



**ASSOCIATION OF DEER MANAGEMENT GROUPS**

**Regional Meeting**

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

**Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park**

## MINUTES

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**In Attendance:**

Richard Cooke  
Finlay Clark  
Paul Bekier  
Col. Bewsher  
Lynda Campbell  
Victor Clements  
Holly Deary  
James Duncan Millar  
Donald Fraser  
Alistair Gibson  
Linzi Seivwright  
Tom Turnbull

Leif Bragg  
Tony Cameron  
Angus Campbell  
Nicola Colquhoun  
Richard Eadington  
Jamie Gibbs  
Jamie Hammond  
Fiona Holmes  
Jackie Hyland  
Peter MacLean  
John Reid

**Apologies:**

James Adamson  
David Allison  
Andrew Gordon

Chairman  
Secretary  
Executive Committee  
Executive Committee

Tilhill Forestry  
[Drumardoch Estate](#)  
SNH  
LLTNPA / Balqhidder DMG  
Forestry Commission  
Dougarie Estate / Arran DMG  
SNH  
Trees for Life  
SNH  
NTS / Arran DMG  
LLTNPA

Executive Committee  
Executive Committee  
Executive Committee

Ewen Macpherson	Executive Committee
John Morison	Executive Committee
Robin Pakeman	Executive Committee
Dick Playfair	Executive Committee
Karen Ramoo	Executive Committee
Randall Wilson	Executive Committee

Alexander Baillie-Hamilton	South Perthshire DMG
James Baillie	Glenelg DMG
Alistair Bruce	Glen Spean Estate
Patrick Creasey	North Ross DMG
John Forbes-Leith	Dunachton Estate
Duncan Gordon	Lude & Glenquoich
Michael Laing	Glenelg DMG
Helen MacIntyre	Inveraray & Tyndrum DMG
Hugh Nicoll	Inveraray & Tyndrum
Ashley Smith	Glen Spean Estate
Ralph Smith	Monadhliaths DMG
Frank Spencer Nairn	Glen Strathfarrar DMG
Gavin Strathdee	Glenelg DMG

Peter Keyser	Associate Member
Col. Nicholas	Associate Member

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b> Recorded above.</p>	
	<p>Minutes of Regional Meetings held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at Birnam and 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness were recorded as a true representation of the meetings.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Simon Jones, Director of Conservation at Loch Lomond &amp; the Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA)</b> opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance including Angus Campbell and Jackie Hyland of SNH, and to Fiona Homes from Trees for Life who would deliver a presentation. SJ welcomed all to Balloch and invited everyone to attend the site visit to Flanders Moss that afternoon.</p> <p>SJ reported that Partnership Plans had recently been signed off by Scottish Government for LLTNPA and Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA). Sustainable management of herbivores was very important and both LLTNPA and CNPA worked with local DMGs. Nicola Colqhoun is key to managing those relationships. Public benefit is the key driver. Lowland and upland deer management is equally important for LLTNPA.</p>	

### 3. Chairman's Report

The Chair welcomed those in attendance and confirmed the site visit to Flanders Moss in the afternoon. Angus Campbell, Chair and Dr Jackie Hyland of SNH were to attend.

**Deer Working Group (DWG)** Simon Pepper, Chair, had confirmed that progress was on-going. The report would expound evolution rather than revolution. Donald Fraser (SNH) had updated Roseanna Cunningham (Cabinet Secretary) that DWG are on schedule to report in Spring 2019.

The Lowland Working Group report was scheduled to be issued by Lowland Panel by late 2018 but it was likely that this would be delayed until 2019. The Lowlands present a very complex picture and were less documented than the Uplands / Highlands.

The Chairman reported that collaborative management in the Highlands was far more developed in the red deer range and in the traditional Highland range than in the Lowlands. It is important for ADMG to push the boundaries of the recognised deer range and Lochlomond NP was an important step in that process.

**Venison** James Duncan Millar reported that local authorities were much more interested since FSS's attention following the E.coli outbreak in 2015. The concern is that venison always seems to find an outlet. Co-ordination of local authorities' responsibilities are not well understood and local authorities in many instances are not wholly keen to add to their workload. Feedback is that a number of carcasses have been seized by FSS. JDM asked that ADMG encourage more Estates to be Quality Assured. SQV offer free assessments for QA compliance.

