

SOUTH PERTSHIRE DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of the 18th Annual General Meeting Held on Wednesday 2 May 2012 At Dunira

Present	Martin Robb	Carroglen
	Michael Aldridge	Secretary
	James Duncan Millar	Remony
	Mike Baillie-Hamilton	Kinnell and Cambusmore
	Daniel Parker	Abercairny
	Jimmy Anderson	Lochearnside
	Andrew Templeton	Carroglen
	Mike Reddington	Glenturret
	Ben Taylor-MacPherson	Glenturret
	Isla Crichton	Monzie
	Charmian Holcroft	Glenbeich
	John Murdock	Glenbeich
	Doug Stewart	Dunira
	Chris Gordon	Logiealmond
	Roddy Mackintosh	Logiealmond
	John Sinclair	Invergeldie and Glenturret
	Mark Duncan	Forestry Commission

Apologies	Roddy Willis	Savills
	Jamie Hammond	S.N.H
	Alex Baillie-Hamilton	Cambusmore
	Richard M J Cooke	Chairman, ADMG

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to Dunira and thanked the Enggaard family and Douglas and Shar Stewart for their hospitality and for providing the venue.

The Chairman paid tribute to Tim Holcroft, who died late last year. He acknowledged the great contribution Tim had made to the group since its inception and mentioned the wise counsel and support given to office bearers and the membership. The Chairman wished Mrs Holcroft all success in running Glenbeich.

2. Minutes of 17th AGM

The minutes of the 2011 meeting were accepted as a true record.

3. Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2012

The group made a modest surplus of £47.74. It was noted that no subscription demand had been received from the Highland Perthshire Community Partnership and it was confirmed that the organisation is still in operation. The reserves at the end year amount to £1,834.56. This sum is largely made up of a marketing levy raised some years ago but never spent. ADMG subscriptions are to increase from £2 to £3 for stags, £1 to £1.50 for hinds and remain at 75p for other species. Although ADMG expenditure is now flat and external commitments have been reduced, declining culls have resulted in falling subscriptions. The old subscription rates were held for 5 years and ADMG is now running on reserves. Our Budget demonstrates a modest surplus and is calculated on the basis that the group subscription, most of which is passed onto ADMG, should increase from £3 to £4 per stag and £1.60 to £2 for hinds. This proposal was agreed and it was noted that subscription rates could be varied annually at the AGM if necessary. It was also agreed that the 75p other species subscription would be levied for the current year and therefore collected in 2013. This would apply to the SPDMG area, which does not generally include low ground.

Both the accounts and budget were approved.

4. Election of Office Bearers

The Chairman asked whether anyone would be interested in taking on the post of Secretary. He thanked Lady Jane Willoughby for allowing the secretarial services to be provided by Drummond Estate Office. Mr Aldridge stated in the absence of any alternative proposals he would be happy to continue as Secretary.

The Chairman stated that at the outset his intention was to act as Chairman for a 3 year period. He is happy to do it for another year but suggests that new Chairman is appointed in 12 month's time and invited members to consider whether they would be prepared to carry out the role. James Duncan Millar endorsed the point stating that it was important for office bearers to rotate and that the Chairman's post was not that onerous with good back up.

5. ADMG matters

James Duncan Millar reported on current ADMG matters:-

With new legislation in place the voluntary principle survives but the deer industry remains under scrutiny. In the areas of firearms and food safety there is a requirement to improve standards or risk statutory enforcement in the future. Deer Management Groups are seen as worthwhile but should include all significant landownerships, operate coherently, liaise with the local community and should have habitat surveys and deer management plans in place. Ronnie Rose who is employed jointly by SNH and ADMG is currently assisting Deer Management Groups with habitat surveys and deer management plans and it is recommended that his services are used.

Competence – it is considered likely that DMQ Level 1 or its equivalent will be the minimum required level of qualification for all who shoot deer. This will include farmers, crofters and professional stalkers, although the latter will still be encouraged to attain Level 2 status. Grandfather rights are no longer valid.

