

# LOWLAND DEER NETWORK SCOTLAND

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 17 April 2018

At the Leapark Hotel, Bo'ness Road, Grangemouth FK3 9BX

### In attendance

Richard Cooke, Chairman  
Dick Playfair, Secretary  
Donald Fraser, SNH (DF)  
Jamie Hammond, SNH (JH)  
Kevin McCulloch, SNH (KM)  
Colin Edwards, FCS (CE)  
Angus Corby, Transport Scotland (AC)  
Ian Fergusson, Forest Enterprise (FE)  
Jamie Farquhar, Confor (JF)  
Lisa Roberts, NFUS (LR)  
John Bruce, BDS (JB)  
James Govan (JG)  
Mark Telfer, EELDG (MT)  
Jim Paxton, WLDG (JP)  
Glen Heggs, WSADG (GH)  
Alasdair B Young  
Peter Semple  
Bob Smith  
Blair McFarlane  
Alan Balfour

### Apologies

Alex Stoddart  
John Campbell-Smith  
George Ritchie  
David Bruce  
Colin Shedden  
Iain Robertson  
Robert Sharp  
David Fyffe  
Maitland Rankin  
Jimmy Simpson  
Ian Talboys  
Hugh O'Neill  
David Quarrell  
Ron Smith  
Tom Ritchie  
Andy Gibbs  
Jane Rosengrant  
Jochen Langbein  
Karen Ramoo  
Mark Wraitham  
Peter Keyser

1.	<p><b>Previous minutes of AGM on 28 April 2017 and matters arising</b></p> <p>1.1 The minutes of the AGM held on 28 April were approved, proposed by PS, and seconded by JF.</p> <p>1.2 Under 5.5, the question of irrecoverable VAT had been investigated but like other organisations not registered for VAT it was difficult to see how such a situation could be avoided.</p>
2.	<p><b>Chairman's report</b></p> <p>RC advised that his report for the year would be on the website and would also be the lead in the LDNS annual review to be published at the end of June.</p>
3.	<p><b>Elections</b></p> <p>3.1 RC explained that the position of Vice Chair had been vacant since Mark Lazzeri had moved to Islay. He proposed Colin Shedden (with his agreement but in his absence) for this position, seconded by JG and the proposal carried with no other nominations for election.</p> <p>3.2 Both Alex Hogg (Borders representative) and Ron Smith (Fife) were due for re-election and proposed by RC, seconded by JP.</p>
4.	<p><b>Annual accounts</b></p> <p>4.1 RC thanked subscribing Members and the agencies for their support and said that broadly speaking the LDNS finances were in good heart based on the available budget. All figures included VAT where chargeable.</p> <p>4.2 The year end showed a net surplus of income over expenditure of £4,402.</p> <p>4.3 In response to a question RC said that membership income remained small, that Groups could benefit from a reduced membership fee, but it was not known how many members there were through Group membership. Indeed, not all Groups were members.</p> <p>4.4 RC said it was important that LDNS was seen as a member network.</p> <p>4.5 The final accounts for year 2017/18 will be posted on the website.</p> <p>4.6 It was noted that the Accountants charge for the year had been included, but not yet been charged and so had been placed into accruals.</p> <p>4.7 CE said that FCS was at this stage unable to commit funding support for the coming year, and should money become available this was likely to be significantly less.</p> <p>4.8 RC said that from a Government perspective LDNS represented good value, and an easy access point for Government to reach the deer sector in the Lowlands. CE said he recognised that, but that FCS did not have a core function to support the deer sector.</p>

	<p>4.9 AC said that for Transport Scotland deer management was not a priority, but that maintaining safe and reliable roads was, and LDNS presented the best option with regard to deer issues.</p> <p>4.10 JH said that the SNH budget had been approved and that he could commit to LDNS for the next year.</p> <p>4.11 DP said that he would revise the annual budget on the basis of no contribution from FCS.</p>
5.	<p><b>SNH report</b></p> <p><u>5.1 Pilot Project</u></p> <p>5.1.1 The pilot project covers 800 sq km to the north of Glasgow, bounded by the M80, M9 and the south of Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park – an area representative of a mix of all aspects of lowland deer habitat. Species are predominantly roe with some red. There is no LDG in the area although the area is covered by a number of deer managers. The project is being undertaken by SRUC.</p> <p>5.1.2 Stage 1 involves fact finding, mapping and assessing all available data covering for example, cull numbers, number of stalkers, DVCs, impacts (agriculture, nature, woodland, designated sites, public safety), availability of larder facilities and chills and then identifying gaps. Stage 1 completes in June 2018.</p> <p>5.1.3 Stage 2 covers a further 12 months and looks at what elements are missing and what could be done better.</p> <p><u>5.2 Local Authorities</u></p> <p>SNH was also now identifying local authorities where deer management was more of a critical requirement, and what they were doing, whether they were demonstrating compliance with the Code. Stirling Council was being treated as a test case, with step 1 assessing the Council’s understanding of deer and deer management. Step 2 would take the LA through the deer management planning process, awareness of the Code, WDNA etc. SNH is also working with West Lothian Council and with City of Glasgow and N Lanarkshire on the 7 Lochs Project, but for many LAs this was completely new territory.</p> <p><u>5.3 Sharing good practice</u></p> <p>The event that had been staged in 2017 was due to be repeated., possibly in late Autumn, once the Lowland Deer Panel had completed its work. The intention was to have two pilot LA deer management plans as the focus, it would be targeted at officials and elected members, and would be a joint event with LDNS.</p>

#### 5.4 Lowland deer panel

5.4.1 The panel was starting to get to grips with the issues and had circulated/was circulating a questionnaire for responses. The six-month timeframe for the life of the panel was recognised as very short and might be extended.