Jamie Stewart will be the new Chair of SQWV following Leo Barclay's retirement. Tom Turnbull will represent ADMG on SQWV.

Lowland outlets are very restricted and limited which makes marketing difficult.

**SNH** – Board review and re-election in March 2019.

**DMG Health Checks** – were on-going and were being funded by ADMG. Victor Clements, Colin Maclean, Cathy Mayne, Mike Cottam and Linzi Seivwright were now carrying out Health Checks. Please see update at 5.b below.

**Section 7 Agreements** – Donald Fraser will update with SNH Report (see item 6 below).

**SWARD** – A review is on-going, and an update provided to SNH, but consultants have found some major challenges. Donald Fraser and Holly Deary advised that the delay in completion of SWARD should not hold up any management decisions.

**Best Practice** – New impetus required, and project officers were in place.

**Scone and Moy Game fairs** – had been successful and were largely 'business as usual'.

	<p><b>CSTG</b> – represented by Tom Turnbull.</p> <p><b>Scottish Venison Partnership</b> – represented by Tom Turnbull.</p> <p><b>Committee Representation</b> – RMJC continued to represent ADMG at SQWV, Moorland Forum, CSTGS, etc.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Administrative Report</b></p> <p>The Secretary stated that the current financial year was the first year that forecast a significant budget loss. This was due to investing in the Health Check process. A general discussion took place surrounding the increased workload undertaken by ADMG in delivering deer management for the 21st Century. The Chairman undertook to internally discuss the merits of seeking additional central funding to help run ADMG.</p> <p><b>Financial Statement relating to the ADMG accounts for the Executive Committee and Regional Meetings held on 13th August 2018 at Loch Lomond.</b>  The Secretary presented the management account reports to the 31st August 2018. The Association have budgeted income of £116,550 during the financial year 2018 / 2019, and year to date had invoiced £41,445. This was a positive variance over budget of £17,520 and was due to timing of invoicing in relation to membership subscriptions. This positive variance would flatten as the year progresses. The Secretary confirmed expenditure of £20,415 versus a budget of £24,810. The biggest major variance from previous years relates to £40,000 set aside for DMG Health Checks. The year to date budget was running some £21,915 ahead of budget due to advance invoice subscriptions and some cost savings year to date. It was anticipated that those cost savings will balance as the year progresses, and that the loss for the financial year 2018 / 2019 of £38,480 was largely on budget. The Secretary confirmed that the Association held £119,999 as cash in the bank.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Future work plan</b></p> <p><b>a/ SNH 2019 Review</b> The 2016 Review had provided many lessons on what is expected from the deer sector. Discussion was on-going on a number of elements of the review, and the key is that there should be “no surprises”. There is no ultimate end to deer management and the situation is one which is constantly evolving. Deer management and land management plans are always evolving. DMGs are now far more sophisticated and more than just the management of deer, environment, access, public interest, etc. Progress is being advanced by top quality young people coming into the industry from Highlands and Islands College and other educational institutions. DF reported on an event to be held in June / July which would set the scene for the 2019 Assessments which will largely replace 2014 and 2016 criteria. Health Checks are important and SNH welcome the opportunity to be involved and encourage all DMGs to take up the offer of a Health Check from ADMG.</p> <p>RMJC re-emphasised the importance of leadership within DMGs. Leading a DMG is a difficult but vital job.</p>	

**b/ Health Checks** (Linzi Seivwright and Victor Clements)

LS updated the meeting on progress having met with 50% of DMGs. This was not a critical process but a process to identify where the gaps exist. There is a large volume of information which Groups are required to present and demonstrate. Not only was leadership important but collaboration of information was key. Health Check Reviews would be completed by the end of October. The main gap is HIA and presentation. Woodland data probably slower than open hill and the lack of guidance is hampering the ADMG Benchmark and SNH Public Interest. - Both areas were being reviewed and 101 criteria.

