



Presentation to Richard Cooke who retired as LDNS Chairman at the May AGM (from l to r) Jim Govan, LDNS Committee; Richard Cooke; Colin Shedden, LDNS Chairman; Peter Watson, Chair Lowland Deer Panel and guest speaker at the AGM

## A welcome from the new LDNS Chairman.



Colin Shedden, Chairman, LDNS

*I would like to thank all of you who supported my nomination for the chairmanship of LDNS at the AGM, and to John Bruce for agreeing to be the vice-chair.*

LDNS is entering interesting times and, as I said at the AGM, the report of the Lowland Deer Panel gives some indication of what is still needed. There was a clear steer that SNH should support those who deliver “local deer management planning, actions and solutions” as well as filling gaps on cull data.

When comparing and contrasting upland and lowland deer management, as many will do in coming months, one of the main differences is the availability of cull data, essential for management planning as well as being essential to demonstrate what we have achieved and the public benefit that this brings. Upland DMGs

have a considerable advantage over lowland groups in this respect and one thing that I hope we can make progress on is cull data, particularly for roe.

There are many other areas to work on, and these include the provision of venison storage and processing facilities – if these are a block to management? – and ongoing engagement with Local Authorities and farming interests. Funding will remain a challenge but, by highlighting the management structures that we already have, and the good that our individual or collaborative management brings, we should be able to attract the funding that we need for either research, training, infrastructure or administration.

Finally, I would like to end by thanking Richard Cooke for all that he has done as chairman for the past seven years. Establishing and leading LDNS has, occasionally, been a thankless task but as last year’s review of LDNS showed there has been progress in a number of key areas. I hope, that with your support, we can all work together to ensure that LDNS continues to make progress and most importantly show that what we do, either individually or collaboratively, does provide public and environmental benefit.

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Includes Annual Report  
and Accounts 2018/19



Photo: Laurie Campbell

## Chairman's Report for 2018 / 2019



Richard Cooke, Chairman, LDNS

*The last year has been 'business as usual' to the extent that the Committee has met regularly and there have been a number of local events and training days - rather less than I had hoped and, in particular, disappointing that there has not been more use of the Deer on your Doorstep material which is available to everyone.*

As you will see from our Annual Accounts published with this report income is somewhat reduced as Forestry Commission Scotland, (now Scottish Forestry) can no longer commit to contributing funding, although there was an unbudgeted ad hoc payment of £5,000 from FCS during the course of last year, targeted specifically at holding habitat impact assessment awareness events and these are ongoing at the time of reporting. This reduction does constrain what we can do on the ground and is a concern going forward. If the Scottish Government thinks LDNS is a good thing and can be helpful in furthering the public interest in deer, then sufficient financial support must be delivered for us to do all that we potentially can.

The Lowland Deer Panel Report is of course the big news currently and the precursor to the 2019 Parliamentary review of the deer sector. Many will have seen and read it. Peter Watson, Chair of the Lowland Deer Panel, was the guest speaker at our AGM.

As I stand down as Chairman perhaps I might share a few personal thoughts on where we have come from since LDNS was formed in November 2011 and what may be the future role of the Network.

Firstly, let me emphasise again the word "network". LDNS was set up to bring together all interests in lowland deer management and to promote a collaborative approach. It is not in itself a representative organisation although membership includes a number of representative organisations along with practising deer managers. My own view, confirmed in the survey organised by Colin Shedden, LDNS Vice Chairman, last year, is that we have been reasonably successful in bringing lowland deer interests together although there are some, notably farmers and local authorities, with whom we have not yet achieved a satisfactory level of engagement.

LDNS has also had good contact with the ten or so lowland deer groups and has supported a lot of good project work with them but there is more to do in reaching out to individual lowland deer managers as many of those work alone and are not necessarily inclined to join groups

or stalking syndicates. Being realistic, what we have achieved in terms of building and expanding a network is the visible tip of a fairly large iceberg, but it would be quite wrong to regard that in a negative sense as we have had a lot of interest and tremendous support from a wide range of groups and individuals, many of whom continue to be actively involved and regular attenders at LDNS committee meetings.

LDNS was set up as a joint public sector/private sector initiative but, although largely funded by the public sector, it is emphatically not a public sector body. Indeed, our public sector colleagues were clear when we reviewed the need for membership five years ago that LDNS should continue as a subscribing membership organisation under the voluntary principle. Although subscription income is a small proportion of the whole it does signify the independence of LDNS. It can perhaps be reasonably assumed also that the continuing support from public funds confirms the perceived value of the Network to the Scottish Government, and to SNH in particular, in communicating with and working with the individuals who manage deer.

