP8: MC</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Working Plan - Outstanding Actions</b>	<b>Paper 4</b>
	<p>LS provided an overview of the outstanding actions in the Working Plan and indicated that most of the outstanding issues would be addressed through the collaborative count, the agreed HIA planned for the Spring and through the proposed plan refresh.</p> <p>With regards to the collaborative count, following discussion it was agreed that it was useful to get updates from Colin Maclean (the wider count coordinator) as to when counts were being proposed but that from the LMG perspective there was not necessarily a need to count with other Groups -as long as it was as close to the date as possible.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Mapping</b>	
	<p>There were still some outstanding maps to be developed but it was agreed that this would be best undertaken as part of the plan refresh. LS indicated that she would be proposing to work with a digital cartographer to develop more informative and higher quality maps in future.</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Habitat Impact Assessment</b>	
	<p>The following was agreed by the Group with regards to blanket bog and dwarf shrub heath monitoring for 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar Lodge to undertake a full HIA with 480 plots being assessed over a range of habitats including blanket bog and dwarf shrub heath.</li> <li>• Delnadamph and Allargue would collaborate to undertake repeat monitoring of both habitats.</li> <li>• Invercauld would be carrying out dwarf shrub heath with training support from LS (having done blanket bog in 2020).</li> <li>• Mar Estate would be carrying out monitoring of dwarf shrub heath (and possibly blanket bog if this hasn't already been done).</li> <li>• Glenavon would be carrying out a full HIA of both habitats.</li> <li>• Dinnet &amp; West Tillypronie would contact Adam Smith to check their plans.</li> </ul>	<p>AP 9: IW</p>

<b>8.</b>	<b>Venison Update and ADMG Update</b>	
	<p>LS indicated that all the recent virtual meetings of ADMG were available online and were worth viewing. ADMG had been encouraging all estates to meet hind culls throughout the season and had been working with the venison industry to ensure continuity of carcass uplift. There had been significant issues with the SQWV scheme in the last 18 months and it was recognised that this was unacceptable. Richard Cooke is a member of the SQWV Board and work was being undertaken to ensure that a new company be put in place to take over. ADMG was urging members to stick with SQWV in the hope that issue would be resolved.</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Review of Deer Management Plan</b>	<b>Paper 5a&amp;b</b>
	<p>LS provided an outline of the proposal for the plan refresh. As well as providing an update on all the data in the plan, LS also proposed a slightly novel approach to presenting the data in map-based format. As this approach was relatively new, LS asked the Group if they would be willing to act as a trial for the approach at a reduced cost, on the understanding that if it was deemed successful, the approach be used as a case study for work elsewhere.</p> <p>Following discussion, and despite some concerns about the political uncertainty of future deer management, the Group agreed that it would be useful to refresh the plan regardless and agreed to the proposal. LS thanked the Group for the opportunity.</p>	<b>AP 10: LS</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Financial Position</b>	<b>Paper 6</b>
	<p>LS indicated that the LMG had applied for their own bank account and it was hoped that this would be operational soon.</p> <p>LS talked to the financial paper and the following was noted and agreed: The Group had agreed to offer £1,000 plus VAT to Savills to settle their outstanding fee. This would leave a balance of £565.92 at the end of the 2020/21 financial year. The Group agreed the budget for 2021/22 of £16,093.50. The Group agreed to adjust the proposed subscriptions, with a view to retaining a slush fund of £1,000. LS agreed to adjust the subscriptions accordingly and recirculate to the Group.</p>	<b>AP 11: LS</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>NatureScot and CNPA Updates</b>	
	<p>MC reported that the Park Authority is due to prepare the next Statutory Park Plan. In terms of deer management, the Park Authority were concentrating efforts in south of the park in 3 DMGs: West Grampian, South Grampian, South Deeside &amp; North Angus. The Park Authority has also applied through National Lottery Fund for deer management funding. A bid had been submitted at the end of Feb and will find out in May. This would cover the cost initially of the development of strategic plans and then a further bid would draw down money for each DMG to implement these plans. Waiting to hear whether development phase will be accepted by the Heritage Lottery Fund. AM asked if there would any funds for UDD LMG? MC indicated that that hadn't been included in the proposal – it was solely for the three named Groups. AM indicated that the Group would be happy to be engaged in the Statutory Plan development. MC said that would be welcomed as there would likely be periods of considerable consultation.</p> <p>IH reported that at the recent ADMG meeting, Robbie Kernahan had talked about Nature based Solutions, and Donald Fraser had talked about developments in technology using remote sensing for deer counting in the future. The Scottish Government were currently considering the 99 recommendations from the Deer Working Group which if approved would fall into various categories: those that might require a simple reallocation of NatureScot (NS) resources for example into</p>	

	<p>population assessment of woodland. Some changes would take some resource in tinkering with the Legislation, but there were others that if approved would require NS to put considerable costs into them. In any case, with regards to UDD LMG- the focus of attention seems to be on other areas and other DMGs where, relatively speaking, densities, impacts and populations are higher and it was hard to see that shifting. NS could have greater focus on woodlands and farmlands rather than uplands in future, but certainly much of the conversation is about Biodiversity and Nature Based Solutions and specifically Peatlands and Woodlands and the elements being considered in the plan refresh.</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Communications</b>	
<b>12.1</b>	<p><b>Website, Monthly Bulletin and PR:</b>                  Monthly bulletin has been improved and hopefully easier to read. In terms of format, there was no feedback from the Group. Members were asked to contribute items they thought might be of interest to other members.</p> <p>On the topic of PR possibly not right time to be doing big PR push and this would be kept as a watching brief. Depending on plan refresh, might have a meeting (virtual) mid-way between now and November.</p>	
<b>12.2</b>	<p><b>Draft Annual Report 2021:</b>                  It was proposed to incorporate this in the plan refresh to tie the two together.</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	There was no AOB items.	
<b>14.</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>	
	LS to canvass for meeting dates in November nearer the time.	

**Summary of Action Points from Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

1.	Meeting to be arranged at Auchnerran.	LS
2.	DMG members to complete Deer Count Spring 2021	DMG Members
3.	Update on feature status on Designated Sites.	IH
4.	LS to contact Jos Milner regarding maps	LS
5.	Website to be updated with changes to constitution.	LS
6.	LS to circulate a copy of the Report to the Community Councils.	LS
7.	Contact Edinglassie and invite to become members of the Group	LS
8.	MC to gather cull data from neighbouring properties to shed light on possible sources of stags coming into Mar Lodge.	MC
9.	Dinnet and West Tillypronie to check HIA requirements	IW
10.	LS to refresh the plan according to the circulated proposal	LS
11.	LS to adjust the subscriptions for 2021/22 and recirculate	LS