

## Meeting of Lowland Deer Network Scotland Executive Committee

At: The Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan

On: Monday 6 October 2014

Present: Richard Cooke (RC), Chairman  
Dick Playfair (DP), Secretary  
Ian Fergusson (IF), Forest Enterprise  
Jamie Hammond (JH), SNH  
Anton Watson (AW), SNH  
David Quarrell (DQ), SLDG  
George Ritchie (GR), Banff & Buchan DMG  
Peter Semple (PS), Inverclyde and Dunbartonshire DMG  
Alex Hogg (AH), SGA  
Kenny Willmitt (KW), BASC Scotland  
John Bruce (JB), BDS  
Maggie Keegan (MK), SWT  
Daye Tucker (DT) NFUS  
Andy Mavin (AM) Police Scotland  
James Govan (JG) Stalker, Ayrshire  
David Bruce (DB), Commercial forestry

Apologies or not present:

Ron Smith (RS), Vice Chairman  
Angus Corby (AC), Transport Scotland  
Donald Fraser (DF), SNH  
Ian Talboys (IT), Aberdeen City Council  
Malcolm Muir ((MM) South Lanarkshire Council, COSLA  
Alex Paul (WLDMG)  
Andrew Treadaway (AT)  
David Fyffe (DFy), Scottish Land & Estates  
Rob Sharp (RSh), stalker  
Alex Stoddart (AS), SACS  
Mike Flynn (MF), SSPCA

1.	<b>Minutes of previous meeting etc</b> 1.1 Welcome 1.1.1 RC thanked Derek Kneller in his absence for his substantial contribution to LDNS as he is stepping down from the Executive Committee. RC also welcomed Maggie Keegan of SWT to the Committee.  1.1.2 IF suggested Helen Sellars should be added as FCS representative on the Committee following retirement of Gordon Paterson. DP to add Helen to Committee list.	
2.	<b>Matters arising</b> 2.1 Alex Paul (AP) to be added to attendance list for 2 July meeting.	

	<p><u>2.2 Constitution template</u>  2.2.1 RC advised that an upland DMG Constitution template was currently being prepared and once done this would be adapted for Lowland Deer Groups (LDGs).</p> <p>2.2.2 RC asked those LDGs that already have constitutions to forward these to him.</p> <p><u>2.3 Enquiries re deer issues</u>  2.3.1 A protocol is needed to address enquiries that may arise. The view is that enquirers requiring deer management should be referred to the Competence Register. There is now a short paragraph on the LDNS website although this may still need to be updated/amended.</p> <p>2.3.2 PS asked what the format was if a LDG was approached direct. JH said that there was no need for an enquiry to go through SNH, although the local LDG should keep SNH advised of its actions.</p> <p><u>2.4 SSPCA consultation</u>  There was no single view from LDNS and therefore individual organisations were free to make their own submissions. This had been advised to the Scottish Government.</p> <p><u>2.5 Scottish Native Woodlands Study</u>  GP's presentation is on the LDNS website.</p> <p><u>2.6 Urban deer qualification</u>  2.6.1 Following discussion it had been decided that there was not a specific case for a new qualification, and the Best Practice Guides were being revisited and could be updated to include this aspect. The days organised by SLDG were extremely useful for those operating in that environment.</p> <p>2.6.2 It was suggested that a 'certificate of attendance' should be produced.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Declarations of interest</b>  3.1 RC said this provided all who might have a vested interest in being on the Executive Committee to state this.</p> <p>3.2 PS asked, where there was a declaration that might influence part of the discussion, whether that member would then be excluded from discussion on that topic and it was agreed that this should be the case.</p>	All
4.	<p><b>Attendance at meetings</b>  4.1 RC said that the Executive Committee sessions were not public meetings, and that ordinary LDNS members had the opportunity to engage through the website etc. Executive Committee meetings should be regarded as 'open' to interested observers.</p>	

