

Draft Minutes of Upper Deeside and Donside Land Management Group

Keiloch, Invercauld and By ZOOM on Friday 28th April 2023 at 2.15pm.

<p>Present (in person)</p> <p>Angus McNicol (Chair & Invercauld)</p> <p>Dr Linzi Seivwright (Secretary)</p> <p>David Frew (Mar Lodge)</p> <p>Andrew Salvesen (DWT)</p> <p>Arthur Fernie (Mar Estate)</p> <p>Chris Murphy (Mar Lodge)</p> <p>Iain Hope (NatureScot)</p>	<p>Present (by Zoom)</p> <p>Richard Gledson (Delnadamph)</p> <p>Rosanna Fraser (Glenavon)</p> <p>Louise de Raad (GWCT)</p> <p>Capt Mark Nicolson (Mar Estate)</p> <p>Ben Carter (IC Home Beat)</p> <p>Tom Turnbull (ADMG Rep)</p>	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Craig Barnett (DWT)</p> <p>Iain Wilkinson (DWT)</p> <p>Hal Salvesen (Tullich)</p> <p>Will Reid (Invercauld Baddoch)</p> <p>Richard Thomas (IC Home Beat)</p> <p>Stuart Young (Edinglassie)</p> <p>Stuart Jenkins (RSPB)</p> <p>Robin Leslie-Melville (Candacraig)</p> <p>Edward Humphries (Dinnet LG)</p> <p>Adrian Walker (Allargue)</p>
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Item		Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.	
2.	Draft Minutes of Meeting of held on 16th November 2022	
2.1	Minutes were approved. Proposed by AF Seconded by DF.	
3.	Matters Arising from Meeting held on 16th November 2022	
3.1	<p>Visit to Achnerran. Set a date for some time in May, basic agenda, circulate through wider group, need a minimum number to make it worthwhile. Louise mentioned they do have some walk & talk scheduled, next one 7th of June, she is happy to accommodate a visit. The subject of the next walk & talk is grazing strategies, no fence technology. Other walks will have other topics, diversity etc, open to anybody, knowledge exchange. 10-3 including light lunch.</p> <p>There are 2 full LMG meetings a year so good to change venue, next one likely to be in November.</p>	AP1: LdR to liaise with LS on dates
3.2	Item 2, Chris is happy to continue as count co-ordinator. He asked for a list of appropriate contacts, also it makes sense we do counts at the same time, 3 groups. Not the best count conditions.	AP2: LS contact n'bouring groups
3.3	Item 3 entertainment events- Angus had been in touch Countryside Learning Scotland, they have schools that approach them and they then do the match with the organizations. Ballater school been contacted direct. Louise said she had been to an event through RHETT, she said the combination of farming and gamekeeping was covered well. Helpful to let the children know what goes on in the countryside.	AP3: LdR to pass contact to LS
3.4	Item 4 write to the CNPA convenor - as a group are we happy to be involved in Rural Land Use Partnership? AM had written to CNPA Convenor but CNPA had not progressed this. Chair to write to new Convenor in 6 months to try and get a relationship going with them. Tom sensed things are slowing down with Rural Land Use Partnerships, he said ADMG would provide support if needed.	AP4: AM to write to New Convenor
3.5	Cover later in meeting.	
3.6	Item 6 Wildfire Prevention Linzi to speak to Jos Milner	AP5: LS to speak to Jos Milner

