

ASSOCIATION OF DEER MANAGEMENT GROUPS

22nd Annual General Meeting

Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie on Wednesday 4 March 2015

In attendance:

Richard Cooke	Chairman
Finlay Clark	Secretary
Helen Polley	Secretarial Support
James Adamson	Executive Committee
Col HFO Bewsher	Executive Committee
Lynda Campbell	Executive Committee
Stephen Gibbs	Executive Committee
George Macdonald	Executive Committee
John Morison	Executive Committee
Dick Playfair	Executive Committee
Randal Wilson	Executive Committee
Mikey Allan	Wildland Ltd
David Allison	Reay Forest Estate
Peter Allison	Corrour Estate
Michael Aldridge	Glenartney & South Perthshire DMGs
Will Anderson	Strathspey Estate
Kenny Bain	SQVV
Jean Balfour	Scourie Estate
Ewen Ballantyne	Arnisdale Estate
James Barrie	Pitcastle Estate
James Bewsher	Torloisk, Mull DMG
Edward Bewsher	Torloisk, Mull DMG
Donnie Broad	Pitcastle Estate
Angus Cameron	Strathconon
Alistair Christie	Ben Alder Estate
Justin Clarke	Atholi Estate
Victor Clements	Breadalbane DMG
Sinclair Coghill	SNH
Crispian Cooke	North Ross DMG
Jim Corbett	Lochbuie Estate, Mull DMG
Patience Corbett	Lochbuie Estate, Mull DMG
Alastair Deighton	Pitmain Estate
I Dingwall	Breadalbane DMG
Chris Donald	SNH
James Duncan Millar	Remony
Fiona Eastoe	Glen Strathfarrar DMG
George Eveleigh	Highland Deer & Habitat Solutions
M Fawcett	Ben Alder Estate
Andrew Feilden	Ardverikie Estate
J Forbes-Leith	Dunachton
Mark Foxwell	Ben More Coigach Estate
Donald Fraser	SNH
Peter Fraser	SGA
William Fraser	Affric & Kintail DMG
Falcon Frost	Glenfalloch Estate
Tim Frost	Boreland Estate
Morven Frost	Boreland Estate
Alistair H Gibson	Glenfinnan, West Lochaber DMG
Archie Gillies	Lochailhort
Robert Gordon	Barisdale
Daisy Grant	Meoble Estate
Leigh Hague	Gordonbush Estate
Andrew Hamilton	Strutt & Parker
Jamie Hammond	SNH
Colin Hendry	Scardroy & Strathconon
Craig Higgins	Glenfinnan Estate

Alex Hogg
Sarah Holman
Iain Hope
Jimmy Irvine
Justin Irvine
William Jackson
Susan Jones
William Kelly
Robbie Kernahan
Timothy Laing
WJ Lamont
Roddy Legge
Ian Leith
Sam Livings
David Lowes
Brian Lyall
Anson MacAuslan
Andrew MacKay
Danny Mackie
Pete MacLaren
Duncan Maclean
Murdoch MacLean
Ross MacLeod
Lea MacNally
Barbara MacDonald
Douglas MacDonald
Drew MacFarlane Slack
Richard MacGregor
Helen MacIntyre
Billy MacKay
Jamie MacKenzie
Seamus MacNally
Ewen Macpherson
Joanna Macpherson
Allan MacPherson-Fletcher
James MacPherson-Fletcher
Arran Matheson
Pete Mayhew
Andrew McDonell
D McGibbon
Andrew McKelvey
David McLean
Peter Ord
Emma Paterson
Mark Pattinson
Mary Reid
Duncan Richardson
Alastair Riddell
Glyn Robson
Ian Ross
Kenny Ross
Ronnie Ross
Robbie Rowantree
James Scott
Linzi Seivwright
Gordon Shankland
Duncan Shaw
Donna Skelly
Frank Spencer-Nairn
Andrew Taylor
Ryan Thomson
Susanna Thomson
Sarah Troughton
Tom Turnbull

