

## Meeting of Lowland Deer Network Scotland Development Committee

At: Scion House, Stirling University Innovation Park  
 On: Wednesday 23 January 2013

Present: Richard Cooke (RC), Chairman  
 Ron Smith (RS), Vice Chairman, Fife  
 Dick Playfair (DP), Secretary  
 Ian Fergusson (IF), Forest Enterprise  
 Gordon Patterson (GP), Forest Enterprise  
 John Bruce (JB), BDS  
 Glenn Heggs (GH), SW Scotland DMG/UPM  
 Jamie Hammond (JH), SNH  
 Kenny Wilmitt (KW), BASC Scotland  
 Daye Tucker (DT), NFUS  
 James Govan (JG) (Stalker, Ayrshire)  
 Angus Corby (ACor), Transport Scotland  
 Alex Paul (AP), WLDMG  
 David Quarrell (DQ) (SLDG)  
 Matthew Love (NLDMG)  
 Robert Sharp (RS), Stalker (Renfrewshire)  
 Alisdair Colyton (AC), Farmer (Angus)

Apologies: Ian Talboys (IT), Aberdeen Council  
 David Fyffe (DF), Scottish Land & Estates  
 Alex Hogg (AH), SGA  
 Jane Begg (JBg), West Lothian Council  
 George Ritchie (GR), Banff & Buchan DMG  
 Ian Laing (IL) (Fife Police)  
 Derek Kneller (DK) (NLDMG)  
 Malcolm Muir (MM), South Lanarkshire Council, COSLA  
 Mike Flynn (MF), SSPCA

		Action
1.	<p><b>Previous minutes and matters arising</b>            DP advised that Derek Kneller has been added to the 'apologies' for preceding minutes having been omitted in error.</p> <p><b>Education</b>            DP said that the education aspect had been discussed with both RHET and Pete Moore of SNH, and that there was already a strong link through SNH with RHET farming/low ground events.</p> <p>JH endorsed this, advising that there were two events for schools coming on 28 February at Cluny Clays, Fife, and 7 and 8 March at Wallets Mart, Castle Douglas. He said that these were good events, with up to 150 primary school pupils attending each day.</p> <p>Alex Paul and Ron Smith said they would be available to help on 28 February, and Glen Heggs possibly on 7 or 8 March.</p>	<p>AP,RS            GH</p>

	<p>KW said BASC also ran farm days with RHET and RNCI.</p> <p>DT said that in terms of broader education there was a growing problem with liver fluke, where there was a huge amount of ignorance.</p> <p>JB said that BDS had this in hand, that it was tracking scale and intensity. While not fatal to red deer, it was fatal to roe. Currently collating information with a view to next steps.</p> <p>DT said that this provided an opportunity to reach farmers. Danger that farming sector would blame deer for spread of fluke into their beef and sheep. NFUS and Moredun also taking action.</p> <p>DP said that it was important that the story, however promoted, was managed so there was no risk to the venison sector or of deer populations being shot out if seen as threat to livestock. Suggestion that any information-sharing should be done with Moredun.</p> <p>RC said that it was important not to present an alarmist picture. JB said that all understanding was that meat was not contaminated and was fit for human consumption.</p> <p>He emphasised that liver fluke is not a notifiable disease but a parasite.</p> <p>GP said there might be some positives that could be drawn from this incident; for example practical value in reducing deer populations in certain areas, and controlled culling would reduce risk of further spread.</p> <p>RS said that to his knowledge it was not present in deer in Renfrewshire and Ayrshire.</p> <p>RC suggested that DP should be copied in on any PR planned by other organisations on this issue.</p>	ALL
2.	<p><b>Draft AGM minutes</b> Circulated (attached) for comment. Any input back to RC/DP please.</p>	DP
3.	<p><b>Chairman's Report</b> RC said that as this meeting followed on soon after that in December meeting there was nothing new to report.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Finance</b> RC said that total income for year 2012/13 would be just over £28,000, with the majority of this as contributions from SNH, FCS and Transport Scotland for which he was most grateful.</p>	

