

Meeting of Lowland Deer Network Scotland Executive Committee

At: The Leapark Hotel, Grangemouth
On: 5 April 2019

Present: Richard Cooke, Chairman, (RC)
Colin Shedden, Vice Chairman, BASC (CS)
Dick Playfair, Secretary (DP)
Colin Edwards, SF (CE)
Ian Fergusson, FLS (IF)
Angus Corby, TS (AC)
Paul Roberts, SNH (PR)
Jamie Stewart, SCA (JS)
John Bruce, BDS (JB)
Iain Robertson, MOD
John Campbell-Smith, Borders DG (JCS)
Glen Heggs, SADG
Maitland Rankin (GDDG)
Ian Carmichael (Dunkeld DMF)

Apologies or not present:

Donald Fraser, SNH
Kevin McCulloch, SNH
Jamie Farquhar, Confor
Alex Hogg, SGA
David Bruce, UPM Tilhill (DB)
Ian Talboys, City of Aberdeen (IT)
Alex Stoddart, SACS
Lisa Roberts, NFUS
Mike Flynn, SSPCA
Shona Mackinnon, Wildlife Crime Unit
David Fyffe, SL&E
Andrew Treadaway, Barony College
Ron Smith
David Quarrell
Robert Sharp
William Brooks, NLDG
George Ritchie, BBDG
Mark Telfer, EELDG
James Simpson

1.	<p>Apologies, previous minutes and matters arising</p> <p>1.1 Apologies were noted as above. The minutes of the meeting on 8 January 2019 were approved.</p> <p>1.2 RC welcomed Ian Carmichael from the Dunkeld Deer Management Forum to the meeting.</p> <p><u>1.3 Actions and matters arising</u></p> <p>4.3.1 (reference on previous minute) GDDG has been the only Group to take forward planning for a WHIAA day. This is taking place on Monday 29 April at Mossdale and is fully subscribed.</p>
----	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<p>4.3.3 DP reported that there was WHIA Best Practice Guidance https://www.bestpracticeguides.org.uk/impacts/principles-in-practice/</p> <p>6.1 DP has contacted Tom Chetwynd. Unfortunately, Tom cannot attend the Committee meeting or the LDNS AGM. Groups and individuals wishing to make contact with him and contribute to his work for the Lowland Deer Management Project should still do so: tom@chetwyndrural.co.uk</p> <p>6.2 JH to advise Pilot Project postcodes to organisations (BASC, SACS, BDS). Carried forward.</p> <p>10. Nominations for regional representatives for Chairman and LDNS Committee regional representatives have been promoted and will remain open until 26 April, one week prior to the AGM.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Chairman's introduction</p> <p>2.1.1 Ahead of agenda items 3 and 6, RC commented that both the Lowland Deer Panel report to SNH and the report on Phase 1 of the Lowland Deer Project had become available shortly before the meeting. He said that he was disappointed at the level of recognition afforded to LDNS in the Lowland Deer Panel report and particularly bringing all parties involved in the sector together and subsequent progress.</p> <p>2.1.2 There is reference to a new role for LDNS but it is not clear what this might imply. The lack of information about deer populations could be addressed by various means. Within the project area an accurate census would add considerable value to any other conclusions and would be informative in the wider lowland context. It is difficult to reach reliable conclusions if the information is incomplete.</p> <p>2.1.3 LDNS to draft a response to the Panel report. DP to undertake first draft and then a small group to take forward).</p> <p>2.2 RC said that he understood that Phase 2 of the Lowland Deer Project was going well. There was concern that politicians would make decisions based on incomplete evidence, and that investment in lowland deer counts would be money well spent.</p> <p>2.3 The Lowland Deer Panel report and LDNS response would be discussed at the AGM on 3 May.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Financial report</p> <p>3.1 The financial report was circulated and showed the LDNS financial position at year end. A fuller financial report would be given at the AGM and in the Summer newsletter.</p> <p>3.2 Headline numbers show income for the year, in addition to a £20,230 carry forward, as £25,467, with expenditure of £23,809 leaving an account balance of £21,887 at the start of the new financial year.</p> <p>3.3 The responsibility of membership administration and day-to-day book keeping for LDNS after RC has stepped down was raised. JB said that there might be capacity in his office and would look into this.</p>

