

Meeting of Lowland Deer Network Scotland Executive Committee

At: The Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan

On: Wednesday 27 April 2016

Present: Richard Cooke, Chairman
Ron Smith, Vice Chairman
Dick Playfair, Secretary
Jamie Hammond, SNH
Colin Edwards, FCS
Angus Corby, Transport Scotland
David Bruce, UPM Tillhill
John Bruce, BDS
David Fyffe, SL&E
Alex Hogg, SGA
Richard Knight, SLDG
Colin Shedden, BASC
Rob Sharp
Ian Talboys, City of Aberdeen

Apologies or not present:

Donald Fraser, SNH
Anton Watson, SNH
Ian Fergusson, FES
Andy Mavin, Police Scotland
Daye Tucker, NFUS
Alex Stoddart, SACS
Peter Semple, I&DDMG
David Ferguson, NLDG
Mark Lazzeri, Falkland Estate
James Govan
Alex Paul, WLDG
Andrew Treadaway, Barony College
George Ritchie, BBDG
Malcolm Muir, S Lanarkshire Council
Mike Flynn, SSPCA
Maggie Keegan, SWT

1. **Previous minutes and matters arising**

1.1 The minutes of the meeting on 3 February 2016 were proposed by Colin Edwards and seconded by Ron Smith.

1.2 Authorisations Review

1.2.1 RC said that there had been vigorous discussion at the previous meeting, and some concern about the LDNS Chairman being overly autocratic. The review process had begun and RC said that those with views should submit them to the panel. A joint response had gone in from LDNS and ADMG. The number of written submission was 'pitifully small'. The panel had met three times and the process was expected to run for six months. RSh said he thought the panel should accept oral evidence, and JB said he understood that oral evidence sessions would take place. RC said that he knew PS would do a very good job in representing the low ground sector.

	<p>1.2.2 There was concern that other members of the review panel would not have all the facts if they did not engage with those with evidence. There was apparently no proposal for a public hearing/meeting. All minutes of the panel meetings are available on the SNH website.</p> <p>1.2.3 RC said that he would write to the panel suggesting that an LDNS contingent would like to give oral evidence to the enquiry.</p> <p><u>1.3 Wild Deer Research Review</u> CE said that everyone should have received notification of the meetings. It was important to understand the exercise is about identifying knowledge gaps; the result should be better communication between Government and practitioners. The Norman Dandie report was cited as being a thorough, and fairly recent, piece of work, but regardless of this Government's understanding of lowland deer issues was still not great.</p> <p><u>1.4 Commercial Forestry Days</u> DB confirmed two days, 10 and 11 June, where the Deer On Your Doorstep (DOYD) display might be used.</p>
2.	<p>Chairman's review RC reserved his Chairman's report for the AGM.</p>
3.	<p>Financial report</p> <p>3.1 The financial report for year to 31 March 2016 would be ratified at the AGM. RC said that income of £27,339 was very similar to the previous year, the majority of it coming from the Agencies, although there had been a modest increase in membership income. There was discussion about whether subscriptions were necessary and it was agreed that subscriptions should continue to be levied, albeit there was a cost involved in this process.</p> <p>3.2 DP said that everyone, member or not, could receive newsletters, e updates and attend events. The only distinction between member and non-member was in the ability to vote at the AGM.</p> <p>3.3 A question was raised concerning the difference in AGM expenses between years 2015/16 and 2014/15. DP to check.</p> <p>3.4 Current cash at bank would be less than that shown because of the final installment paid to PACEC. Invoices would be issued shortly to the Agency funding partners.</p> <p>3.5 DP then ran through the projected budget for 2016/17 based on an income of £32,350 but with a budgeted expenditure slightly in excess of this at £34,480. CE said that he had secured up to an additional £ 5000 funds from FCS for training and events. SNH has no additional funds available, AC said that he would enquire regarding Transport Scotland.</p>
4.	<p>Project Plan This now requires a rewrite by SNH.</p>