	<p>4.2 Where deputies were asked to attend EC meetings then they should be properly briefed in advance, and the Secretary should be advised ahead of the meeting.</p>	<p><b>NB All</b></p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Chairman's Report</b></p> <p>5.1 RC gave an update on his meetings and contacts made during the previous period including: Meeting with Ian Ross, new Chairman, SNH, and attendance at Dalkeith deer management event with Scottish Land &amp; Estates and Buccleuch allowing engagement with a new audience.</p> <p>5.2 DP to forward e mail of Midlothian Council response to JH.</p> <p>5.3 DT said that after the shooting season a similar walk and talk event was possible, again with SL&amp;E, in Stirlingshire.</p> <p>Discussion followed:</p> <p>5.4.1 RC said that this type of event was important as a communication exercise and more like it would be beneficial.</p> <p>5.4.2 PS suggested a similar exercise could possibly be undertaken in his area focusing on a 4000 acres forestry block involving Police, local authority, MSPs etc.</p> <p>5.4.3 DT stressed again that meetings and events with NFUS at local level would be useful to spread word about deer management responsibilities.</p> <p>5.4.4 JH said that communication with local authorities was being revisited at top level. RC said that communication from Ian Ross to Chief Executives of local authorities has been discussed.</p> <p>5.4.5 DT said all should consider <a href="http://www.writetothem.com">www.writetothem.com</a> which allowed communication with all elected councilors, MSPs etc.</p> <p>5.5 RC chaired the meeting about the proposed restructuring of the SW Scotland DG.</p>	<p>DP</p> <p>DT</p> <p>PS</p> <p>DT</p> <p>All</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Financial update</b></p> <p>6.1 RC reported on the LDNS financial position to 30 September 2014.</p> <p>6.2 Total income year to date from 1 April 2014 was £17,365 with expenditure of £15,122. A further £10,000 in grant funding for the year was due from FCS.</p> <p>6.3 RC advised that there was a further £2,400 due to PACEC, and that LDNS had paid for one third of the ADMG stand at the Scottish Game Fair.</p> <p>6.4 Discussion followed about whether there were other options apart from Scone for future years such as agricultural shows.</p>	

	<p>6.5 DT suggested having leaflets and pop-up banners on the NFUS stand at agricultural shows. DT to follow up.</p> <p>6.7 RC said we should revisit this early next year and agree a programme of events for 2015 (DP note for agenda).</p>	<p>DT</p> <p>DP</p>
7.	<p><b>LDG Constitutions and deer management plans</b></p> <p>7.1 This topic to be revisited and discussed at next meeting. RC reiterated his request for those with an LDG constitution to send to him for reference.</p>	<p>DP</p> <p>LDGs</p>
8.	<p><b>LDNS Project plan</b></p> <p>DP advised that this had recently been reviewed and updated, and had been circulated to all the Executive Committee.</p>	
9.	<p><b>SNH update</b></p> <p>9.1 JH said that Ian Ross intended to write to local authorities.</p> <p>9.2 AW gave a short brief on the 'urban deer photographic competition' to be launched before Christmas as a communication exercise with the public, and also to source more shots of urban deer.</p> <p>9.3 JH said that SNH was coming to an end of its assessment programme of upland DMGs after which there would be more time to work with LDGs. He said that the review in 2016 would focus mainly on upland groups.</p> <p>9.4 RC said it was important 'not to take the foot off the pedal', that there was a lot happening, but that the deer sector would continue to be under the microscope for some time. He said that there was a need for more locally led deer initiatives and whilst the Angus Deer Initiative had lost momentum it would be reinvigorated as soon as someone was found to lead it.</p> <p>9.5 MK said that it was important, in her view, to push more deer information towards schools – pictures, general information about Scotland's deer, reasons for management etc.</p> <p>9.6 DP drew the Committee's attention to the Deer in Scotland Education Zone hosted on the Scottish Venison Partnership website.</p> <p>9.7 MK said that potentially there were links that could be made with 'wildlife watch' groups, and involvement with other members of LINK. MK to investigate.</p>	<p>MK</p>

10.	<p><b>PACEC update</b></p> <p>10.1 There had been less than 50 responses to date. RC said even if only certain sections of the form could be completed this was still important. PS said that it was difficult to complete all the form.</p> <p>10.2 RC emphasised the importance of data from upland and low ground in the study in order to assess as accurately as possible the true and full economic contribution of deer management.</p>	<b>NB All</b>
11.	<p><b>Events</b></p> <p>11.1 <u>Walk and Talk event, Dalkeith</u></p> <p>11.1.1 DP reported on the 'walk and talk' event that had been held at Dalkeith Country Park with SL&amp;E and Buccleuch and attended by more than 40 land owners, deer managers and stalkers, police, agencies etc.</p> <p>11.1.2 DP said that all who attended would now be mailed with future LDNS information through the SL&amp;E SE regional office, and that this had provided a good model for future events planned for Ayrshire and the Borders. SL&amp;E had made a verbal commitment to host a further similar event in 2015.</p> <p>11.2 <u>LDNS AGM</u></p> <p>11.2.1 The next LDNS annual general meeting is due to take place early in 2015. DP to investigate dates for return to Westerwood Hotel – possibly Sunday 15 or 22 February.</p> <p>11.2.2 Ideas needed for speakers for AGM. Christian Nissen at Highland Game was suggested as he is working hard to find UK markets for roe venison. DP to ask.</p> <p>11.2.3 Suggested we could feature a talk from a local stalker supplying local market. Ideas?</p> <p>11.2.4 AH said it would be good to have someone explain the entire system of supply of small quantities to local butchers and other outlets, tagging, implications regarding 'jacket on' and 'jacket off', venison dealers licenses etc.</p> <p>11.2.5 A discussion on 'collaborative collection' was also suggested.</p> <p>11.2.6 Possibly ask a representative from the Food Standards Agency to come and talk through system. DP to investigate.</p> <p>11.2.7 RC said possibly one of the private forestry companies could be invited to talk about how they manage deer. RC, DP and DB to discuss</p> <p>A venison sausage tasting suggested as some light relief.</p>	<p>DP</p> <p>DP</p> <p>All</p> <p>DP</p> <p>RC, DB, DP</p> <p>DP</p>