While the Lowland Deer Panel Report does not look particularly closely at LDNS it suggests that there may be a role for a new organisation, perhaps with a remit extending beyond deer - a role for "some sort of national co-ordinating body focused on deer to share information within the sector." The report thinks that LDNS might evolve slightly differently to fill this perceived gap but I would question whether LDNS could make that change without losing its independence - an essential element in the credibility of LDNS among deer management practitioners.

So, my plea to the Lowland Deer Panel and to the Scottish Government when they consider the LDP report is that they recognise the value of LDNS retaining its independent status and its roots in the voluntary principle. The development of collaborative deer management in the Scottish lowlands needs to be a bottom up, not a top down, process and I believe that LDNS can be a useful platform to assist in developing a more structured approach to lowland deer management so far as that may be desirable.

It would also be great if Government and others could consider not always referring to deer as a "problem". They have the potential to be either asset or liability and we need a more balanced view of their role in nature and in our lives and to manage them accordingly.

One success which LDNS can claim to have achieved is the recognition at Government level, and also emphasised in the Panel's report, that lowland deer management is complex and entirely unsuited to a one-size-fits-all approach. It's very different from the management of large herds of red deer in the Highlands and a variety of different management approaches for the lowlands can be effective. All credit to the Panel for understanding and reinforcing this as a basis for a much more realistic conversation about what is possible, allowing sufficient flexibility for local solutions to local situations.

I was pleased to note the Panel's acknowledgement of the importance of collaboration in a range of different forms in managing lowland deer and to read among their concluding words that "we would not recommend any approach that seeks to impose a rigid structure on what is a complex, heterogeneous environment, and we would wish SNH to continue to recognise the current multiplicity of approaches."

There is also welcome recognition in the Panel's report of what we have said repeatedly over the years, namely that developing a more comprehensive approach to lowland deer management is seriously constrained by the lack of information. Unlike in the red deer world we do not know what the lowland deer population is; we do not have a good overall feel for deer impacts on lowland land uses and habitats other than rather piecemeal information on deer vehicle collisions and impacts on forestry; we also do not have a good overview of the deer management resource - who the deer managers are, where they are, their level of expertise, and above all how many deer they cull. It is difficult to see how much progress can be made until, at the very least, we have a realistic understanding of the total annual cull. The agencies have the powers and means to obtain that information and I think that is the first nettle that needs to be grasped even if it meets with initial resistance in some quarters. The contrast between the level of information and analytical data in the open range red deer sector as opposed to the rest of Scotland is very marked.

To conclude, I believe we have come a long way since 2011. Of course, there is much more to do in future but LDNS now has the mechanism and support from interested individuals and organisations to continue to make useful progress both to the benefit of deer managers and in the wider public interest. I am proud to have been associated with the Lowland Deer Network and am very grateful for the support that I have received, and would wish you all well under a new Chairman.



Photo: Laurie Campbell

# Lowland Deer Network Scotland:

## Income & Expenditure account for the year to 31 March 2019

Income	2019 (£)	2018 (£)
Membership	£448.04	£426.24
SNH Grant Funding	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Transport Scotland Grant	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Forestry Commission Scotland Funding	£5,000.00	£15,000.00
Bank Interest	£33.37	£5.36
	<b>£25,481.41</b>	<b>£35,431.60</b>

Expenditure	2019 (£)	2018 (£)
<i>Administration:</i>		
Chairman's Expenses	£393.66	£963.18
Secretarial and Administration Expenses	£2,400.00	£2,400.00
	<b>£2,793.66</b>	<b>£3,363.18</b>
PR Consultant's Fees and Expenses	£13,260.00	£16,560.00
Consultant's outlays	£1,313.20	£1,849.20
Game Fairs	£808.52	£699.46
Newsletter Costs	£1,116.00	£1,418.20
Meeting Room and AGM expenses	£957.60	£892.80
Website Costs	-	£986.40
Committee Travel Expenses	-	£286.52
Accounts	£300.00	£300.00
Events and Training Costs	£2,388.71	£4,335.42
Deer On Your Doorstep Project	-	£338.40
	<b>£22,937.69</b>	<b>£31,029.58</b>
<b>Net Surplus for the year</b>	<b>£2,543.72</b>	<b>£4,402.02</b>

# Lowland Deer Network Scotland:

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2019

Current Assets	2019 (£)	2018 (£)
Cash at Bank	£23,581.28	£20,229.04
	<b>£23,581.28</b>	<b>£20,229.04</b>

Current Liabilities	2019 (£)	2018 (£)
Accruals	£1,108.52	£300.00
	<b>£1,108.52</b>	<b>£300.00</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>£22,472.76</b>	<b>£19,929.04</b>
<b>Net Surplus b/fwd</b>	£19,929.04	£15,527.02
<b>Net Surplus for the year</b>	£2,543.72	£4,402.02
	<b>£22,472.76</b>	<b>£19,929.04</b>

## Accountant's Report to the Lowland Deer Network Scotland

We have prepared, without carrying out an audit, the approved balance sheet and income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2019 from the books and information supplied.