SGA
Shielbridge
SNH
Glen Mazeran Estate
James Hutton Institute
Strathtay DMG
Lochalsh DMG
Ardnamurchan
SNH
Mull DMG
Forest Enterprise
Letterewe Estate
Glenfinnan Estate
Lochluichart Estate
Glenfalloch Estate
Badanloch Estate
Northern DMG
Dalness, East Sutherland
Ledgowan
Inverailort
Kinlochmoidart
Strathconon
Wildlife Estates Scotland
Glen Quoich
Letterewe Estate
Shielbridge Estate
MDMG / SLE
East Loch Erich
Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG
Wildland Ltd
Lochluichart Estate
Gairloch Conservation Unit
Lochalsh DMG
Lochalsh DMG
Balavil
Monadhliath & Glenelg DMGs
Ledmore Estate
Cairngorms & Speyside DMG
Glen Mazeran Estate
Wildland Ltd
Knockie
Kinlochmoidart
Invercauld and NTS
Auchlyne and Suie
South West Ross DMG
Assynt Peninsula, Subgroup WSDMG
Mid West DMG
North Chesthill
Lochluichart Estate
SNH
Lochrosque & Kinlochewe Estate
Lochrosque
Ardnamurchan
SNH
Caorann
Loch Shiel Estate
Gualin Estate
Coignafearn
Glen Strathfarrar DMG
Scottish Government
Wildland Ltd
Black Mount DMG
SCSTG
Strone Estate

Richard Vernon
Ben Weatherall
Rob Whitson
Jamie Williamson
Roddy d'Anyers Willis
Mark Wrightham
David Campbell
Roddy MacAskill
Christian Nissen
Peter Keyser
Richard Seaman
Gilmour Strang
A Walker

Glendoe
Yorkshire Game
Ardverikie
Alvie Estate
Savills
SNH
Land Consultancy Services Ltd
Highland Deer and Habitat Solutions
Corporate Member, Highland Game Ltd
Associate Member
Associate Member
Associate Member
Associate Member

Apologies:

John Bruce
Willy Inglis
Bruce Sewell

Executive Committee
Executive Committee
Executive Committee

Pieter Bakker
Richard Barclay
Ken Bowlt
Charles Butter
Jane Cheape
John Christie
Donald Fraser
Rory Galloway
Heather Gow
John Hay
Diana Jordan
Christopher MacKenzie
Malcolm Mcphail
Clive Meikle
Malcolm Nicol
Gillian Pattinson
James Scotland
Susan Steven
Ian Sutherland
Major Tom Wills
Martin Johnson
Col Rupert Nicholas
Hugh Rose
Derek Stead
William Boyd
George Leggatt
Robin Leslie Melville
John Macdonald
Kenneth McDiarmid

North West Sutherland DMG
Innerhadden
West Ross DMG
Strathtay DMG
Moidart DMG
Lochdochart
Glencannich
Savills
North West Sutherland DMG
Mullardoch
South West Ross DMG
Achnashellach Estate
Harris & Lewis DMG
Glenstrafarrar DMG
Birse Parish DMG
South West Ross DMG
Emslie Farming
Affric & Kintail & Glenmoriston DMGs
Dunan Estate
Achnashellach Estate
Associate Member
Associate Member
Associate Member
Associate Member

1.	Minutes of the previous AGM on 20 February 2014 The minutes were proposed by Andrew Hamilton, seconded by Col H F O Bewsher.
2.	Election of Chairman Richard Cooke left the Chair which was taken by Deputy Chairman Andrew Gordon. There being no other nominations Richard Cooke was re-elected as ADMG Chairman for a further term, proposed by Andrew Hamilton, seconded by George Macdonald.
3.	Regional elections 3.1 The Regional Representative elections were conducted en bloc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area 1 – David Allison; Brian Lyall, Deputy • Area 3 – Jamie Williamson stood down, replaced by Jamie Adamson, and Drew Macfarlane-Slack, Deputy • Area 5 – Lynda Campbell; Alistair Gibson, Deputy. All proposed by Jamie Duncan-Millar, seconded by Victor Clements.

