

Minutes of the LDNS Open Meeting
On Tuesday 21 November
At The Auldhouse Arms, East Kilbride

Attending:

Richard Cooke, LDNS Chairman
Dick Playfair, LDNS Secretary
Angus Corby, Transport Scotland, LDNS Committee
Kevin McCulloch, SNH, LDNS Committee
Jim Govan, LDNS Committee
Glen Heggs, LDNS Committee
Jim Paxton, LDNS Committee

Colin Campbell
Clark Macmillan
Alasdair Young
Sam Templeton
William Haddow, NLDG
Steve Clark
Gavin Brown
Frank Potter
James Bell
Richard Knight, SLDG
Danny Sneddon
Bob King
Ian Young
Tom Forgie

1.	Status of meeting This is a record of an open meeting held at the date, time and place shown above. This was not a full LDNS Committee meeting
2.	Chairman's update RC gave an update on what was happening in political circles and elsewhere on the deer front. He said that the Cabinet Secretary Roseanna Cunningham had responded to the report on Deer Management from the ECCLR Committee, and that progress had been made, particularly in that it was now understood that upland and lowland deer management were very different. The ECCLR Committee had proposed more statutory action and greater powers of intervention. One outcome was the setting up of two new bodies, a Deer Working Group covering all of Scotland and all species, and a Lowland Deer Panel. The make-up of the Working Group had been decided. The members of the Panel were yet to be announced but this was due to happen before the end of the year.

	<p>RC said that this was an opportunity again to develop a better understanding of lowland deer management. Currently only 50 per cent of the low ground cull was probably reported; lowland deer groups were very different to their upland counterparts and more akin to hunting clubs.</p> <p>He said that there would be a further deer management review in 2019 and a further report from SNH.</p> <p>It was hoped that current initiatives would continue the important engagement with local authorities, the promotion of the value and availability of a locally-based deer management resource, and the view that there was an alternative to putting everything on public ground out to contract.</p> <p>There were potentially two pilot projects, both in the central belt, to be announced in 2018. SNH and the Forestry Commission and also recently published new research on upland and woodland/forestry deer densities.</p>
3.	<p>Financial report</p> <p>There was not a full financial report. However it was stated that income per annum was approximately £30,000, mostly made up of grants from the agencies. LDNS currently had some £26,000 at the bank.</p>
4.	<p>Events</p> <p>DP gave a run down on events in which LDNS had been involved so far during the year including the Scottish Game Fair, the DVC themed event at Gullane, the ballistics and lead vs copper evening at Airth, and a DIAT pilot training day at East Kilbride.</p> <p>He also advised that there was an LDNS/SNH event taking place at the Scottish Parliament later in the month. He also drew attention to the Deer Dog Day in SW Scotland on Sunday 3 December.</p>
5.	<p>Shooting rates</p> <p>RC gave a run-down on the current status regarding sporting rates. He said that all land now had to be rated for shooting and whilst many landholdings would be exempt under the Small Business Bonus Scheme, where shooting activity was accumulated with other business then this could take people over the exemption threshold.</p> <p>It was understood that some 10,000 assessments had been undertaken by the regional assessors so far, out of a total of some 55,000, with different rate bands set for different types of land – ie agricultural, woodland/forestry, hill etc with forestry being the highest rated. RC said that this might result in some deer control activity being discontinued.</p> <p>A lot of questionnaires sent out in the first round had not been returned.</p>

	<p>There was a question regarding syndicates where it was not uncommon to have several disconnected parcels of ground over which they shot, and whether these would be assessed separately, or be lumped together, in which case their rateable value could exceed the Small Business exemption threshold.</p> <p>Also, whether appeals should be made when assessments had not been received for every piece of ground. RC said that it was his understanding that appeals should be made for individual pieces of ground and that there was a 6 month window from receipt of notice to do this.</p> <p>RC also said it was important to check that the information on which the rating was based was right as he was aware of a number of cases already where mistakes had been made.</p>
6.	<p>SNH report Kevin McCulloch, SNH deer officer, gave a short resumé of SNH activity which included the planned pilot project; Flanders Moss; engagement with local authorities; use of local deer management resources and the Fit and Competent Register and an FES training day for tender applications.</p>
7.	<p>Scott Country International – thermal and night vision In introducing the team in attendance from Scott Country International and thanking them for their input, DP, showed the following important information concerning TI and night vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deer (Firearms etc.) (Scotland) Order 1985 prohibits the use of a sight that is light intensifying, heat sensitive or any other special sighting device for the taking or killing of deer at night. • The use of anything other than a traditional telescopic sight for culling deer is illegal. • Many deer managers are now using night vision and thermal imaging devices to spot deer and then resorting to a spotlight and scope (if shooting under an 18(2) night shooting authorisation) or conventional rifle and scope for day time hunting. <p>The meeting concluded around 21.00hrs</p>