Johnston Carmichael LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
15 Academy Street  
Forfar  
DD8 2HA

15 May 2019

We approve the financial statements for the year ended to 31 March 2019 and confirm that we have made available all relevant records and information for their preparation.

Richard Cooke  
Chairman, Lowland Deer Network Scotland

15 May 2019

# LDNS Review of Activity and Events



**Dick Playfair**

*LDNS has organised a number of events at various locations across Scotland and supported local deer group or LDNS member individual initiatives through funding.*

Date	Event	Area
02.05.18	Woodland habitat impact assessment awareness day	Flanders Moss
12.06.18	DVCs and Deer Management (with SL&E)	Raehills, Lockerbie
23.06 - 24.06.18	DSC1	Harburn, West Lothian
29.06 - 01.07.18	GWCT Scottish Game Fair	Scone
17.11 - 18.11.18	DSC1	Harburn, West Lothian
18.02.19	First aid + forestry and firearms injury Clyde Coast Deer Management	Glasgow
23.03 - 24.03.19	DSC1	Harburn, West Lothian
29.04.19	Woodland habitat impact assessment awareness day Galloway & Dumfries-shire Deer Group	Mosshope/Airds

Date	Planned Activity	Area
28.05.19	Woodland habitat impact assessment awareness day	Cashel Woods, Loch Lomond
31.05.19	Woodland habitat impact assessment awareness day BDS and Dunkeld Deer Management Forum	Forneth, Blairgowrie
15.06 – 16.06.19	DSC1 West Lothian Deer Group	Fauldhouse, West Lothian
05.07 – 07.07.19	GWCT Scottish Game Fair	Scone



*Woodland Habitat Impact Assessment Awareness Day, Dumfries & Galloway*



CCDM member Peter Semple being assessed by Douglas, the trainer. The consensus of those attending was that Peter was not appropriate for cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

### First Aid at Work + F Course

Clyde Coast Deer Management organised for the benefits of its members and others a full day First Aid + F Course on 18 February 2019. The course was run by Stewart First Aid Training Ltd.

For some this was a refresher having attended a similar course three years earlier. The trainer, an active Mountain Rescue Team Leader/Volunteer and former senior HSE employee, was able to tailor the programme to suit the requirements of deer managers. He included elements that the Forestry Commission requires when their own employees are being trained in first aid. Accordingly, management of firearms, knife and crush injuries amongst other elements important to deer managers such as tick bites were also covered.

Attendees found the day's programme to be comprehensive, practical, interactive and enjoyable and CCDM can confidently recommend Stewart First Aid Training to other groups and syndicates. The company has training centres in Glasgow, Ayrshire, Aberdeen, Belfast, and Edinburgh as well as several in England.

### DSC 1 Courses at Harburn

Craigswood Game and Deer Management supported by Barony College and LDNS has organised three DSC 1 courses throughout the year at Harburn Estate.

Craigswood has run these courses for a number of years with lectures and instructional presentations geared to make learning enjoyable and easier as well as refreshing previous study from pre-study material, with pass rates consistently high. The courses have been attended by a variety of stalkers varying in ages (14 being the youngest) and from differing backgrounds and experience.

Andrew Treadaway with Stevie McKillop have delivered the lectures and assessments in a relaxed and efficient manner appreciated by the candidates. The range tests took place at Dykefoot Plantation.

Alex Paul, for Craigswood, has expressed his thanks to Andrew Treadaway, Stevie McKillop, Barony College, LDNS, Harburn Village Hall Association and The Spurway family (Harburn Estate) who continue to support shooting in all forms, and also to the candidates who make these weekends such a success.



On the range at Dykefoot

### Woodland Habitat Impact Assessment Awareness Day, Dumfries & Galloway

Around 25 stalkers, foresters and land managers gathered at the Village Hall, Mosshope and in the afternoon on Airds Estate on 29 April for this deer group's first event. Fully subscribed, with a waiting list, the day, run by the Galloway and Dumfries-shire Deer Group with Broomhill Ecology and LDNS, gave an introduction to assessing damage to woodland, shrub and plant species by deer and other herbivores.

The protocol, which has been endorsed by Scottish Forestry, focuses on types and levels of damage to varying species, and gives a real insight into which plants deer prefer to browse and which they find highly palatable. The system allows severity of damage by herbivores to be assessed and on this basis provides an indicator of where control measures should be implemented.

This is the second in a series of Habitat Impact Assessment Awareness events being delivered by LDNS with funding from Scottish Forestry, with further events to come at Cashel Forest (East Loch Lomond) with SNH and the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, and at Forneth Estate, Blairgowrie with BDS and the Dunkeld Deer Management Forum.