	<p>3.2 Richard Cooke said that ADMG Area 7, formerly the SW Scotland DMG, which had been a long-standing member, was being disbanded. It had been decided following much discussion that this Group was too big to be really effective and would now split into three Lowland Deer Groups and be aligned with the Lowland Deer Network.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Financial Report</p> <p>4.1 Finlay Clark, ADMG Secretary, thanked the Chairs, Secretaries and all those involved in the administration of DMGs for their hard work and focus in ensuring that the dissemination of information and collation of returns and subscriptions was carried out in a timeous fashion.</p> <p>He also thanked all those present who actively promoted ADMG and in particular, those who had encouraged new members to enlist. There continues to be strong interest in new groups and associate and corporate membership.</p> <p>4.2 The major change to subscription administration related to the decentralisation of Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) subscriptions being paid directly to ADMG. These are now paid through the DMG network. The change in payment mechanism appeared to be working well but any group which is unsure of the process should ask for support. Finlay Clark thanked FES for their commitment and input into what is logistically a complex task.</p> <p>4.3 <u>Management Accounts to 28 February 2015</u></p> <p>4.3.1 Finlay Clark reported the annual budget of income amounting to £101,932 v budgeted expenditure for the year of £98,870 would thereby result in a surplus of £3,062. The financial year of the Association runs from 1st July to 30th June and a report at 28th February therefore constituted 2/3rds of the financial year. Finlay Clark reported that of the budgeted £75,288 income to be invoiced or recovered by the 28th February, this had fallen short by £12,778 and £62,510 had been billed. On the expenditure side, some £46,857 had been spent versus a budget of £60,320 thereby recording a positive variance of £13,463 and an overall positive variance of £685. The under recovery of income, principally membership subscriptions, relates to timing of recovery as opposed to any projected shortfall at year end. Finlay Clark was confident that the budgeted surplus of £3,062 would be achieved and thereby the budget delivered. Finlay Clark also commented that the delay in budgeted income was in part due to the function of the complex FES changeover during 2014/2015.</p> <p>4.4 <u>Audited Accounts to 30 June 2014</u></p> <p>Finlay Clark presented the audited accounts of the Association of Deer Management Groups, signed off by the Chairman and Johnston Carmichael LLP, the Association's auditors. Income amounted to £98,706.85 for the year 2014/15 which was a slight shortfall on the previous financial year. The lower recovery of subscriptions from £103,438.18 to £96,297.88 accounted for the reduction in income. Total expenditure amounted to £79,660.48, a slight increase from the previous year. Finlay Clark explained that Deer Group Expenses related to money being refunded to the DMGs in relation to FES contribution.</p> <p>4.5 The annual accounts were proposed by Andrew Gordon and seconded by Timothy Laing.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Chairman's Address</p> <p>Appended to minutes as a pdf.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>DMG Work Programme 2015</p> <p>6.1 Richard Cooke, ADMG Chairman, and Linzi Seivwright of Caorann Consultants, jointly outlined the work programme that ADMG and DMGs would be expected to undertake through 2015 ahead of the RACCE Committee review in 2016</p> <p>6.2 Linzi's presentation is appended to the minutes as a pdf.</p> <p>6.3 She said that the challenges were identified and that most DMGs were working well towards having effective, dynamic management plans by the 2016 review.</p>

	<p>6.4 A programme of work was ongoing to build capacity, under the guidance of ADMG working closely with SNH. Almost all DMGs had now gone through the Assessment process.</p> <p>6.5 She said that the deer management database tool, SWARD, would be piloted in the summer and thanked East Sutherland DMG and Inverary & Tyndrum DMG for their involvement so far.</p> <p>6.6 The next DMG Seminar and Workshop was planned for Birnam on 20 March for DMG Chairs and Secretaries, and would focus on deer management planning in the morning, and information, data protection and communications in the afternoon.</p> <p>6.7 Richard Cooke said that it would be a challenging year for ADMG and the DMGs but that they now were better equipped in terms of tools, support and guidance.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>PACEC Report</p> <p>7.1. Finlay Clark said that the 2006 PACEC Report had been extremely good on financial and employment data, identifying £105 million from deer stalking contributed to the Scottish economy, and 2500 full time job equivalents.</p> <p>7.2 The 2015 PACEC report would tell a great deal more, but to deliver a sharp, political focus needed the best data to illustrate what the whole deer management sector, including the low ground, does for the rural and wider Scottish economy.</p> <p>7.3 There had been 132 respondents so far (twice the number for the 2006 survey) accounting for coverage of 1 million Ha; initial analysis showed that 84 per cent are members of ADMG; 72 per cent are members of DMGs or equivalent; 88 per cent count their deer annually or bi-annually; 90 per cent stated that they practice deer management to keep deer numbers and habitat in balance. The preliminary analysis showed 45 per cent of deer were shot for 'sport' and 42 per cent shot for conservation. Evidence showed declining red populations and increasing sika and fallow.</p> <p>7.4 It was asked whether there was a breakdown of stags and hinds; also that those deer shot for sport were also likely to have been culled for conservation, although not specifically stated.</p> <p>7.5 It was asked whether data could be split by DMG and, if so, this would be useful for inclusion in respective Deer Management Plans (DMPs). FC confirmed that the information could be broken down at least regionally.</p> <p>7.6 The report would be finalised in the summer for publication in autumn 2015. It is jointly funded by ADMG, LDNS and SGA.</p> <p>7.7 The meeting was reminded that data included in the report was anonymous and protected and estates should not be reluctant to complete the questionnaire. Finlay Clark reassured the meeting that all data would be handled confidentially.</p> <p>7.8 There followed discussion about whether red deer numbers particularly were stable, increasing or decreasing. Robbie Kernahan, SNH, said there was no overall view at this moment, and that at the 2016 AGM there would be the opportunity to show more detailed population and cull data.</p> <p>7.9 Finlay Clark said that the sector could not survive in this age if it did not declare information, although points regarding confidentiality were noted.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Committee and other reports</p> <p>8.1 <u>Scottish Venison Partnership (SVP)</u> John Morison gave a report as ADMG representative on SVP, highlights below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deer farm demonstration project was into its second year. The 5 events had been very well attended at Culquoich, Strathdon and would move to a different venue or venues in 2015.