	<p>RC reported that expenditure to date was running at £17,856 but that there were further costs to incur before year end that would leave just a small surplus to carry forward.</p> <p>RC said that a meeting had been held prior to the Executive Committee with the three funding bodies and it was agreed that they would contribute the same level of support for a further year to 31.3.14, against a budgeted expenditure of £27,600.</p> <p>SNH (JH) had produced a paper setting out three possible options for the way forward and funding for LDNS. This to be circulated to the Committee (attached).</p> <p>RC said that there had been discussion over whether LDNS should continue as a subscription organisation and that there were arguments for and against. Was enough being offered for the £25 subscription; did it give members the right feeling of ownership; should the subscription be reduced to a more notional figure?</p> <p>ACor said there should be a subscription of some form, although he acknowledged that many would be resistant to paying it.</p> <p>RS said that much depended on what members wanted to get out of LDNS and that it was harder to justify the subscription when all information was being disseminated to both members and non members.</p> <p>DT said that it must be about getting 'buy in' from a broader population. She suggested that perhaps NFUS and SL&amp;E could offer LDNS membership to their members as a free extra as part of their respective subscriptions for those organisations.</p> <p>JB said that this idea was attractive, as an alternative, a notional membership of £1 could be levied to build the network.</p> <p>AC said that a survey should be done among farmers to establish their commitment to/understanding of deer control and that this could then be used to make LDNS more relevant to them.</p> <p>DQ said that his Group, SLDMG, were happy to pay a group subscription and that membership through subscription was not an issue.</p>	<p>DP</p>
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	<p>RC said that this was encouraging, as it demonstrated that it was cost beneficial to be a member through a DMG subscription, which possibly worked out at around £5 for membership.</p> <p>RC said that the objective was to raise awareness of the issues rather than to raise money.</p> <p>Alex Paul said that he thought individual membership was a good idea.</p> <p>GP said that public sector funding was effectively ‘pump priming’ and how LDNS was to be funded in the medium to longer term needed to be determined as ongoing public sector finance could not be guaranteed. What was required was to get people involved and to see its value, and to be sustainable it would need individual subscriptions.</p> <p>RC said that a target for non-public funding would be sensible – possibly 25 per cent after 3 years.</p> <p>In conclusion, RC said that the subscription levels had been agreed at the AGM, and these should continue to be promoted and to attract new members at least through 2013/14.</p> <p>The ‘free membership’ idea for NFUS and SL&amp;E members was good in terms of spreading awareness and RC asked DT if she would raise with these organisations.</p> <p>DQ said that the value of DMGs and the service they deliver should be recognised by public bodies.</p> <p>This item would be discussed again at next meeting.</p>	DT
5.	<p><b>Competence</b> Competence and, in particular, regard to those with learning difficulties was raised.</p> <p>JB said that special consideration had been made for this and that the training organisations, BASC, BDS etc could be approached for help, and that every impediment was covered.</p> <p>JB said that the only way to ensure unilateral uptake of competence to the prescribed level was through current schemes, and that the opportunity for opting out on the basis of ‘grandfather’s rights’ had passed some years ago.</p> <p>RS said that, as an assessor, he knew that what happened on the ground was totally different from learning at home or in the classroom.</p>	

6.	<p><b>Membership</b> RC advised that he had been approached with the regard to the possible setting up of a new Group; also that two existing groups had agreed at their AGMs that they would join LDNS.</p> <p>RC said that the SW Scotland Group was arguably too big and diverse, and could possibly do with restructuring.</p> <p>There had been further enquiries to join the Angus Initiative.</p>	
7.	<p><b>AGM Review</b> Turn out had been disappointing although it was felt that the venue was well placed for the event.</p> <p>DP said that, because of the Sunday booking, the hotel had been very favourably discounted. All felt that despite low turnout Sunday was a good day for such an event although perhaps not so close to Christmas.</p> <p>Suggested for 2013/14 AGM to move the event back to February or March?</p>	
8.	<p><b>Events and Initiatives</b></p> <p>8.1 <u>SLDMG event at East Kilbride</u> DQ reported that the Lowland Deer Management Awareness day on 2 March was fully subscribed. E mail addresses were being taken from any who could not be accommodated for a possible follow-up event.</p> <p>RC encouraged others who might wish to adopt this formula to go on the day and see how it worked. DQ said he was grateful for the support from other DMGs.</p> <p>8.2 <u>WLDMG Level 1 Assessment Day</u> 6 April, Harburn Estate. AP reported good interest for this, and assistance from S and N Lanarkshire DMGs. DP said that a photographer should be present at this event, and will organise.</p> <p>8.3 <u>WLDMG Information day for farmers</u> Agreed this should be held back until any special promotion with NFUS had been decided.</p> <p>8.4 <u>BDS events</u> JB said that BDS held in region of 180 events per year but that LDNS could not expect to 'cherry pick' these for showing on its website.</p> <p>JH said it was important that events reached beyond those in the stalking sector. In response to a question from RS, he said that Best Practice was being 're-modelled' but would continue, as would 'deer in and around town' events.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>DP</p>