Woodland Habitat Impact Assessment Awareness Day, Dumfries & Galloway

# Update on the Scottish Deer Health Survey 2017 - 2018

Tom McNeilly and Beth Wells

The Scottish Deer Health Survey, funded by Food Standards Scotland and the Scottish Government and started in July 2017, is now coming to the end of its two-year funding period. The project aims were to determine the prevalence of *E. coli* O157 bacteria that can cause severe disease in humans but not deer, in wild Scottish deer, and to determine which practices in processing deer carcasses are most likely to cause faecal (and therefore *E. coli*) cross-contamination of the carcass. The project also looked at the prevalence of a specific parasite, Cryptosporidium, in deer faeces which can cause disease in both deer and humans.

Thanks to the efforts of deer stalkers, deer managers and Forest Enterprise, over 1000 faecal samples from wild Scottish deer were collected and analysed for presence of *E. coli* O157 between July 2017 and June 2018. Of the samples tested, only three were positive for *E. coli* O157 meaning the prevalence of this bacteria in wild deer is low (~0.3%); however, the three positive samples contained high levels of *E. coli* O157, and DNA sequencing indicates that the types of *E. coli* O157 strains found are very similar to those that cause human disease. Analysis of the cross-contamination survey is ongoing.

Cryptosporidium is a parasite of livestock and public health significance, the main reservoirs of which are cattle. However, recent localised studies have shown that wildlife, including red and roe deer, can act as Cryptosporidium reservoirs. All available samples have now been tested for Cryptosporidium and 13% were positive for the parasite. Analysis is currently underway to determine which species of Cryptosporidium was present in the positive samples, as some species of the parasite are more able to cause disease. A further analysis will then be performed to determine whether proximity of the deer to livestock increases the risk of being Cryptosporidium positive.

The final project report is currently being compiled and will hopefully be published in autumn 2019. We once again would like to thank the deer industry, from deer management groups, Forest Enterprise through to the stalkers on the ground, for their enthusiasm and efforts in making this project happen.

**For more information please contact:**

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## Scottish Venison



Dick Playfair

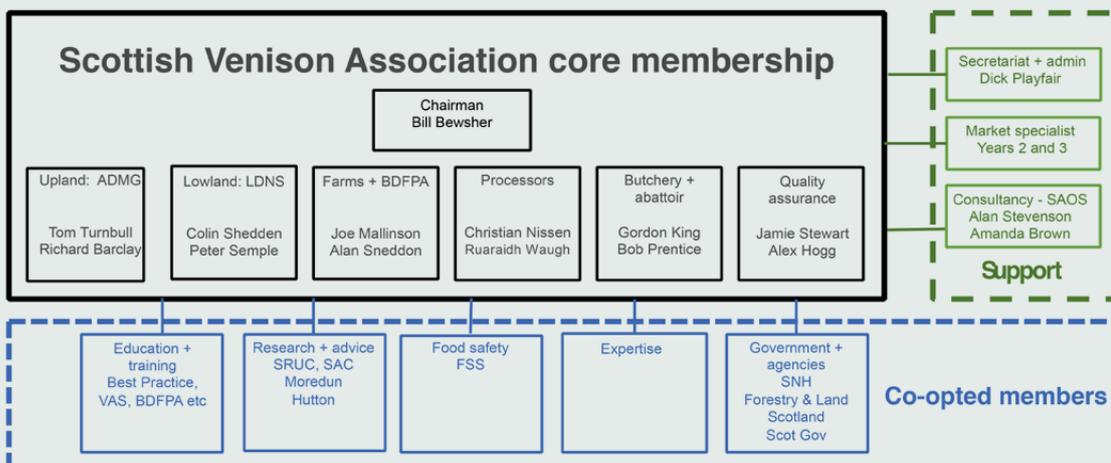
*In line with the new strategy for Scottish Venison, Beyond the Glen, the Scottish Venison Partnership was wound up at its annual general meeting in May 2019, and a new organisation, the Scottish Venison Association to be known as 'Scottish Venison' was formed.*

*Association to be known as 'Scottish Venison' was formed.*

This organisation will take on the role of the 'venison hub' as outlined in the strategy. In addition, a Venison Industry Leadership Group has been set up to oversee activity. Both are chaired by former SVP Chairman Bill Bewsher. Scottish Venison's restructuring sees it move

towards an organisation that is firmly producer and processor led, its membership drawn principally from upland and lowland wild deer interests, deer farming, processing, the butchery and abattoir sector, and quality assurance.

Discussion remains ongoing with the Scottish Government about funding for the 'big ticket' items within the strategy. Brexit has had an impact with all major funding currently on hold until it is clear where Scotland's food and farming sectors will stand in relation to Europe in the future, but the Group remains optimistic that funding support will materialise in due course. The production of the strategy followed the holding of a venison summit chaired by Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing last year.



*Industry Leadership Group comprises Chairman and one from each of SVA core membership.*

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