<p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p>	<p>Item 7 Adding fire prevention into the draft plan - no one will be able to attend any fires unless they are fully trained.</p> <p>Item 8 - Linzi was asked what data is collected by the Group on hares. Are people still counting them? Mark said CNPA is and the information is all there. Louise confirmed they were too. Invercauld also.</p> <p>Item12 – Cairngorm Venison Marketing. Angus was to contact other chairs, only one response from Cairngorm Group, parking idea. Cairngorm Connect trying to do something.</p> <p>Item 13 Nature Festival (May), some estates would be doing events but not UDD itself.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Culls -stags and proposed hinds</p>	
	<p>Linzi got a map through from Glen Avon, helicopter count this year, she will circulate it, and bring this into count information for the rest of the group. Linzi to get raw data from Nature Scot. Linzi to put population paper together. Mar Lodge asked if Dorback had changed their deer policy. AM to get in touch Colin Mclean and Cairngorms Group.</p> <p>Proposed Culls – No changes to Mar Lodge stag policy. Mar, Baddoch and HomeBeat all indicated similar culls as last year.</p>	<p>AP6: LS to circulate info & pop paper</p> <p>AP7: AM to contact CM re n’bouring group objectives.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Draft Plan Refresh</p>	
	<p>Angus said the plan done by Linzi was great, full information. It had not actively been put out to the public although has been on the ADMG website in draft form. Angus proposed they accepted the proposed plan subject to updating count data as raised by AS. Plan to be made publicly available.</p> <p>The Group discussed how the plan should be used. It was agreed that LS would summarise the action points as a check list. Also, Linzi to summarise some of the opportunities she thought might be worth considering as she was putting the plan together. Then people can go through and follow up what’s relevant for them.</p> <p>Peatland restoration Angus met up with Matt Watson CNPA looking at a programme and individual project. Collaborative working in peatland not a priority for CNPA but might still be opportunities for collective marketing of carbon units.</p> <p>Louise mentioned applications are on an individual basis, up to each Estate to make an application. Angus said make the plan a working document. Linzi to also to summarise action points and keep up to date and to circulate each ¼.</p> <p>AS asked Linzi table 3 in draft pan it’s not showing much for the eastern part, if density numbers are below a certain number is it recorded as zero? Linzi said that 0 had been used to cover both 0 count and also where no count had taken place due to negligible numbers.</p> <p>It was decided to clarify in the plan how a zero count had been construed. For future recording, it should be clear if 0 is no deer counted or whether no count was undertaken on the basis on few deer. Count table should also make it clear that the counts are red deer only.</p>	<p>AP8: LS to publish final plan, summarise action points & prepare opportunities map at November meeting</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Habitat Impact Assessment</p>	
	<p>Angus said most people doing habitat assessments. Is everyone happy doing them, do they need any assistance? Noone indicated a requirement for assistance.</p>	

7.	Venison Update and ADMG Update	
	<p>Tom said there is a lot going on, rural support, biodiversity strategy, liaising with Lorna Slater and ADMG had met with her 3 times. Also liaising with Nature Scot and Strategic Deer Board. Have been highlighting the challenges with rural funding, and conveying some of the fears of deer managers on the reduction of numbers. Also, the effect on income and potential employment in deer management. Liaising regularly with Scottish Government, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy draft is available to view, land reform consultation is closed now but ADMG responded and their response is available on-line. Any estate over 3,000 hectares may need to produce their own land management plan, this would duplicate the work already done in DMG plans. Waiting to hear on a lot of things. Where density of more than 10 deer per km² Groups and areas are being tackled by Nature Scot, and they have become priority areas. Most interesting is the incentives on how to reduce numbers and protect habitats. Secondary legislation (extension of season, use of thermal sights, and lead ammunition) will come on board sooner than the Environment Bill -that might come out next year. Managing expectations from Scottish Government is quite difficult, expectation that if deer numbers reduced then forest magically appears across the Highlands of Scotland, little bit of disconnect between ministers and Nature Scot.</p> <p>ADMG AGM had provided an update on venison. Ardgay Game talked about the difficulties with the processing, and the need to avoid large volumes of venison hitting the markets in October, need to spread cull across the season and liaise with game dealers, and warn them when to expect the venison. ADMG are going to provide support to the Scottish Venison Association to help promote venison sales. Intention to roll out DMG health checks. ADMG helped set up the Finding the Common Ground Project, getting people around the table to talk. ADMG have set up a Deer Management Working Group within the National Access Forum, hopefully find solutions to dealing with hot spots. Meeting set up for next week which ADMG chairs.</p> <p>Richard Cooke’s book, Deer People, raised just under £20,000 and the money will be used for education and training purposes. First project 3-month overseas placement for young professionals, in Namibia and Wyoming.</p> <p>Event at Glenfeshie on the 28th June, more details will be sent out. Realisation at Nature Scot and Ministers that they need to keep Deer Managers on side and work together.</p> <p>Angus asked if venison price would get back to what it was? Tom said there are only 3 major game dealers in Scotland, problems with export following Brexit. ADMG helping with marketing, need to distribute to more consumers. Scottish Venison Association runs on £17,000 per year, he suspects more money is spent on beef and lamb. ADMG offering a payment this year to the Scottish Venison Association.</p>	
8.	Subscriptions 23/24	
	<p>Linzi proposed subs for this year are the same as last year, expenses are the same, unless we are planning to do anything community wise, we can use the existing funds. Calculated the same way, minimum fee of £300 discussed so rounded up to this value, and because Mar Lodge take the brunt of the payment, she divided it up and whatever was left was taken off the Mar Lodge payment. The Group thought that was fair, and this was agreed.</p>	
9.	NatureScot and CNPA Updates	
	<p>There was no one in attendance from CNPA at the meeting. Ian Hope agreed there is very clear overlap with what Nature Scot is involved with regarding the strategic deer board and the work the ADMG are doing. Legally we are still SNH. Angus asked if anything specific to this local area they should be doing, Ian said no at this stage.</p>	

