

SOUTH PERTSHIRE DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of the 22nd Annual General Meeting

Held on Wednesday 18 May 2016

At Fordie, Comrie

Present	Martin Robb	Carroglen, Chairman
	Michael Aldridge	Secretary
	Jamie Hammond	S.N.H
	Victor Clements	Deer Management Plan Author
	James Duncan Millar	Remony
	Daniel Parker	Abercairny
	Donald Ogilvy Watson	Urlar Estate
	Jack Whitaker	Auchnafree
	Andrew Templeton	Carroglen
	John Greenshields	Carroglen
	Chris Gordon	Logiealmond
	Leif Brag	Griffin
	Mattias S Pedersen	Dalchonzie/Glenbeich Estate
	Vincent Brigode	Fordie/Eighton Estates
	John Sinclair	Glenturret, Invergeldie and Glenogle
	Iain Fridge	Aberuchill Estate
	Patrick Leonard	Fordie
	Bob Smith	Balmuick
	Kevin Peters	FES – Forest Enterprise Scotland
Apologies	Ian Duncan Millar	Wester Tullich
	Alex Baillie-Hamilton	Kinnell
	Alix Whitaker	Auchnafree
	Bill Drummond Moray	Abercairney
	Michael Baillie-Hamilton	Kinnell
	Brian Kaye	Lochan

1. Minutes of 21st AGM

The minutes of the 2015 meeting were accepted as a true record.

2. Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2016

The Accounts were presented in a different format due to Deer Management Plan funding and payments straddling the year end. For clarity, transactions through the bank prior to 31st March 2016 have been included in the Accounts which show a surplus of £3,230.25. The budget for the year to 31st March 2017 includes the completion of the Deer Management Plan and projects a closing balance of £3,063.51. There will be a modest deficit as annual subscriptions will not cover the ADMG Subscription and running costs. No subscription changes have been proposed but will be reviewed next year. The accounts and budget were approved.

4. Group Deer Management Plan

The Chairman thanked the steering group, Jamie Hammond and particularly Victor Clements for the considerable efforts made in the last twelve months in producing the draft plan. It was stressed that the plan was in draft and subject to approval.

Victor Clements presented his plan. For the purposes of the Minute, the slides from the presentation are shown at Appendix 1 with some annotations. General points raised in discussion were as follows:-

South Perthshire is one of the bigger deer management groups and is quite complex. Some land owners/occupiers are not engaged and it was recommended that they should become reporting members, who would at the very least submit cull numbers.

Sub-area Boundaries

In discussion of the sub area structure, new deer fences change the boundaries between groups which makes population modelling very difficult. In terms of deer numbers and population models a western sub-group to the west of the deer fences makes much sense.

The proposed south central group has low deer numbers and members are not that interested in deer management.

The east group is neither operational nor coherent, has a wide variation of objectives and no obvious leader. The east group has potential problems with recruitment expected to be high on a fertile area with much shelter. It was questioned why the grouse estates should be excluded from the western group and, as an interim measure, it was agreed that Garrows and Urlar should remain part of the west group with efforts being made to bring Bolfracks back in on the basis that the logical northern boundary in this area is the Kenmore/Aberfeldy road.

Objectives

There are a very wide range of objectives within the group which makes it unusual. Very few estates and farms see deer as a main priority.

Community Council Interest

The DMP process has raised the profile of the group even if there has been no direct comment or interest from the Community Councils.

Designated Sites

The main site within the deer range, Ben Chonzie, is in favourable condition. There are some peripheral sites, such as Comrie Woods, in unfavourable condition but in most cases deer is not the main issue.

Counts

Recent count information has been fragmented. Since the helicopter count in 2010, fewer members have been involved in counting whilst deer densities have been reducing. Current confidence in counts is low, mainly due to non-participation. It was noted that recruitment

counts were in the range of 45-55%, which is high. A helicopter count might be expected for 2017/18.

Habitat Monitoring

SNH guidelines suggest that an ideal upland property should have 30 blanket bog and 30 upland heath monitoring sites. If these are surveyed on a 3 yearly basis, this involves 20 sites per year, which might be done in two days. To be done effectively this requires the use of contractors or training so that it can be done in-house. Thereafter the information requires to be collected and processed. Grant funding on a group basis may become available and for South Perthshire it is not considered that urgent due to the lack of designated sites under threat.

Extensions

There is a large area to the east of the A9 with similar issues to the eastern sub group including a large fallow population, woodland cover and high recruitment. This area is large enough to form a group of its own which might in time include the eastern sub group.

Dalchonzie and Aberuchill have both expressed an interest in being included and Perth & Kinross Council have requested membership for the Birks of Aberfeldy.

Current Issues

See Appendix.

Conclusion

It was agreed that the plan would be adopted in principle, recognising that it is a working document and with the proviso that the sub group boundaries would be reviewed. The Constitution, as part of the plan is also adopted in principle with formal consideration and approval to take place at a forthcoming AGM.

4. Election of Office Bearers

Chairman

Having held the post for six years, Martin Robb proposed that James Duncan Millar should become Chairman and this was seconded by Sir Jack Whitaker. The new Chairman said he was happy to take on the role for two years.

Secretary

In the absence of any nomination to take over as secretary, Michael Aldridge was re-elected stating that Drummond Estates would continue to carry out the administration but would be happy to hand over should there be a wish for change. In the past the role had been fulfilled by Scone Estates.

6. ADMG matters

The new regional representative Tom Turnbull was unable to attend the meeting but produced a comprehensive set of notes which are attached to the Minutes.

7. SNH Matters

Jamie Hammond explained that the re-assessment was due shortly. He noted that the Deer Management Plan had addressed a great many issues and huge progress had been made. The assessment meeting on Monday would feed into a wider process which reviews all deer management groups. A report would then be prepared for the new minister. He felt encouraged at the progress that had been made although there were some loose ends that needed to be addressed.

8. Deer counts and recommended culls

There has been much discussion earlier in the meeting in consideration of the plan. It was agreed that counting needs to be revitalised. Overall there was a desire to keep culls much as they are. There was a general feeling that the open range population is decreasing with the woodlands either static or increasing.

There will be a summer count on Tuesday 12 July.

9. Land Management Issues

Daniel Murray Parker stated that there would be an Earn/Tay/Almond Grouse Group meeting at the end of August to which all would be welcome.

10. Any Other Business

Chris Gordon of Logiealmond expressed willingness to contact non-participating members in the eastern sub-group to encourage more dialogue and participation.

The outgoing Chairman expressed thanks for the considerable support given by Jamie Hammond over the last twelve months. A vote thanks was given to Martin Robb for his efforts as Chairman over the last six months and thanks were also expressed to Vincent Brigode for hosting the meeting at Fordie.

Date of Next Meeting

The next AGM will held in May 2017 on a date to be confirmed.

There will be SPDGMG Meeting at Fordie on Tuesday 9th August 2016 at 4pm to discuss the counts (8 March 2016 and 12 July 2016) and to agree cull targets. All members are invited especially keepers, stalkers and deer managers.