VC – reported that he had completed Health Checks for 23 DMGs and had a further 7 to complete. VC was being “critical” in his approach. Scoring criteria can be highly subjective.

It is anticipated that there will be Group follow up from the summary reports that are issued. Further audit to enable DMGs to demonstrate compliance and activity on various areas. All Groups varied and some had particular strengths and weaknesses.

Groups have increased professional capacity, and this helps with delivery and compliance. SNH contributed £1,800 per DMG to help HIA output. No additional public funding other than FCS who have helped in the south west.

VC sees ‘red scores’ lessening and reduction helps make the red scores stand out more.

**c/ Sporting Rates Appeals** are likely to be processed later this year. The Highlands and Argyll authorities are likely to adopt Scottish Government recommendations, but it is unlikely that Angus will do so. The Small Business Bonus Scheme continues as drafted at present. Col. Bewsher commented that Local Authorities were unhappy at being tasked with tax collection. The Survey of Sporting Rates was on-going and survey information will help standardise a pricing structure. There is a very wide variation and a more straightforward approach is required. Results would be available early in 2019.

FCS have appealed all assessments across all holdings. Winston Churchill had been successful with “Vacant Property Relief” which guides local authorities. Highland Council were adopting, Argyll were likely to apply, but several authorities are yet to confirm.

**d/ Venison** Col. Bewsher, Chair of SVP reported that Food Standards Scotland (FSS) were very active with management of game dealers and processors. Non-compliance was evident in some areas and some non-compliance had been deemed wilful.

Col. Bewsher advised that there is a special scheme for small producers which would help encourage participation. Leo Barclay was undertaking this as a project. Local authorities will become more active in venison and larder standards. Anyone selling carcasses to Game Dealers should satisfy themselves they are a competent

	<p>and recognised producer and processor. Take responsibility for the product you are supplying.</p> <p>As an aid to producers, there are three films on You Tube that had been shown at Scone Game Fair. The films can be viewed at:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVZqTCDy62jfse5Prk18Lzg">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVZqTCDy62jfse5Prk18Lzg</a></p> <p>All DMGs to have a copy of the films, with possibility to roll out to all DMG members.</p> <p>A PR campaign on venison was underway to Trade Magazines.</p> <p><b>e/ SQWV Quality Assurance</b> is very important. Leo Barclay is working on a small number scheme to allow the financial hurdle to be overcome.</p> <p><b>f/ Ambition 2030</b> (Scottish Government project) is aiming to double the contribution to food and drink sector. Venison is an important part of this ambitious target. Any doubling of venison output will come from the farmed sector rather than the wild deer sector.</p> <p><b>g/ SQWV</b> is offering free assessments of deer larders and guidance on how to comply. ADMG supports the expansion of the SQWV and QA Schemes. Raising of standards is very important.</p> <p><b>h/ FSS / Scottish Government</b> project to assess health status of deer in Scotland. FES very important as they manage properties across Scotland with a good mix of species. Report is now being written. E.coli 0157 is the main concern.</p> <p><b>i/ Meetings Attended</b> See Chairman's Report (3. above).</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>SNH Update</b></p> <p><b>2019 Review</b> The Health Check process is well progressed and there is no question that any "goal posts" will be moved.</p> <p><b>Lowland Deer Panel</b> Will report to SNH in October 2018.</p> <p><b>Review of Deer Code</b> Members to be lobbied and questioned shortly.</p> <p><b>Deer Working Group</b> By early 2019, DWG will have reported to Convener.</p> <p><b>2019 Review</b> Terms of reference to be agreed with SNH Board</p> <p><b>Health Checks</b> SNH focused on poorer performing Groups. Five Section Seven Agreements are in place. Caebrochan, North Ross currently on-going.</p> <p><b>ECCLR</b> Took a keen interest in 2016. The new committee including Chair will be important. All new members will need to be contacted by ADMG and brought up to speed.</p> <p><b>LS</b> – Woodland Inventory will not be in place prior to the 2019 review. FCS/FES training and roll out important.</p>	

