

Meeting of Lowland Deer Network Scotland Executive Committee

At: The Leapark Hotel, Grangemouth
On: Thursday 23 August 2018

Present: Richard Cooke, Chairman (RC)
Colin Shedden, Vice Chairman, BASC (CS)
Dick Playfair, Secretary (DP)
Angus Corby, Transport Scotland (AC)
Ian Fergusson, FES (IF)
Kevin McCulloch, SNH (KM)
Andy Mavin, Police Scotland (AM)
John Bruce, BDS (JB)
Jamie Stewart, SCA (JS)
Maitland Rankin (MR)
Robert Sharp (RS)
Jim Govan (JG)
John Campbell-Smith (JCS)

Apologies or not present:

Jamie Hammond, SNH
Donald Fraser, SNH
Colin Edwards, FCS
Charlie Everitt, Police Scotland
Jamie Farquhar, Confor
Alex Hogg, SGA
Alex Stoddart, SACS
Lisa Roberts, NFUS
Iain Robertson, MOD
Mike Flynn, SSPCA
David Fyffe, SL&E
James Simpson
Ron Smith
David Bruce, UPM Tilhill
Ian Talboys, City of Aberdeen
George Ritchie, BBDG
John Walker, WLDG
Glen Heggs, SWSDG
Mark Telfer, EELDG
David Quarrell, SLDG
Andrew Treadaway, Barony College

1.	<p>Previous minutes and matters arising</p> <p>1.1 In opening the meeting RC congratulated IF on his appointment as Deer Management Officer for Scotland for FES. IF then gave a brief resumé of the restructuring of the forest districts, and lines of reporting, and also advised that the Scottish Government's Draft Forestry Strategy (2019 - 2029) was about to be put out for consultation.</p>
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	<p>1.2 IF also suggested that those with issues over the Procurement Scotland process for tendering for FES deer management contracts should take this up with Procurement Scotland direct. IF said he would pass the main point of contact at PS on or advise at the next meeting. Forest Enterprise Scotland supports the <u>Supplier Development Programme</u> which assists businesses to tender for public contracts.</p> <p>1.3 RC explained concerns over recent issues with communication, and that not everyone had received notice of the meeting promptly if they had not attended the previous meeting. He said that procedures would be tightened and that dates of future meetings would be circulated as soon as possible after they had been fixed, which they have been.</p> <p><u>1.4 Sporting rates</u> Under minutes item 4.3 RC said that Government had provided guidance to local authorities advising that Empty Property Relief can be applicable where shooting rights are not exercised, eg in early stage commercial forestry, but that each local authority could apply this or not at their discretion. For example, Highland was following the guidance but Angus was not. It is to be hoped that there will be consistency across the Councils in due course.</p> <p><u>1.5 Minutes of 4 July 2018</u> These were approved to go on the web. RC asked for a list of action points to be provided for future minutes.</p> <p><u>1.6 West Lothian DG representation</u> There was a question over West Lothian representation. DP advised that communications continued through the WLDG secretary and that an apology had been received for this meeting.</p> <p><u>1.7 Funding and training</u> There was a question about funding being made available to support independent training providers. RC explained that LDNS was inclusive and that where a properly completed application from a member for funding in line with the agreed conditions and guidelines had been submitted, and a full report submitted following a previous event, then the process was being conducted fairly and properly could not be questioned.</p>
2.	<p>Financial report</p> <p>2.1 Income received to date totaled £20,386, with an account balance as at 6 August 2018 of £27,739. LDNS expenditure to date totaled £18,876.</p> <p>2.2 It was noted that the payment for a training event should be under a separate heading 'DSC1 Contribution'.</p> <p>2.3 DP advised that the budget for the year had been re-done to reflect no funding in 2018/19 from FCS (revised budget circulated). <i>Note: Subsequent to this a sum from FCS has now been offered.</i></p>
3.	<p>LDNS internal review</p> <p>3.1 RC explained the background to the internal review and that he had asked CS, as Vice Chairman, to undertake this (survey attached).</p>

3.2 CS gave a presentation showing his interim summary. The general conclusion from an initial sample and small response, and useful associated comments, was that LDNS was considered to be worthwhile in a number of areas but with potential to do more.

