

## Meeting of Lowland Deer Network Scotland Executive Committee

**At:** The Leapark Hotel, Grangemouth  
**On:** 28 April 2017

**Present:** Richard Cooke, Chairman  
Dick Playfair, Secretary  
Donald Fraser, SNH  
Jamie Hammond, SNH  
Alastair McGugan, SNH  
Colin Edwards, FCS  
Ian Fergusson, FES  
Angus Corby, Transport Scotland  
Colin Shedden, BASC  
Ian Talboys, City of Aberdeen  
Ron Smith, Fife  
David Bruce, UPM Tilhill  
Peter Semple, IDDMG  
Hugh O'Neill, IDDMG  
Glen Heggs, SWSDG  
Andy Mavin, Police Scotland  
Lisa Roberts, NFUS

**Apologies:**

Alex Hogg, SGA  
John Bruce, BDS  
Mike Flynn, SSPCA  
David Fyffe, SL&E  
Iain Robertson, MOD  
George Ritchie, BBDG  
Andrew Treadaway, SE Scotland DG/Barony College  
Mark Telfer, EELDG  
Peter Baxter, BDG  
David Quarrell, SLDG  
Richard Knight, SLDG  
Robert Tennant, SLDG  
Jimmy Simpson  
Daye Tucker  
Rob Sharp

1.	<p><b>Welcome, previous minutes and matters arising</b></p> <p>1.1 RC welcomed Lisa Roberts of NFUS and Hugh O'Neill of IDDMG to the meeting</p> <p><u>1.2 Sporting rates</u> RC reported that all questionnaires had been circulated and the Assessors were now swamped with work. A six month extension had been given. All assessments are expected now to be completed by end summer but no ideas what figures will look like.</p> <p><u>1.3 Firearms licensing</u> CS reported that the BMA had now issued guidance, that 96 per cent of firearms renewals had been completed on time in Scotland and, on average, prices charged by GPs ranged up to £200.</p>
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	<p><u>1.4 Deer Management Review</u> RC said that this would be covered under the AGM agenda to avoid repetition.</p>
2.	<p><b>Financial report and budget for 2017 – 2018</b> To be covered under the AGM agenda.</p>
3.	<p><b>Proposal for LDNS restructuring</b></p> <p>3.1 RC said that some concerns had been raised about the proposal that had been circulated. Some had expressed the strong view that it would be undemocratic and would cut out the practitioners from decision-making.</p> <p>3.2 RC reiterated that the proposed new structure had been aimed to make LDNS more inclusive, not less, but this had possibly been missed in communication. In view of the different views the proposal had now been set aside and would not be debated at the AGM.</p> <p>3.3 Governance issues would remain as the Committee meetings had in the past had up to 30 attending and this was not ideal.</p> <p>3.4 RC said that the point made about making more use of local deer managers and LDGs on public land was noted and understood. He had raised this with relevant Agencies and the Cabinet Secretary's office and would do so again. The Sharing Good Practice low ground event, which was excellent, had also examined opportunities for local delivery of deer management.</p> <p>3.5 PS said that he was sympathetic to the course of action taken with regard to restructuring. However, the item should have remained for discussion at the AGM. Others supported this saying that not all views expressed were opposed to a review of the LDNS structure.</p> <p>3.6 RC said that clearly the politicians saw LDNS as having a role to play, but that there was a delicate balance to achieve between all interests.</p>
4.	<p><b>Overview of current activity</b></p> <p><u>4.1 Introduction to peri-urban deer management – East Kilbride</u> RC said that the training day had been fully subscribed, with a waiting list, and that he had attended for the morning. A review would be undertaken to develop the programme and assess how or whether to roll out further.</p> <p><u>4.2 Sharing good practice lowland event</u> This was an excellent event with first-rate presentations from Malcolm Muir and Ian Talboys. DF said that attendance had included 11 local authorities and 8 public agencies with good engagement, and that the momentum and awareness gained from this event should be capitalised on and followed up. At minimum it would be repeated every two years given the high turnover of local authority staff.</p>

	<p><b>4.3 NFUS</b> LR said that NFUS would welcome an article on deer management for The Leader, and there could be opportunities for LDNS to present at local NFUS meetings. DP to liaise with LR going forward.</p> <p><b>4.4 Shared Larders project</b></p> <p>4.4.1 The ECCLR committee had included a deer larder network for Scotland in its recommendations although the actual practicalities of the proposition were unexplored – who pays, who runs and maintains them, who would buy the venison and whether it would in fact increase the cull. SW Scotland, following changes to Yorkshire Game, is an area where a local solution is in discussion, and there are other areas that could benefit also.</p> <p>4.4.2 AMcG said that this also brought the whole issue of the Venison Dealers License into focus and that this was an opportunity possibly to look at the whole supply chain from a legal perspective.</p> <p>4.4.3 RC said he thought the legislation with regard to larders was adequate but that, in his understanding, inspection and enforcement by local authorities was in some cases insufficient. Another food scare and the venison sector could be shut down, and the risk was greater as a large part of the cull was not traceable. The EU derogation for small quantities sold locally was not always compatible with the promotion of high standards or Best Practice.</p>
5.	<p><b>Events</b></p> <p>5.1 There were two further events in the near future on the topic of Deer and Roads, although it was likely that the event at Raehills would be cancelled because of low numbers. Subscription for the Gullane event on 19 May was much better.</p> <p>5.2 An evening event is planned for 15 June on the topic of ballistics and non-lead ammunition. This would be preceded by a short discussion to allow those who had not had their say on the now-sidelined LDNS restructuring proposal to contribute their thoughts.</p> <p>5.3 There was a proposal for a future event on the theme of night vision and thermal imaging, and RC suggested that LDNS might invest in night vision equipment for shared use by LDGs.</p>
6.	<p><b>Data</b></p> <p>6.1 Lack of data had been cited throughout the ECCLR review as a reason for activity being slow in lowland areas. RC said that there was a clear demand for more and usable data. Also, not everyone culling deer was submitting a cull return, and the system would be more inclusive if everyone who had a firearms license had to submit a return, or that everyone on the Rating Assessors' list of 55,000 holdings had to submit one.</p> <p>6.2 It was agreed that a better idea of the national roe cull would be beneficial.</p>

	<p>6.3 AMcG suggested that a start point could be for all LDGs to submit their numbers, possibly to LDNS.</p> <p>6.4 It was noted that there were difficulties in one Government department or Agency accessing information that had been collected by another but that it would be better that any cull data should be based on landholding rather than individual.</p>
7.	<p><b>CWD</b> RC gave a short update on the situation regarding CWD and the reindeer cull in Norway. 6500 samples had been taken and the prevalence rate was very low; also that the moose case had been found not to be of the same CWD strain as in N America. It was agreed that Norway was a good example of how such a crisis should be dealt with.</p>
8.	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> The next meeting will be held at Airth Welfare Hall, Graham Terrace, Airth, Falkirk on Thursday 15 June from 18.00 to 21.00hrs. A notice and programme for the meeting will be circulated nearer the time.</p>

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