5.4.2 The members of the panel had been selected on the basis of skills, knowledge and expertise, and was not about those on the panel representing their own interests.

5.4.3 From the questionnaire it was noted that availability of facilities for handling lowland deer was an issue and a blockage and this could once again raise the potential for a pilot for co-operative larders. However, it was recognised that there were difficulties in assembling and assessing the data to present a suitable business case for this.

5.4.4 JB said that there was also a welfare issue with increasing cull numbers and inevitable problems with orphaned deer. RC agreed that maintaining high welfare standards was critical.

#### 6. **Events and activities**

6.1 DP gave a brief report on events and activities for the year. These included:

- Where the buck stops – deer and traffic event in Gullane
- Central Scotland Green Network Edinburgh conference
- Evening meeting on bullets and ballistics at Airth
- GWCT Scottish Game Fair stand (with ADMG)
- WLDG first aid course (supported)
- NLDG DSC1 course (supported)
- Evening meeting at East Kilbride with Scott Country International
- Evening reception at Scottish Parliament with SNH
- Deer Dog Day, SW Scotland (supported)
- Guest presentation at BDS NE England meeting

6.2 Plus production of Summer Newsletter/Annual Report and regular LDNS E-News to Subscribers.

6.3 Coming events would include:

- Habitat impact assessment awareness day at Flanders Moss
- DVCs and deer management at St Ann's, Lockerbie with GDDG and SL&E
- DSC1 course (supported)
- GWCT Scottish Game Fair

6.4 JB advised that the two-day BDS conference was to be held in Edinburgh and that those from LDNS would be welcome.

	<p>6.5 JF said that an event with the private forestry sector was being considered, but that in addition there could be speaking opportunities to advise forestry companies about deer management at their meetings on 26 September at Huntly, 24 October at Lockerbie and 31 October at Stirling.</p> <p>6.6 DP said that a new protocol for LDNS support for training had been agreed and that funding would be available to groups and individuals using a new form but that LDNS could not contribute to either registration or certification costs.</p>
7.	<p><b>Venison</b></p> <p>7.1 It was noted that venison and meat hygiene were currently issues very much to the fore, that a meeting with processors had been organised by FSS and a series of potential actions produced from that meeting, and that a further session was planned.</p> <p>7.2 RC said that FSS was taking a close interest in AGHEs and was encouraging local authorities to do the same with deer larders.</p> <p>7.3 SVP had had a follow-up session with FSS. FSS does not have prime responsibility for the producer/stalker end of the food chain this being the responsibility of Local Authorities, particularly in relation to the registration and inspection of deer larders. FSS involvement is mainly in the processing stage but it is likely to be engaging with local authorities to ensure that all are dealing adequately with their area of responsibility. It is clear that both FSS and the local authorities will now be working to identify bad practice and to put an end to it.</p> <p>7.4 The venison market was facing increasing demand, and the Cabinet Secretary had recently held a venison summit. It was seen as a valuable part of Scotland's natural larder. The outcome would be a strategic plan for Scottish venison produced by the sector to 2030 for launch later in the year.</p> <p>7.5 It was also hoped that the deer health project being undertaken by the Moredun Research Institute might show that the health status of deer with regard to E. coli O157 was comparatively good.</p> <p>7.6 It was emphasised that gut-shot carcasses should never go into the human food chain.</p> <p>7.7 DP advised that SVP was consulting internally on the FSS action points and would revert to FSS. It was also intending to put a campaign in place with SQWV and Best Practice to promote meat hygiene awareness in the venison food chain; 3 short films on this topic had been produced and further activity including holding seminars at the GWCT Scottish Game Fair was planned.</p>

8. **Any other business**

8.1 Sporting rates

8.1.1 RC said that this was covered in his annual report.

8.1.2 JG raised questions on the appeal process and the failure of the Assessor to engage with a query. RC said that factual errors should be able to be sorted outside the appeal process.

8.1.3 It was noted that some leaseholders were already receiving debt collection letters where there had been no coordination/liaison between landlord and sporting tenant.

8.1.4 JB said as far as he was aware that Perth & Kinross was sorting out queries on the telephone.

8.2 Tick-borne encephalitis study

Attention was drawn to a study being undertaken in England but with samples sought from the whole UK and Europe on tick-borne encephalitis.

8.3 There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

DRAFT