- The latest industry estimate was that there were now some 2000 hinds on deer farms in Scotland.
- PGI status for Scottish Wild Venison was to be pursued for venison from animals killed in Scotland (although not exclusively processed in Scotland).
- The Food and Health Innovation Service had produced a positive report about the health benefits of venison.
- A study had been undertaken by the James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen University and SVP to identify barriers to entry into deer farming.
- Media visits during the hind season would be planned as part of the programme for 2015/16
- The 2p/kilo levy collected through the three SQWV assured game dealers was working well and had placed SVP on a more secure footing.

8.2 Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group (SCSTG)

Sarah Troughton, Chair of SCSTG thanked ADMG for its ongoing support, and said it was a vital partner in the Group. The website was a major focus and doing well, and members were reminded that sporting days to let could be added.

8.3 Moorland Forum and Access Forum

Robert Balfour had represented ADMG on both the above. He was now stepping down and Richard Cooke asked for ADMG's thanks to him to be minuted. Richard Cooke would be taking over on both pro tem. He mentioned Lord Lindsay's letter on behalf of the Moorland Forum in response to the Land Reform Bill consultation. He said that Wildlife Estates Scotland (WES) was mentioned in this, and that those attending could find out more about WES at their stand at the back of the room.

8.4 Competence

Colin McClean, ADMG's representative on the Competence Group, said that the Group's final report had gone to Government. They now needed to ascertain how this fitted with the overall review of the sector and if more needed to be done.

8.5. General Discussion

Discussion followed with questions from the floor on the above and other topics, and covered:

8.5.1 How does Government intend to spend the money raised from sporting rates as statements in relation to this tended to be confusing and simplistic. Richard Cooke said that an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 landholdings would need to be assessed, and assessment would be required before exemption under the Small Business Bonus Scheme applied if indeed this was still to be applicable.

8.5.2 It was remarked that those living and working in the countryside felt threatened, and that Government had to recognise that people were important too.

8.5.3 It was suggested that if statutory control was introduced Government would have to meet a larger proportion of the costs, and PACEC would help illustrate the extent of these. Richard Cooke said that the deer sector needed not just to be "grown up" but seen to be so. However there should be no underestimation of the effort required to ensure that its points were heard in political circles, for example on the need for a cost benefit analysis and economic assessment for sporting rates.

8.5.4 It was asked whether a "sound empirical assessment" could be made of how many deer there actually are and whether numbers are decreasing or increasing as so many arguments stemmed back to numbers. Also the fact that roe deer were seen to be decreasing in PACEC was an obvious anomaly. In response, Richard Cooke said that because of the bias of highland v lowland returns, PACEC probably gave a highland interpretation of roe deer populations. Also the numbers quoted to the RACCE Committee were 275,000 open hill red deer based on an aggregate of counts going back 10 years plus, and a reduced population of 2.2 million sheep (down from 3.3 million).

8.5.5 Robbie Kernahan added that at the RACCE Committee, while some members thought in terms of overall numbers and general trends, the concept of impacts was also grasped.