	<p><b>VC</b> concerned about how woodland monitoring will affect the wider DMP. Concern that this will form part of 2019 Review. Very strongly stated by DF that the absence of woodland HIA will be seen in a negative way.</p> <p><b>Best Practice</b> (JDM) confirmed that it is very difficult to access the <b>Best Practice</b> Guides. DF guide alerts should be available shortly.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Publications</b></p> <p><b>The Summer 2018 Newsletter</b> had been published and launched at Scone Game Fair.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Fiona Holmes</b></p> <p><b>Trees for Life Caledonian Pine Recovery Projects</b> is a two-year project funded by various Trusts and Woodland Trust, (SNH, SLE, Steering Group). There are 84 remnants of pine woods in Scotland and FC are actively involved with the majority. Glenmoriston and Glen Affric are large scale projects which have been active for many years. Priority is given to those sites which may not be SSSI, JMT or NTS managed and where there are no obvious conservation managers. The project comprises 2 parts: 1/ Information gathering, HIA standard methodology, 2/ Future resilience (300-year, 600-year viability).</p> <p>What are the options going forward from FCS and WGS? Why is uptake slow? Part of the review process under 1/ above.</p> <p>Fiona Holmes emphasised that Trees for Life are realistic about wider land management objectives and do not seek to recommend projects which are never likely to be taken up. Thirty possible visits have been set up and 10 have been undertaken so far.</p> <p>Lowland details within website.</p> <p>VC commented that the focus on pinewoods, had been going on for over 30 years. VC considered that pinewoods will be better than envisaged. Little support through WGS of regeneration as support had been diverted to new woodland establishment.</p> <p>More information is available at the Trees for Life website:  <a href="https://treesforlife.org.uk/work/about-us/who-we-are/">https://treesforlife.org.uk/work/about-us/who-we-are/</a></p>	
9.	<p><b>DMG Updates</b></p> <p><b>West Lochaber</b> AG reported that the Group had been reviewed by Colin Maclean in July. There was work to do on population modelling, but the process was generally going well.</p> <p><b>Balqhiddier</b> NC confirmed that the Group had been reviewed in May by VC. The process was fair, and some areas had been highlighted. The Group was very</p>	

	<p>diverse in terms of members and objectives. Includes a large forestry resource and counts can be challenging which impacts on population modelling and HIA.</p> <p><b>South Perthshire</b> - JDM reported problem areas and coherence of land holdings on eastern edge. Woodland properties challenging. HIA was on-going and a number of actions required to be audited. Resources are required to deliver. Health Check was a good process. Concern that SNH will move the goal posts with the introduction of new criteria.</p> <p><b>Arran</b> – JG reported that administrative support and HIA was required but all could be delivered.</p> <p><b>Holly Deary</b>, SNH commented that she had attended a couple of Health Checks and this had been a good way to reinforce the standards required and core messages. Capacity and resource very important.</p> <p><b>TT</b> reported on new Groups including, Cowal, and West Loch Lomond that were moving forward but there was concern about the expectation that comes with DMG status. Flanders Moss also doing the same.</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>Next Meeting:</b> 21st November 2018 at Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness</p> <p>AG, West Lochaber DMG reported that community engagement was on-going.</p> <p>Paul Bekier – East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum – Herbivore Management Group. Work from TT and NC and new model of management. RMJC commented that there were many forms of collaboration. NC – deer management not necessarily an issue as there was no collaborative deer management plan. Peatland management, woodland restoration and wider land management foci were deemed more relevant.</p> <p>JDM – South Perthshire DMG is keen to learn more about East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum.</p> <p><b>Kippen – Flanders Moss Nature Reserve.</b> Assembly point at observation post. 1,000 red deer within a small area. Deer management is difficult due to small holding size. Damage to agriculture is the main issue and crop growing is very difficult. Damage to designated sites is likely to increase and damage is potentially likely. Most members of the DMG would prefer not to have deer. SNH asked to intervene by farming membership.</p>	

	<p>Recovery of deer difficult on raised bog. Deer stay on the bog during day and raid crops at night.</p> <p>High density surrounding Flanders Moss. FCS and SNH providing good support on thermal counting.</p>	
<b>11.</b>	<p>There being no other business, the Chairman thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting.</p>	

DRAFT