10.	Communications	
	<p>Angus has put together a draft communications strategy, about sharing internal information, monthly bulletin being done – inward facing (between group members) and outward facing (between the group and public/others).</p> <p>Inward facing - Anything the group has to share just send an email to Angus or Linzi. Linzi asked for anything that is interesting. Subgroups are for anything specific that is a local issue, deer ticks, peatland etc, can be done on zoom to keep people in touch with each other.</p> <p>MN asked is monthly bulletin too much? He suggested bimonthly to help reduce workload of Linzi and cost. Agreed to take as an action.</p> <p>Outward facing communication is important particularly about good news stories and data from this area that doesn't get publicised, and making sure we are available to the wider public if there are concerns. Website is an off shoot of the ADMG website, management plan etc can we found on there. Now plan approved, Angus proposes we have a public meeting online to let people know what we are all about. As last event was poorly attended at Braemar – consideration will be given to the format this time. Linzi to set up 2nd half of May. Send out to communities etc, presentation online about an hour in length, questions and answers.</p> <p>MN said two press releases a year are good, deer detractors will still talk about record numbers of red deer on the open hill, as we have the figures from 1985 would be interesting to put comparison out, as we have a good balance at the moment. Lastly Mark wanted to publicly to congratulate Linzi on the ADMG talk about red deer, where she introduced the balance of the pros and cons.</p> <p>AM asked if ADMG's PR machine assist with their press release, Tom agreed with points raised, and said they can help in any way we like.</p> <p>AM said we could develop a social media presence, maybe set up a FaceBook page. After discussion it was agreed not to pursue at this tie.</p>	<p>AP9: LS set up public zoom meeting.</p> <p>AP10: AM & LS to discuss items for press release</p>
11.	AOCB	
	No A.O.C.B	

Summary of Action Points from Meeting on 28 April 2023

1.	LdR to liaise with LS on dates for Walk & Talk	LS & LdR
2.	Contact neighbouring groups	LS
3.	Contact details of RHETT to Linzi	LdR
4.	New Convenor of CNPA to be contacted	AM
5.	LS to speak to Jos Milner re Wildfire Prevention	LS
6.	LS to circulate info & do population paper	LS
7.	AM to contact CM (CNPA) re objectives in Cairngorms & Speyside Group	AM
8.	LS to finalise plan, collate action points and develop Opportunities Map	LS
9.	LS to set up public zoom meeting	LS
10.	AM & LS to develop press release	AM & LS

