

Meeting of Lowland Deer Network Scotland Executive Committee

At: The Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld
On: Sunday 26 January 2014

Present: Richard Cooke (RC), Chairman
Dick Playfair (DP), Secretary
Ian Fergusson (IF), Forest Enterprise
Donald Fraser (SNH)
Jamie Hammond (JH), SNH
Anton Watson (AW), SNH
Ian Talboys (IT), Aberdeen Council
Alex Paul (AP), WLDMG
David Quarrell (DQ) SLDG
Peter Semple (PS), Inverclyde DMG
Derek Kneller (DK) NLDMG
Alex Hogg (AH), SGA
Daye Tucker (DT), NFUS
David Fyffe (DFy), Scottish Land & Estates
Iain Laing (IL) Police Scotland
Andy Mavin (AM) Police Scotland
Glenn Heggs (GH), SW Scotland DMG/UPM
James Govan (JG) Stalker, Ayrshire
Robert Sharp (RSh), Stalker, Renfrewshire

Attending: Ian Clark, SACS
Alex Stoddart, SACS
Kayleigh Hogg

Apologies or not present:
Ron Smith (RS) Vice Chairman
Gordon Patterson (GP), Forest Enterprise
Angus Corby (ACor), Transport Scotland
John Bruce (JB) BDS
Kenny Willmitt (KW), BASC Scotland
Jane Begg (JBg), West Lothian Council
Malcolm Muir (MM), South Lanarkshire Council, COSLA
George Ritchie (GR), Banff & Buchan DMG
Mike Flynn (MF), SSPCA

1.	<p><u>Introduction to meeting</u></p> <p>1.1 RC said that this meeting of the Committee was mainly to address issues and housekeeping matters arising at the AGM and that a further meeting, scheduled for Tuesday 25 February, would pick up items carried forward.</p> <p>1.2 RC said that the network had been launched in 2011 and formalized in 2013. Until the AGM at end 2012 there had been a development committee but this had become the Executive Committee at that time. A Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary had been elected/appointed, and annual accounts going forward were to be approved at the AGM.</p>	

2.	<p><u>Chairman's presentation to the AGM</u></p> <p>2.1.1 RC talked through his presentation to be made to the AGM.</p> <p>2.1.2 RC said that he had attended 4 Committee meetings and 2 meetings of the events sub committee, and that a joint LDNS/SNH project plan was in development which would be a working document and able to be refined over time.</p> <p>2.1.3 RC welcomed Inverclyde DMG and thanked DK for his part in mentoring and helping to set up this group.</p> <p>2.1.4 RC said that some restructuring was required, particularly in SW Scotland, and that some smaller groups were emerging. Another 4 groups were in consideration, and he hoped by the next AGM that group membership would be up to around 10.</p> <p>2.1.5 RC reported that the Angus Deer Initiative was due to meet again in early Spring.</p> <p>2.1.6 RC then ran through a number of other points from his AGM presentation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending LDNS representation • Encouraging farming sector engagement – this was very important and LDNS should offer Committee members as speakers to NFUS meetings for example. • Private forestry company engagement – LDNS needed to get closer to the private forestry organisations through their representative organization ConFor. • Conservation Bodies – RC had extended an invitation for Scottish Environment Link to join the Committee, hopefully to be taken up by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. • Butchers – a continuing job to do with SFMTA particularly on the venison butchery front and a course being considered. <p>Other important aspects included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence – LDNS involved in Competence Steering Group, and new leaflet produced. • CWD – raising awareness through membership etc. <p>2.1.7 Looking forward, LDNS would build on 2013 activity – there had been presence at the Borders Stalking Fair, SLDG Competence Awareness Day, WLDMG DSC Level 1 course, Scottish Game Fair and 2 wildlife crime events. The proposed DIAT event had been cancelled, there had been 2 low ground events for butchers, and 2 school events with RHET.</p> <p>2.1.8 On the political front there had been a meeting with the Minister for Environment and the submission to the RACCE Committee. RC had given evidence to the Committee for ADMG and LDNS.</p>	
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<p>3.</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p>3.1 RACCE Committee 3.1.1 DF said that this was mainly focused on deer management issues in the upland deer range, and that this aspect was “seriously under the microscope.” However there was now a limited period of time during which upland DMGs could be made more effective, but there was pressure to go “further and faster.”</p>	

	<p>3.1.2 From an LDNS perspective there was not the same perception that deer are a problem on the low ground, but MSPs particularly need to be aware of future problems, and engaging with Local Authorities. LDNS had “set out its stall” in its evidence to the RACCE Committee,</p> <p><u>3.2 Humane Dispatch Course</u></p> <p>3.2.1 PS asked whether there was support available through LDNS for attendance at the BDS humane dispatch course. DK has prepared a draft advice note that is currently with Transport Scotland for comment. There was discussion over how exactly LDNS should get involved. RSh warned that this area was a “minefield”.</p> <p>3.2.2 Agreed that DK should say a few words on his DVC guidance project during the AGM.</p> <p><u>3.3 RACCE Committee and political engagement – ongoing</u></p> <p>DT said that it was important, having made a positive contribution to the RACCE Committee, that engagement with politicians continued, and particularly with the potential threat of a “one size fits everyone” approach to deer management. DT suggested using the website www.writetothem.com to reach MSPs, Councillors and others.</p> <p><u>3.4 Assessment of how LDNS is doing</u></p> <p>RC asked the Committee how they felt LDNS was doing. DT said that it was doing fine but would like to go faster, that with the 2015 CAP there was the opportunity to integrate deer management more into environmental prescriptions, that the NFUS production-driven menu was not the only option, and that Ministers needed the deer management facts. LDNS should also be identifying alternatives for SRDP support – cold stores/chills, butchery training etc</p> <p><u>3.5 West Lothian</u></p> <p>3.5.1 AP said that the addition of more estates in West Lothian had expanded the operations of the WLDMG – Hopetoun, Dundas Castle and Dalmeny. This was a positive move.</p> <p>3.5.2 AP also said he had minor concerns about those who didn’t pay a subscription benefiting from the investment of those that did.</p> <p><u>3.6 Inverclyde and Dumbarton DMG</u></p> <p>PS said that the launch event for the new group would take place between 9 and 16 June (date now agreed as Friday 13 June)</p>	
4	<p>Date of next meeting Tuesday 25 February, 10.00am for 10.30am at the Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan.</p>	