

Meeting of Lowland Deer Network Scotland Development Committee

At: Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld, Glasgow
On: Sunday 9 December 2012

Present: Richard Cooke (RC), Acting Chairman
Dick Playfair (DP), Secretary
Ian Fergusson (IF), Forest Enterprise
Glenn Heggs (GH), SW Scotland DMG/UPM
Jamie Hammond (JH), SNH
Ian Talboys (IT), Aberdeen Council
Ron Smith (RS), Fife
Daye Tucker (DT), NFUS
David Fyffe (DF), Scottish Land & Estates
Alex Hogg (AH), SGA
Jane Begg (JBg), West Lothian Council
Alex Paul (AP), WLDMG
Robert Sharp (RS), Stalker (Renfrewshire)
Alisdair Colyton (AC), Farmer (Angus)
George Ritchie (GR), Banff & Buchan DMG
Ian Laing (Fife Police)
James Bell (SLDG – deputy for David Quarrell)

Apologies: Kenny Wilmitt (KW), BASC Scotland
Mike Flynn (MF), SSPCA
James Govan (JG) (Stalker, Ayrshire)
Angus Corby (ACor), Transport Scotland
Derek Kneller (NLDMG)
David Quarrell (SLDG)
Malcolm Muir (MM), South Lanarkshire Council, COSLA
John Bruce (JB), BDS

1.	<p><u>Previous minutes and matters arising</u></p> <p>RC passed swiftly through the minutes from the previous meeting of 5 September 2012, with the majority of points and matters arising to be covered at the next Executive Committee meeting, and said that the main purpose of the meeting was to plan the immediate requirements of the AGM.</p> <p>In a brief Chairman's report, RC said that since the last meeting he had given a presentation at a BDS/SCA event at Lochter, attended a sub-group meeting to plan a deer management 'taster day', plus an ADMG meeting, a Scottish Venison Partnership meeting, and Deer Panel meetings.</p> <p>He said that for the AGM he had a Powerpoint presentation that would set the scene and remind those attending of the progress of LDNS since its launch in November 2011, including formation of the Development Committee, drafting the Constitution, and funding.</p> <p>He said that the Constitution would be circulated, and he would talk through important aspects of it, linking them back to the objectives of LDNS.</p>	
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	<p>RC said that the financial report would take the form of a financial statement and not an annual report since the LDNS year runs concurrently with the financial year, April to end March.</p> <p>He said that LDNS would be solvent through to end March, although membership numbers were small, but will grow. On reflection he said that the membership aspect should be regarded as secondary; however membership did show a commitment to the Network.</p> <p>On future funding, RC said that he had been in discussion with SNH, FCS/FE and Transport Scotland for further funding for another year. He said that the Network was now based on good geographical representation and involved a good cross-section of organisations, but would need to deliver a range of public sector objectives.</p>	
2.	<p><u>AGM Elections</u> RC reviewed the election of members to what would be the Executive Committee. There was one nomination for Chairman at present, himself, (although there may be other nominations from the floor at the AGM), and RC would leave the Chair for this with DP requesting a proposer and seconder.</p> <p>Ron Smith was the single nomination for Vice Chairman.</p> <p>RC reiterated the nominations for regional representatives (as per minutes of the previous meeting) and the plan was to have all elected 'en bloc'.</p> <p>The public agency and local authority representatives did not require election.</p> <p>The secretarial position was an appointment not requiring election.</p> <p>The financial management and book keeping was undertaken by Dalhousie Estates' office/staff and a small annual charge was made for this.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Other discussion</u> There followed some general discussion in relation to LDNS, its activities, and challenges.</p> <p>DT said that the point of engagement with Local Authorities (LAs) was not always clear, or the same from one LA to another. Also that it would be a good time to raise the deer management issue through Community Planning Managers who were key to providing what the public wants and needs in LA areas.</p>	

	<p>RC said that there were some LAs that had no deer management or culling policy and that there was a long way to go in terms of education and raising awareness of responsibilities.</p> <p>He said that a useful event in 2013 would be a seminar for countryside officers; however JH said that the feedback from the previous events for LAs at Stirling had been disappointing.</p> <p>JBg said that it was easy to single out LAs as the problem area; however the issue did not always lie with LAs and that they do not own as much land and have as much responsibility as is often assumed.</p> <p>DT said that in terms of ‘delivering public goods’ there was a need to encourage farmers in particular areas (such as Stirling) to manage deer collectively, and this might then qualify for support through SRDP.</p> <p>RS said that predominantly deer management came down to money, and if the money wasn’t available to do the job then it was not a priority.</p> <p>RC said that 2013 needed LDNS initiatives that would raise awareness and change culture at public, local authority and individual level.</p> <p>A contact list for each LA would be useful, as it was not always clear who had responsibility for deer, for instance in some areas Trading Standards had responsibility!</p> <p>RC closed the discussion saying that it had given some useful indicators as to priority areas for LDNS through 2013.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Agency Review</u></p> <p>RC asked both IF for FC/FE and JH for SNH what their thoughts were on how LDNS had performed through Year 1.</p> <p>IF said that he was very encouraged by the way that LDNS had come together, and that Year 1 was bound to be difficult. However, Year 2 should be more interesting and productive, and FCS/FE would continue to support LDNS financially for a further 12 months.</p> <p>JH said that it was going to be tough to get representation across such a broad cross-section together, and there was going to be the ‘what’s in it for me?’ view of some of the target membership. Some people who had signed up would see a benefit, but not all. SNH had to consider carefully where its money should be spent, and needed to see continuing positive outcomes through 2013.</p>	

	<p>He said that the meeting with COSLA and Transport Scotland in the Autumn had been 'reasonably constructive' with an agreement to develop a communications package for COSLA members.</p> <p>RC said that the approach would be a 'drip feed', slow and steady.</p> <p>DT asked at what point the focus of the Network should change from being just deer to wildlife in general, including beavers, to reflect the wider emergent wildlife remit.</p> <p>RC said that this was happening at Deer Management Round Table already with a view that deer should not be considered 'in a vacuum' and that thinking at an ecosystem level was required.</p> <p>RC said that a priority in 2013 would be to get the message across to farmers, crofter farmers, smallholders and young farmers via the NFUS and other organisations.</p> <p>DT said that the message could be spread through Region and Branch NFUS meetings. Where there were incentives for farmers to manage deer this would help.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u> The next meeting of the Executive Committee will take place at 10.30am on 23 January 2013 at Scion House, Stirling.</p>	