	<p>8.5.6 On behalf of those attending, David Lowes said he sensed nervousness in the room but that everyone should be grateful for what ADMG was doing.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Presentation by Ian Ross, Chairman, Scottish Natural Heritage</p> <p>9.1 Ian Ross said that he had come not just to talk but to listen and fully understood the views and concerns that had been raised.</p> <p>9.2 He said that SNH valued its relationship with ADMG and the DMGs; SNH was there to provide information and support, and was a key part in the ongoing, collaborative approach.</p> <p>9.3 He said that effective DMGs have an important role to play in rural sustainability, good practice, delivering good quality habitat, and healthy deer.</p> <p>9.4 Ongoing work included the self-assessment process; delivery of effective DMPs, and wider delivery of benefits referencing the Deer Code, WDNA (new and refreshed), links to Best Practice, and the public interest.</p> <p>9.5 He acknowledged the current political and policy context, and wider work such as the Scottish Land Use Strategy, Community Empowerment Bill and greater social justice.</p> <p>9.6 He said that SNH through the RACCE Committee evidence sessions, and the concerns raised by the National Native Woodlands Survey had maintained support for the voluntary principle.</p> <p>9.7 There had been a review also of the SNH Corporate Plan, with changing emphasis towards delivery of wider public benefits, natural capital, ecosystem services and making these more accessible by the layman.</p> <p>9.8 Deer were a priority for the SNH board, and there was a prospect of wider powers in respect of deer. There had been detailed feedback from SNH Field Officers on the Assessment process, and it was evident that some DMGs had more work to do – whether this was effective delivery of plans that articulated the public interest, greater transparency, better communications, or access to and use of robust data. He said there were some very quick, easy wins, but all should be conscious of the diminishing time window to achieve these.</p> <p>9.9 He said that assessments had been carried out over 44 DMGs, and it would be unrealistic to expect all ‘green’ for the 2016 review but that the target was less ‘red’, more ‘green’ and more ‘yellow’.</p> <p>Among the questions the following points were raised:</p> <p>9.10 What happens if the voluntary principle does not deliver what the Minister wants at the 2016 review and the sector be making plans for that eventuality now? Ian Ross said that there were very able, committed people taking the process forward and the direction of travel so far suggested optimism.</p> <p>9.11 There was concern that SNH staff on the ground were overstretched with more changes imminent.</p> <p>9.12 Politicians and civil servants might be driving for greater public interest and public benefits, but was this in line with what the public wanted, and had they been asked? Was there any research to support this? In response, Robbie Kernahan said that there was evidence gathered by SNH for 5 years, that the public regularly and continually raised concerns about deer. There were now opportunities for DMGs to speak to the public directly about local concerns, such as through open consultation on DMP development, DMG meetings etc.</p> <p>9.13 An example was given by Glen Strathfarrar DMG where the Group had worked</p>

	<p>with Highland Council to provide an educational day on deer management.</p> <p>9.14 The definition of public benefit was discussed in relation to management of designated sites, reduction of herbivores on designated sites in unfavourable condition, and also the loss of subsidy being incurred by removing sheep. Ian Ross said that provisions in the new SRDP could possibly help with this, but that the focus should be getting things sorted on the deer management front and then moving on to concerns over wider land use.</p> <p>9.15 It was remarked that on one estate to protect subsidy and achieve 0.05 livestock units/Ha up to 3000 sheep would need to go back on the hill, resulting in overstocking, so there was a clear conflict between economic and environmental objectives. Lower stocking rates were important, but this had not been recognised.</p> <p>9.16 It was suggested that SNH should run a PR campaign to raise awareness of what was meant by 'public interest' and 'public benefit'. These were terms that were widely used, but not always understood. Ian Ross said that much of this was common sense and to achieve these objectives for the review regarding 'public interest' was not as onerous as many thought.</p>
10.	<p>Presentation by Mark Wrightham, SNH <i>The New Heading for the Scottish Hills Web Service</i></p> <p>10.1 Mark Wrightham's presentation is available to download from the ADMG website.</p> <p>10.2 He said that the HFTSH site had been developed so as to be easier for land managers to use, easier for SNH to maintain, be more accessible from a hill walker's perspective and give wider geographical coverage.</p> <p>10.3 Engaging with the service would help land managers meet the requirements of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and deliver enhanced public benefit.</p> <p>10.4 Next steps were to agree estate entries for the new framework, translate current information into the new format, generate more entries from landholdings (there was a dedicated e mail address for this), and promote the service at DMG meetings. The aim was to have components in place for 1 July and the 2015 stalking season, albeit this was an ongoing process.</p> <p>10.5 The HFTSH web address Website is www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/hftsh</p> <p>10.6 Questions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether there was a counter on the website to know how many people are actually accessing it. • A glossary providing information on pronunciation of difficult Gaelic names of hills would be helpful, as would a search facility. • Whether links could be included to individual estate websites • Guidance on latest wording for signs about stalking and for information on estate websites would be helpful. <p>10.7 Mark Wrightham said that the service was currently only serving Munros, Corbetts and a number of other charismatic peaks and walks.</p>
11.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>A vote of thanks was given from the floor for the significant amount of work being done by the ADMG Chairman, Secretary and Executive Committee on behalf of the sector.</p>