	<p>3.4. RC said that he was confident of continued funding from SNH. CE said that Scottish Forestry (SF) could not guarantee funding support and that those discussions were still to be had in the light of the new forestry strategy. AC said that TS would hopefully continue to support LDNS. It was suggested that the profile for lowland deer was heightening and that a strong case could continue to be made for support of evolving deer management in the lowlands.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Lowland Deer Panel report</p> <p>4.1 PR (SNH) spoke to the Lowland Deer Panel report which had been circulated ahead of the meeting. He said that at a high level the report confirmed much of what was already known. Venison storage and processing was one of the areas highlighted. However there was no indication what volumes were involved and that, given a suspected low level of usage, such facilities if developed would require to be very heavily subsidised.</p> <p>4.2 IR said that the MOD had identified the requirement for its own larder.</p> <p>4.3 MR asked whether, with FLS becoming a Government body this might mean that accessibility to its larders could be revisited. IF said that one of the issues was that during peak times, October to March, FLS larders operated at capacity. CE said that culling in forestry was likely to increase further in order to deliver other objectives. However, outside the national forest estate there was no conclusive evidence that more larders would generate more culling, or that a higher cull was actually necessary.</p> <p>4.4 JB said that he foresaw an explosion in roe deer numbers coming and that the demand for processing would increase.</p> <p>4.5 The Panel had also recommended that SNH should work more closely with local authorities whilst recognising work that was already underway. There was currently no indication of how much land each local authority had that might require some level of deer management, or what area of deer habitat they were currently managing.</p> <p>4.6 IC said that Perth and Kinross appeared to be on top of issues. Conversely there was nothing at all happening in Fife.</p> <p>4.7 MR asked how many SNH staff were actually involved in deer in SW Scotland. It was thought as many as 40 might be involved across the lowlands, although not exclusively on deer. There was concern that SNH was losing people with knowledge on the ground.</p> <p>4.8 CE said that the number of local authorities producing plans and taking action was increasing. The Seven Lochs project had made progress with Glasgow and North Lanarkshire Councils but these remain concerned about public perceptions of deer management.</p> <p>4.9 The Lowland Deer Panel also supported the findings of the Public Interest study. Part 2 of this was now underway and seeking more substantial stakeholder engagement. This reviews the wide range of collaborative approaches to deer management across low ground Scotland to ensure that these are reflected in Best Practice. Solutions are complex.</p>

	<p>PR said that SNH supports stakeholder delivery of deer management planning given the shortage of resources available coupled with an increasing workload.</p> <p>4.10 PR said that all appropriate work would be taken into consideration in the Deer Working Group report to the ECCLR Committee in September.</p> <p>4.11 CE said that, in his view, the work of LDNS would be appraised in the Review to see how it had helped in raising awareness and action, particularly against NWSS targets.</p>
5.	<p>Current events and activity</p> <p><u>5.1 Meat hygiene refresher course</u></p> <p>5.1.1 JS said that the writing of this had concluded, that three modules had been produced and that these had now been test-run with JDCS and DP. The three modules are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of meat hygiene (for those with no formal training) • Understanding contamination and shot placement • CPD refresher for meat hygiene certification <p>All the above could be augmented by one or more videos and/or a live carcase handling demonstration.</p> <p>5.1.2 It was thought that, because of some duplication, the programmes would work best in pairs lasting around 1.5 to 2 hours total, There was no formal assessment or certification but thought that certificates of attendance should be awarded.</p> <p>5.1.3 The Chairman thanked JS for the work involved in bringing this forward.</p> <p>5.1.4 JDCS said that Borders Deer Group might benefit from hearing a synopsis of the meat hygiene refresher at its AGM. JS to liaise.</p> <p><u>5.2 Woodland Habitat Impact Assessment Awareness days</u></p> <p>5.2.1 MR advised that GDDG was organising a day on 29 April which was oversubscribed with 25 attending. The training elements are being delivered by Helen Armstrong of Broomhill Ecology. All cost is being met by LDNS through FLS funding.</p> <p>5.2.2 A further day is being planned for S Loch Lomond (Cashel Woods) towards the end May. This is being organised by LDNS (DP), SNH and LLTNP and would be targeted at Park staff and volunteers and the vocational stalking sector in Dunbartonshire, N Glasgow, N Lanarkshire and W Stirling. A maximum 20 attendees would be sought. A recce to Cashel Woods with Broomhill Ecology to be organised.</p> <p>5.2.3 DP suggested that a further event could be staged either at Birnam Institute or BASC Trochry using Dunkeld Woods as the survey site. DP to take forward with CS and IC.</p> <p><u>5.3 Fetternear Estate walk and talk deer day – early Autumn</u></p> <p>DF has proposed hosting a walk and talk day on HIA and deer management in the NE in early Autumn. This would not go into the same detail on HIA as the days noted above. Date to be fixed and programme to be drafted.</p>