3.3 CS said that the results of the review were not final and that some further responses were expected. It was therefore decided to delay until the next meeting before taking a close look at outcomes and how to progress them. He said that there might also be benefit in seeking an external view as part of the process. *Note: The Review has now been finalised and has been forwarded as a draft to the Lowland Deer Panel Chair.*

3.4 CS said that information had also been received from DMQ showing the spread of holders of DSC 1 and 2 qualifications in the UK with the highest proportion per head of population being through Scotland's central belt. RC said that this would help to inform both for the Deer Working Group and Lowland Panel although, as provided, it did not provide any detail such as post codes which would be more helpful.

3.5 There was further discussion about LDNS progress and in particular the continuing lack of engagement from some Local Authorities and how this was making it difficult for deer management on the ground. Renfrewshire was cited as an example.

3.6 KM said that SNH had contacted all Local Authorities, and that related venison issues were now also demanding their attention. However, generally progress was slow. Aberdeen was regarded as the flagship. West Lothian Council was now preparing a deer management plan. Some authorities were not interested at all and others such as Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Borders, Glasgow and North Lanarkshire were producing 'deer statements' as a DMP was considered too onerous too soon.

3.7 RC said that he was disappointed that the successful Battleby event for local authorities had not been followed up more swiftly.

3.8 Farming engagement had improved with NFUS representation on the Committee, and more profile for deer management in the farming press was considered helpful. RS said that he was now working by arrangement over a significant number of farms, but he advised that others were undertaking management themselves, sometimes using inappropriate firearms, or were contracting in the "wrong people" to do the work.

3.9 RC said that LDNS still has work to do in engaging both farmers and local authorities.

3.10 MR said that the LDGs should be the outward facing element of the network and should be doing more in engaging with farmers, forestry interests and others.

	<p>3.11 JG agreed that Groups operated differently and had different motivations. He thought that LDNS engaging more at Group level with local deer managers/stalkers, possibly at evening meetings, would be of benefit.</p> <p>3.12 It was suggested that LDNS should have a presence on Facebook as a closed forum.</p> <p>3.13 In concluding the discussion RC said that he was encouraged, that until 2011 no one was even talking about common lowland deer issues, and that was what the Network should be about. He said that if LDNS had not been formed then SNH would have had to do the job, but that combined effort appeared to be moving in the right direction.</p>
4.	<p>Deer Working Group RC said that the DWG work was ongoing as was that of the Lowland Deer Panel. The Panel had one more meeting and it was expected that it would be slightly late in reporting, ie now October.</p>
5.	<p>Venison business</p> <p><u>5.1 Venison Strategic Plan</u> DP gave an update on the Scottish Venison Strategic Plan which was in draft form and due to be launched by the Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing on 4 September.</p> <p><u>5.2 Meat hygiene</u> DP said that an advertising campaign jointly funded by SVP, SQWV and SNH would run in the autumn in Gun Trade News, Sporting Rifle, Countrymans' Weekly, and Shooting Scotland, with supporting ads in the publications of other organisations eg BASC, SGA etc. The venison food safety films on Youtube are also being made available as DVDs.</p> <p><u>5.3 Scottish Venison Partnership</u> SVP is currently undertaking an internal review to establish whether it has the right structure for the future, and how it may need to change in the light of the new venison strategy being launched in September.</p> <p><u>5.4 SQWV</u> SQWV is considering expanding the scope of its schemes to include small producers. Its offer of free larder inspections will continue until Christmas.</p> <p><u>5.5 Meat hygiene event</u></p> <p>5.5.1 Further discussion is required with regard to the planned meat hygiene event at East Kilbride on 6 October, and it is likely that the presentation material for this will be developed further. DP to enquire whether the 6 October date can be cancelled/postponed. <i>Note: this event has been postponed.</i></p> <p>5.5.2 It was suggested that it was important to include at these sessions detail of the legal aspects regarding supply to local butchers of small quantities, when a venison dealer's license is needed, when EHO inspection of premises is required etc.</p>