	<p><b>11.3 Deer on Your Doorstep</b></p> <p>11.3.1 DP said the current plan was to trial 'deer on your doorstep' in the Spring in Dundee, and would progress on this basis.</p> <p>11.3.2 DT said that we should consider how this might link with the Citizen Science Project.</p>	DP
12.	<p><b>Urban Deer Management Qualification</b></p> <p>12.1 This had been discussed at the Competence Review Group – A McGugan and JH liaising.</p> <p>12.2 DQ said that SLDG was considering a re-run or similar of its Urban Deer Awareness Day with more attention to the afternoon programme. RC welcomed any additional initiatives going forward.</p>	JH, AMcG  DQ, SLDG
13.	<p><b>SW Scotland</b></p> <p>13.1 A meeting had taken place with IF, JH and AW attending. SW Scotland Group was a member of ADMG but there was now a proposal to form three manageable, separate sub-groups under a single umbrella LDG which would transfer to LDNS. RC said it was important that the split was about the best delivery of deer management and not about commercial deer stalking and territorial opportunities.</p> <p>13.2 JH asked whether this type of sub-division could be replicated elsewhere. IF said he thought this move would reinvigorate the SW with motivated individuals in each area and sub-group.</p>	
14.	<p><b>Local and National Deer issues</b></p> <p><b>14.1 Deer Health</b></p> <p>14.1.1 JB advised that the last 3 damp summers plus outbursts of liver fluke in areas where it had not previously been present (due to sheep movements, increase in snail numbers etc) had been detrimental to deer health. There had been many reports of only single roe deer births, or no kids because debilitated does were not able to carry to full term.</p> <p>14.1.2 Massive drop in number of roe deer kids had been recorded. JH said anecdotal reports bear this out.</p> <p>14.1.3 DT said that the fluke issue had been raised over a year ago, and that the Heads of Veterinary Surveillance at the Moredun would have up to date information.</p> <p>14.1.4 JB said the impact of fluke could result in the future annual roe cull numbers being revisited.</p> <p>14.1.5 PS asked whether de-fluking is an annual requirement.</p>	

	<p>14.1.6 DT said that resistance to Triclabendazole is developing in the sheep flock through over-use.</p> <p>14.1.7 RC suggested an article for the next newsletter. JB suggested contacting Dr Philip Skuse.</p> <p><u>14.2 SLDG</u></p> <p>14.2.1 DQ said that there was an offer for a photographer to come out with members of his Group to take deer pics.</p> <p>14.2.2. DQ said that a meeting had taken place and that discussions were ongoing regarding frequency of granting night authorisations.</p> <p><u>14.3 Daye Tucker</u></p> <p>14.3.1 DT said that there was an ongoing problem with members of the public interfering with snares, that estates were being targeted, and that BASC was doing a survey to ascertain the extent of the problem.</p> <p>14.3.2 AW said that where there was suspicion that snares had been tampered with then this should be reported and that there was a mechanism for doing this. AM said that the problem may be under-reported. DT said that in her area the Police WLCO was providing input to the local NFUS regional group.</p> <p><u>14.4 Scottish Wildlife Trust</u></p> <p>MK said that SWT had more resources in Scotland's central belt than anywhere else. Many of its 120 reserves included SSSIs, of which 94 per cent were in favourable condition. Deer were not largely a problem on the reserves and no full time stalkers were employed, although arrangements were made for deer management/stalking where required.</p> <p><u>14.5 Strathclyde Park</u></p> <p>DT said that she had heard that there had been a number of poaching and animal cruelty incidents reported at Strathclyde Park. DQ thought this might be around Burnbank Wood.</p> <p><u>14.6 Best Practice</u></p> <p>JH said that future 'deer days' were planned, possibly to include with DSC/DMQ1. JH to keep Committee advised.</p> <p><u>14.7 Deer dogs</u></p> <p>14.7.1 GR said that Best Practice required that a 'trained' deer dog 'must be present'. He asked what constituted 'trained' in this context. There is a European training standard although the UK is well behind.</p> <p>14.7.2 RC said that there was room to tighten this area up and welcomed further discussion between FE and SNH to develop suitable guidance for Best Practice.</p>	<p>DP</p> <p>JH</p>
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15.	<p><b>Date of next meetings</b></p> <p>15.1 The next LDNS Executive Committee meeting will be on Wednesday 10 December, 10.30am, at the Royal Hotel.</p> <p>15.2 The LDNS AGM, preceded by an Executive Committee meeting, will take place on Sunday 15 or Sunday 22 February 2015, or the closest available Sunday to this, at the Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld, subject to availability.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>DP</p>

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