	<p><u>5.4 Other training</u> DP advised that support was available for training and that Craigswood had run 3 x DSC 1 courses in the past year. Clyde Coast Deer Management had also run a first aid course. DP advised that support from LDNS was typically made on the basis of around £30 discount per candidate attending.</p>
6.	<p>Lowland Deer Management Project In addition to that already been reported, PR said that Tom Chetwynd, who was undertaking the project for SNH, had received a good response, there had been three workshops (two of them well attended) and several meetings with individuals. It was intended to have the consultant's report to SNH by end June with SNH publishing the final report in late summer.</p>
7.	<p>Venison report</p> <p>7.1 DP gave an update on the Scottish Venison strategy, delivery of which has stalled (it is hoped temporarily) because of Government support being held back until there is clarity on Brexit.</p> <p>7.2 DP advised that the Scottish Venison Partnership was restructuring later in the month at its AGM as Scottish Venison, with new make-up, an industry leadership group in line with the strategy, and emphasis on being producer and processor led. LDNS would be represented by CS and Peter Semple.</p> <p>7.3 DP thanked JB for his matrix on routes to market for venison. JB said he would check that the final version had been made available prior to circulation (final version attached to this minute).</p> <p>7.4 There was discussion about the merits of venison supply through an AGHE or Venison Dealer, and that both were legitimate routes to market, FSS overseeing the AGHE route, and the appropriate local authority where supply is through a venison dealer. Current list of AGHEs, from FSS, to be circulated.</p>
8.	<p>Reports from Groups and Organisations</p> <p><u>8.1 Scottish Forestry</u> CE said that SF was looking at the Bavarian approach regarding silviculture, ungulates and hunting, how it conforms to sustainable forest management, and how a similar approach could be adopted in Scotland. He said he hoped LDNS would support its principles, and in particular the principle of "forest before game" to protect forests and woodlands. It would be a positive step for both local authorities and the private sector in terms of engagement in management.</p> <p><u>8.2 Dunkeld Deer Management Forum</u> IC introduced the DDMF and its work, principally the control of fallow in the Dunkeld area. He said that DDMF has different issues from upland DMGs, urban deer management, direct local community involvement etc. CS said that he hoped that DDMF would continue to be engaged with LDNS.</p> <p><u>8.3 BDS</u> JB to circulate date and details of the Central BDS branch HIA day at Alyth.</p>

<p>9.</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p><u>9.1 Wild Deer Best Practice</u> CS said that Wild Deer Best Practice was being revitalised with a complete review of existing guides and updating these where appropriate, gaps being identified and new guides being developed.</p> <p><u>9.2 Deer Stalking Fair</u> The Deer Stalking Fair was discussed. Whilst seen as a valuable event for the sector it was felt that being held every year was possibly too frequent. It could also benefit from being amalgamated into a bigger event.</p> <p><u>9.3 Wild Animal Welfare Conference</u> JB reported on the Wild Animal Welfare Conference, chaired by Steve Goddard of JHI, that he had attended. This looked, among other topics, at the principles of ethical wildlife control. Seven key principles were agreed at the event, and these were welcomed by BDS. It is a further indication of the increasing attention governed by animal welfare which will undoubtedly move even higher up the agenda in future.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Summary of action points</p> <p>2.1 DP to draft response to Lowland Deer Panel report and then a small group to take forward for discussion at AGM.</p> <p>3.3 JB to assess capacity of his office to take on book-keeping and membership duties for LDNS.</p> <p>5.1.4 JS and JDCS to liaise about Meat Hygiene Refresher presentation to BDG.</p> <p>5.2.2 DP and SNH to organise WHIA recce with Broomhill Ecology to Cashel Woods.</p> <p>5.2.3 DP to progress possible Dunkeld WHIA day with CS and IC.</p> <p>5.3 Walk and talk deer management day at Fetternear to be progressed by DP for early autumn 2019.</p> <p>6.4 DP to circulate list of approved AGHEs (from FSS).</p> <p>8.3 JB to circulate detail and date of BDS Central Branch HIA day at Alyth.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting is the LDNS AGM to be held at the Leapark Hotel, Bo'ness Road, Grangemouth, Friday 3 May 2019, 10.00 reception for 10.30 start. Peter Watson will be the guest speaker.</p> <p>There will be elections for Chairman, and regional representatives for SW Scotland, Central belt, and NE Scotland. All are encouraged to attend.</p>