	<p>5.5.3 The question was raised whether showing a film or using a real carcase for demonstration purposes would be better. In some situations it would not be possible to use a carcase.</p> <p><u>5.6 FSS</u> DP is attending an event on enforcement for Local Authorities in Glasgow on 30 August.</p> <p><u>5.7 Other events</u> RC asked those present to consider other topics for future evening meetings along the lines of the non-lead ammunition event that had been held at Airth.</p> <p><u>5.8 Deer on your Doorstep</u> KM reported that following the last meeting he had contacted all appropriate SNH Reserves to offer DOYD material and had to date received 9 positive responses. RS said that he had also distributed printed material to nature reserves.</p>
6.	<p>SNH Central Scotland deer management pilot scheme KM advised that Stage 1 of the pilot had now been completed and was being written up and that there should be a report at the next meeting.</p>
7.	<p>Deer Health Survey</p> <p>7.1 DP reported that the steering group had met again but that there was nothing further to report on Phase 1 as discussion was yet to be finalised on how the results of the study were to be disseminated/promoted.</p> <p>7.2 DP said that Phase 2 was still ongoing (sampling carcasses from kill to processor) and any help from stalkers for that would be appreciated. JG asked DP to forward Cristina Soare's details to him as she is coordinating this part of the study.</p>
8.	<p>Reports from attending LDGs and organisations, and other business</p> <p><u>8.1 SW Scotland</u> JB drew attention to the event that is taking place at Millbank Venison on 2 September. JB also said that Ian McWatt had stated that "gifts" of food come under Food legislation, which is different to venison dealing, which requires an exchange of goods, or money to constitute a "trade". It had been thought that making a gift of food was outwith the law, but it isn't, and falls under Food legislation, not just venison legislation so everyone is encapsulated in regulation. JB is currently working on a matrix of examples to show who, how and when folk are entangled in law.</p> <p><u>8.2 Borders DG</u> JCS reported that Borders DG had held its AGM which Ian McWatt had been unable to attend. He said that the Group was hoping to organise a Spring event with LDNS support and a celebrity chef. He was also intending to approach Scotland's Natural Larder to support this. He would need two to three committed members of the Group to help to pull this together.</p>

	<p><u>8.3 Galloway and Dumfries-shire DG</u> MR reported that the GDDG was now properly established and had a committee of 12 with its first AGM to take place on 1 November (further details to follow). There was a lot of support and enthusiasm, good representation on the Committee, a logo had been designed, a link had been put on the DMG map on the ADMG website and a Facebook page was under consideration.</p> <p><u>8.4 SNH</u> KM said that the next event for Local Authorities was a priority and LDNS involvement would be sought for this.</p> <p><u>8.5 LDNS Venison sub-group</u> JS said that he would circulate a doodle poll to establish a date for the next venison sub-group meeting. Also, it was important that the material that was worked up for a Meat Hygiene presentation pilot fitted the brief as a number of different proposals were now in circulation. DP advised that, given ongoing discussions, the Whitehills event planned for 6 October would be postponed. <i>Note: this event has now been postponed.</i></p> <p><u>8.6 Forest Enterprise</u> IF advised that three wildlife posts with FE were shortly to be advertised.</p> <p><u>8.7 North Ayrshire</u> Whilst not a constituted Deer Group, JG said that there was close cooperation between himself, Hugh O'Neill and Peter Semple over deer management matters in the N Ayrshire region.</p>
9.	<p>Date of next meeting Friday 26 October at Leapark Hotel, Bo'ness Road, Grangemouth. Agenda to follow. The meeting will be chaired by Colin Shedden with Richard Cooke being on leave.</p>

Action points – minutes 23 August 2018

Action point	Ref in minutes	Description	Action by
1.	1.2	IF to pass on Procurement Scotland contact	IF
2.	1.3	Notice of future meetings to be circulated as soon as dates are fixed.	DP
3.	1.5	July meeting minutes to go on website	DP
4.	2.3	Budget for the year to be circulated – attached to this minute	DP
5.	3.15	LDNS Facebook page: not agreed yet who actions or admins	-
6.	5.5	Cancel/postpone 6 October event	DP
7.	6.	Report for next meeting on pilot scheme	SNH
8.	7.2	Cristina Soare's contact details to be passed to JG for phase 2 deer health survey.	DP
9.	8.5	Doodle poll for next LDNS venison sub-group meeting	JS