

## **SOUTH PERTSHIRE DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP**

### **Minutes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting Held on Wednesday 14 May 2014 At Carroglen, Comrie**

<b>Present</b>	Martin Robb	Carroglen
	Michael Aldridge	Secretary
	James Duncan Millar	Remony
	David Crichton	Monzie
	Charmian Holcroft	Glenbeich
	John Murdock	Glenbeich
	Chris Gordon	Logiealmond
	Stewart McIntosh	Logiealmond
	Jamie Hammond	S.N.H
	Jack Whitaker	Auchnafree
	Colin Day	Auchnafree
	David Campbell	West Glenalmond
	Vincent Brigode	Fordie/Eighton Estates
	Chris Hemingway	Fordie
	Daniel Willoughby	Fordie
	Leif Brag	Griffin
	Phil Lowe	Abercairney
	Josh Burton	Abercairny
	Daniel Parker	Abercairny
	Phil Robinson	Managed Estates
	David Mills	Invergeldie
	Robert Smith	Balmuick
	Michael Baillie-Hamilton	Kinnell
<b>Apologies</b>	Ian Duncan Millar	Wester Tullich
	Alex Baillie-Hamilton	Kinnell
	Ron Smith	Dunira
	Stan Riches	Glenquaich
	Jimmy Anderson	Lochearnside
	John Sinclair	Glenturret/Invergeldie
	Mike Reddington	Glenturret

#### **1. Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> AGM**

The minutes of the 2013 meeting were accepted as a true record.

## **2. Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014**

The deficit for the current year is £257.20, similar to the previous year's deficit of £234.58. This is resulting in a gradual erosion of funds reflected in the bank balance at 31 March 2013 of £1,342.78.

ADMG subscriptions remain at £3 for stags £1.50, for hinds and £0.75 for other species. It was proposed that Group subscriptions increase to £5 for stags, £2.00 for hinds and £0.75 for other species. With this increase the budget surplus for the year is £500, taking into account a proposed £100 increase in secretarial expenses. An incentivised subscriptions system was suggested by Daniel Parker. After discussion the proposal was considered to be worthy but overly complex to administer. The accounts, budget and subscription increase were approved.

## **3. Election of Office Bearers**

In the absence of any nominations, the Chairman agreed to serve for one more year. It was agreed that office bearer's posts should be rotated and that there is merit in having a Vice Chairman. Michael Aldridge agreed that Drummond Estates would continue to fulfil the Secretarial role and noted that much of the hard work was done by Jackie Smith and Margaret Moran.

## **4. ADMG matters**

James Duncan Millar gave an overview of current issues affecting ADMG. The Association has been working with the Best Practice Guidance Group to produce a guide on deer management and is involved in the SNH review of "Wild Deer - A National Approach".

Political pressure had mounted in the last 12 months with the Rural Affairs Committee specifically looking at deer management under the chair of Rob Gibson. It was reported that the deer industry, represented by ADMG and the Scottish Gamekeepers Association, was given a fair hearing. The Committee identified issues of lack of participation and attendance basing much criticism on some failures in the north-west. The Scottish Government responded to the Committee stating that the review of the deer management system would continue with more improvement in deer management standards required by 2016. ADMG is working on a deer management benchmark, believing that if standards do not improve across the sector, some form of compulsion must be expected. The current draft of the benchmark is attached these minutes. It is considered that the South Perthshire Group measures fairly well against the standard but some improvements require to be made.

ADMG is working on a collaborative deer management project being run by Linzi Seivwright. A meeting looking at the project and the benchmark will be held in a week's time with the Chairman and Secretaries of all groups being invited. Andrew Templeton, James Duncan-Millar and Michael Aldridge are attending.

ADMG continues to encourage deer managers to embrace Scottish Quality Venison. The difficulty that not all dealers are quality assured remains.

Members were urged to take appropriate measures to prevent the introduction of chronic wasting disease. Guests from America must have clean and preferably new equipment and boots.

## **5. SNH Matters**

Jamie Hammond endorsed the ADMG draft benchmark noting that SNH was supportive of the voluntary system. He agreed that South Perthshire was in the middle to upper bracket of groups when compared to the benchmark but there was an opportunity to improve the deer management plans (currently only one plan exists for the northern sub group). Funding will be available for deer management planning amounting to £200,000 over 2 years across the sector which includes 48 DMG's. Some work is being done on the public interest of deer management and what the public expects. 14 themes are being developed, including environmental impact, economic benefit, social benefit, competence and welfare. It is acknowledged that there is now a recognition that the overall impact of deer is more important than numbers.

In discussion it was considered whether the current sub group structure was appropriate, with most members in favour. Mike Baillie-Hamilton felt that we had a responsibility to other deer management groups to get appropriate plans in place and this was agreed. Victor Clements had prepared the plan for the northern sub group and it was suggested that he be asked to make a proposal for preparing plans for the west and east sub groups.

## **Deer counts and recommended culls**

The deer count took place on the second Tuesday of March. It was again felt that the count understated the number of deer on the ground mainly due to the inability to count deer in woodland. There is merit however in counting at the same time each year in the same manner as it does enable trends to be observed. The northern sub groups counts in August which gives a good idea of annual increment.

Culls are unsustainable when compared to the count figures, which, again, suggests that not all deer are being counted.

Cull will be agreed within sub groups.

## **Grouse Groups**

Daniel Parker reported that they had been encouraged by the revival of grouse on estates around Amulree. It was intended that there will be an open day and moorland tour on 24<sup>th</sup> August.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

The next AGM will be held in 2015 in late April/early May with the date to be confirmed. Vincent Brigode offered Fordie as a venue.

The Western Sub Group will meet at the beginning of August with the date to be confirmed. The Northern Sub-group meets on 10<sup>th</sup> August.