Venison – with good support from the catering industry the demand for venison is rising. Two thirds of the 3,500 tonne annual production of Scottish venison comes from wild Red Deer. Demand is increasing but, with culls static or declining, the supply is reducing. The undersupply is being met by New Zealand, Poland and elsewhere in Europe. Quality assurance is seen as important with all main game dealers largely quality assured. ADMG urges members to become quality assured not least because it is another way to demonstrate the increase in overall deer industry standards. In time Estates may find it more difficult to sell non quality assured venison.

Roe Deer – only a third of Roe Deer culled reach the consumer market. There is considerable potential to increase the volume coming onto the domestic market. The population is expanding on the low ground and control and management are seen as a real issue.

Deer in Scotland Education Package – a web based teaching programme for schools has been developed. (See www.education.scottish-venison.info)

Heading for the Scottish Hills – the web based trial has worked well as a replacement to Hillphones. An expanded trial area will operate this year in the Breadalbane DMG area. It is hoped to roll this out nation-wide next year. Members showed support for the new system at the AGM. The current delay in implementation is due to funding restrictions by SNH.

Closed Seasons – clarification is being sought from ADMG on the correct interpretation of new legislation about closed seasons and general licensing arrangements. The current position appears to be that males may be shot under the general licence on enclosed land during close seasons. Females may not be shot between 1st April and 31st August unless a specific licence is obtained from SNH.

Hill Fires – it is recommended that Deer Management Groups become more involved with the local community, councils and the Fire Brigade in the response to hill fires. Many Estates have man power, equipment (both high and low tech) and local knowledge regarding access. Mark Duncan (Forestry Commission) will provide a template of a fire action plan.

6. SNH matters

Unfortunately neither Jamie Hammond nor Ronnie Rose was able to attend the meeting.

Most current SNH matters were covered under ADMG matters. James Duncan Millar noted that at the ADMG AGM, Eileen Stewart from SNH Wildlife Operations Unit, explained that some research had been carried on wildlife species in Scotland. The most iconic species was found to be Red Deer with Golden Eagle second. Of greatest concern to the public were Red Squirrels followed by Red Deer. There was clearly a misunderstanding by the general public of the issues of culling and population balance. SNH is supportive of all kinds of tourism connected with deer including field sports and is keen to ensure good and steady dialogue with deer managers.

7. Habitat Surveys and Deer Management Plans

There was a discussion about whether the group should get Ronnie Rose involved to assist in drawing up habitat surveys and deer management plans. The northern sub group has had a plan in place for some years. The western sub group has no formal plan but meets regularly to review cull numbers, counts and other related matters. There is no formal meeting of the eastern sub group other than at the AGM, although grouse groups meet regularly not necessarily following sub group boundaries.

It was agreed that Ronnie Rose should be invited to meet with the Chairman and Secretary to discuss what he might be able to offer the group and how this might impact in terms of time and cost, whilst not compromising privacy nor confidentiality.

8. Deer Counts and Recommended Culls

The count which took place on 12 March (being the second Tuesday) was not felt by some to be accurate. (This is almost certainly the case given the result of the helicopter count and subsequent 2011/2012 cull figures) It was noted that cull weights were generally lower than in the previous season, although this may be partly due to less mature stags being shot in areas where a reduction in deer is the policy. Culls will, as in previous years, be managed by sub group.

9. Forestry Commission

Mark Duncan stated that, with Kepranich having been sold, Craigvinean is the sole remaining large Forestry Commission holding within the deer group area. He explained that FC is re-instating the 8km deer fence on the western boundary due to the impact of the Griffin Wind Farm development. The damage levels within the forest have been unacceptable due to the displacement of Red Deer from Griffin and despite cull levels being three times higher than previous. It was noted that there will be an impact on neighbours such as Drumour and Murthly. He suggested that the group should encourage deer within Griffin to be managed appropriately.

10. Any Other Business

Date of Next Meeting

The next AGM will be held in 2013 in either the first or second week of May with the date to be confirmed.

The Western Sub Group will meet at the beginning of August with the date to be confirmed. The Northern Sub-group is due to meet on Sunday 12th August 2012.