5.	<p>Government review of deer management</p> <p>5.1 RC said that he thought from the rhetoric around the Bill that many minds were already made up, and that land reform and deer management were wrongly entangled. LDNS was doing its best to demonstrate that in lowland areas deer management was dynamic, adaptive and increasingly creative.</p> <p>5.2 One aspect of the Bill covers the reintroduction of sporting rates where a small concession had been introduced in an amendment by Mike Russell MSP that the assessors should take account of relevant factors (such as good deer management). Also that there would be three yearly reviews by SNH which should not be a worry as long as these reviews were objective and evidence based.</p> <p>5.3 DFy said that transparency and engagement with local authorities remained important. AH said that there was a risk that farmers would perceive deer as vermin and simply get rid of them.</p> <p>5.4 CS said that a large number of smaller shoots and sporting businesses would be exempt from rates under the small business bonus scheme.</p> <p>5.5 RC said that valuations were to be based on the sporting potential of the land so, in effect, assessments would be hypothetical. As yet there is no definition for 'deer forest'.</p> <p>5.6 RS said that public disturbance should also be taken into account in assessments, and that this should be part of the discussion between the land manager and the regional assessor. Also management culls should not be rated.</p> <p>5.7 JH said that briefing material would be provided to the new Minister, and that a good day had been spent with the previous Minister Dr McLeod in SW Scotland and her officials. Likewise the <i>Meeting of Minds</i> event had reinforced the differences between upland, lowland and urban fringe deer management.</p> <p>5.8 JH said that the low ground review would not involve formal assessment of deer groups and that he was pulling together material now for the report which was due for delivery in September. RC said that it was important for this report to give a positive outlook.</p> <p>5.9 It was agreed that it would be a mistake to add low ground DMG websites to the ADMG site.</p> <p>5.10 RC said that the <i>Meeting of Minds</i> event had been extremely helpful, really driving home the concept of local skills being used for local management, and local product for local supply. RC asked for thanks to DQ for organizing an excellent event to be minuted.</p>

<p>6.</p>	<p>Events</p> <p>6.1 DP reported that the events Group had met once with a further meeting planned in late June. Also that a system for administering funding to regional events, training courses etc was now established, subject to some fine tuning. The events budget for 2016/17 was broadly as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to six deer group training events - £3000 • Up to six 'outward facing' public events - £3000 • 1 main event for members (partnered with SL&E) - £500 • Scottish Game Fair - £1000 <p>6.2 Current planned events and displays are as follows:</p> <p>30.04 – 02.05.16 Bennachie Centre, Aberdeen (DOYD display only)</p> <p>14.05 – 15.05.16 NLDG DSC 1 (+ DOYD display)</p> <p>08.06.16 Low ground deer management event, Borders</p> <p>30.06 – 04.07.16 Scottish Game Fair, Scone Palace</p> <p>31.07 – 01.08.16 Turriff Show (DOYD display only)</p> <p>09.08 – 10.08.16 Wild about A'den (DOYD display only)</p> <p>30.09.16 Scent hounds seminar, Dalkeith (BBDG)</p> <p>02.10.16 Shot site event/scent hounds, Strathdon (BBDG)</p> <p>6.3 Recent events that have already taken place in 2016 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLDG DMQ 1 • SLDG Meeting of Minds event (attended by Minister) • IDDMG First Aid Course <p>6.4 Additional proposed events in 2016 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fife event • Tilhill forestry event (10.06 - 11.06) • South Scotland event in Autumn <p>6.5 CS said that BASC might be able to take the DOYD display to the RSPB Big Nature Festival (21.05 – 22.05) at Musselburgh.</p> <p>6.6 There had been some concern reported over attendees at LDNS supported courses coming from outside Scotland. DP said he would ask BASC and BDS what their protocol was on restricting attendance.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Scottish venison</p> <p>7.1 DP gave a brief update on the venison situation and the follow-up to the E coli O157 outbreak.</p> <p>7.2 The letter from DQ to RC regarding the development of chill facilities for the central belt was discussed. DP said that this was also on the agenda of the Scottish Venison Partnership and could possibly be the subject of a future application for SRDP support through the Food Marketing and Innovation Grant Scheme. At the previous SVP meeting three options had been discussed – (a) one central larder, (b) one larder per lowland deer group (or shared larder between groups), and (c) extending butcher's premises to incorporate deer larder/chill facilities. DFy advised that main livestock sector is looking at possible mobile slaughter house facilities for remoter areas bringing guaranteed food safety and hygiene standards and also geographical flexibility.</p>

	<p>7.3 JH said that this was important from an SNH perspective and was possibly an aspect of the proposed landscape scale demonstration project for which National Heritage Lottery Funding was being sought.</p> <p>7.4 RK said that political support was evident for a South Lanarkshire initiative, and this would present a major opportunity not just for local produce to be supplied locally but also as an incentive for deer managers to cull deer in increasing numbers, so meeting environmental targets.</p>
8.	<p>CWD</p> <p>JB gave an update on the CWD situation and that a TSE case had been confirmed in Norway. He also advised the folly of importing reindeer from Scandinavia. An official announcement was expected from DEFRA. BDS will continue to monitor the situation and developments. JB advised that those travelling to and from Norway for stalking should remain highly vigilant with regard to possible contamination.</p>
9.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 16 August, 10.00am, Bridge of Allan (to be confirmed).</p>

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