<p>8.5</p>	<p><u>NFUS Regional Branch Meetings</u>  Agreed that LDNS should try and get slots at these meetings to make presentations on deer management. DT said she would approach Christine Cuthbertson, Regional Manager NFUS, and Jonnie Hall, NFUS Director of Regions, to discuss.</p> <p>Glen Heggs asked for an NFUS contact in Ayrshire to follow-up; likewise RS in Fife, and JB for Perth and Kinross. DP to source list of area managers from NFUS and pass contact on.</p>	<p>DT</p> <p>DP</p>
<p>8.6</p>	<p><u>Local Authorities</u>  Understood that JBg and MM were pulling together a list of local authority contacts. Suggestion that there should be a further awareness day for local authority staff, both senior managers and countryside rangers, and possibly arrange to make a presentation at a future COSLA meeting.</p>	
<p>8.7</p>	<p><u>Stalking Show – Kelso, 23 and 24 March</u>  Attendance at this agreed. DP said he would set up the stand on Friday/Saturday and return on Sunday to take it down. RC, DQ, GH, AC and JG all agreed to be available to man the stand at some point throughout the event.</p>	<p>All as indicated</p>
<p>8.8</p>	<p><u>Scottish Game Fair</u>  Agreed to stand-share again with ADMG and Sporting Rifle. Volunteers to help to man the stand to be recruited at next meeting.</p>	<p>RC, DP</p>
<p>8.9</p>	<p><u>Butchery demonstrations</u>  DP advised that Bruce Brymer, who had been brilliant in doing butchery demos in the past, had now retired from the Scottish Venison Partnership. However it was hoped that further demos could be set up with SVP, SFMTA and SGA in Perth, the West and South West during latter part 2014.</p>	<p>DP</p>
<p>8.10</p>	<p><u>Royal Highland Show 2013</u>  Possible presence discussed. RHS is expensive for a stand, and intensive in terms of staffing. If possible, then LDNS should seek to have a presence on member organisation stands.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>Publications and website</b></p>	
<p>9.1</p>	<p><u>Website</u>  DP said that the plan was to have a separate website for LDNS at the earliest opportunity as the main focus for providing information, supported by E News bulletins and a printed newsletter. Development of this was in hand.</p>	<p>DP</p>

<p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p>	<p><u>Newsletter</u> Agreed that the printed newsletter should be delayed until situation with a possible NFUS and/or SL&amp;E member 'incentive' known.</p> <p><u>Scottish Farmer</u> DP also advised that an article by Ron Rose, edited and published in the last LDNS Newsletter with Jonnie Hall of NFUS as author, would be revisited and provided to Scottish Farmer with advertising support from LDNS for a small feature.</p>	<p>DP</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p><b>Meeting with Minister</b> RC said that he and DP were meeting with Paul Wheelhouse MSP principally to discuss ADMG business on 21 February and that he would also be given an update on LDNS at that point.</p> <p>GP asked for the brief for the Minister to be circulated to funding bodies in advance of the meeting.</p>	<p>DP</p>
<p>11.</p> <p>11.1</p>	<p><b>Current issues</b></p> <p><u>Strategy</u> GP said that he felt some strategic thinking was required. Whilst it was important to get farmers and deer managers to focus on local issues, such as damage, over-population, poaching, or RTAs, there was a need for more thought at woodland planning stage – eg the consequences of creating perfect habitat for deer through woodland expansion in central Scotland.</p> <p>A discussion forum could possibly be set up with forestry companies through ConFor with Tilhill, Fountain, Scottish Woodlands and others as start point.</p> <p>Also, the availability of current data should be reviewed and a project set up to integrate what was available – for instance data from RTAs being overlaid with that of woodland impacts, possibly map based</p> <p>This could for instance identify where it would be helpful to set up new DMGs to manage specific issues.</p> <p>Agreed that FCS, TS and SNH would take forward.</p> <p>JH said that only landholdings of 50 Ha or upwards required a deer management plan. As a consequence many smaller woodlands, such as community woodlands, had no DMP in place and deer were not considered until they started to cause problems.</p>	<p>RC, DP</p> <p>GP, JH, ACor</p>

11.2	<p><b>Recovery of shot deer from public land</b> This was discussed at length, and the need for a clear, universal protocol suggested.</p> <p>JB outlined a number of different scenarios in relation to following up a wounded deer onto someone else's ground, the legal obligations placed on the stalker, and the considerations that he/she had to undertake if choosing decisions counter to these.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would be useful if all public bodies had a protocol in place and acknowledged that there were safety issues with regard to the public highway. Transport Scotland was addressing this in its future roads maintenance contracts.</p> <p>JB said that stalkers should always have the number of their Police contact in their phone; that the Police should always be advised in such instances; and an incident number should always be obtained.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Contact list</b> An up to date contact list for the Committee should be circulated.</p>	DP
13.	<p><b>SNH update</b> JH advised that Anton Watson would be joining SNH staff full time to focus on local authorities.</p> <p>Also feedback had now been received for the Best Practice Guide 'Deer in and around towns' and this would now go to the steering group for final approval.</p>	
14.	<p><b>Police Wildlife Crime events</b> DP advised that there were two relevant Police events imminent.</p> <p>Lothian and Borders Police event at Scottish Borders College, Galashiels, 6 February 2013 from 7.00pm. Contact <a href="mailto:ainrhamilton@lbp.pnn.police.uk">ainrhamilton@lbp.pnn.police.uk</a></p> <p>Fife Constabulary event, 21 March. Further details to be advised. Contact <a href="mailto:Ian.Laing@fife.pnn.police.uk">Ian.Laing@fife.pnn.police.uk</a></p>	
15.	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> Wednesday 10 April, 10.30am, Dumyat Room, Scion House, Stirling University Innovation Park.</p>	