



## **LEWIS & HARRIS DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP (LHDMG)**

### **NOTE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**DATE:** 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018

**TIME:** 7.00pm

**VENUE:** The Resource Centre, Kershader, South Lochs, Isle of Lewis

**Present:** Jason Laing (Grimersta Estate), Gordon Cumming (North Harris Trust), Sally Reynolds, Ben Inglis-Grant (Carloway Estate Trust), Lisa Maclean (Galson Estate Trust), Ivan Brown (Barvas Estate Trust), Chris Macrae (Eishken Estate), Fiona Stokes (Pairc Trust), Angus Mackenzie (Scaliscro Estate), Iain Macleod (Aline Community Woodland),

**In attendance:** Mark Macdonald (Scottish Natural Heritage), Graeme Taylor (Scottish Natural Heritage)

**Apologies:** Alison Alston, Olly Alston (Aird Bheag), Iain Maciver (Stornoway Trust), Innes Morrison (Amhuinnsuidhe Castle Estate & Morsgail Estate), Angus Macleod (Barvas Estate), Neil St. Quinton (Borve Lodge Estate), Calum Mackay (North Harris Trust)

Item	
	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
	<b>Declaration of Interests – none declared</b>
	<b>Minute of previous meeting – No previous AGM</b> <b>Matters Arising – No previous AGM</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	Apologies were noted.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Annual report of LHDMG for period ended 31 August 2018</b>
2.1	Jason Laing reported on activity for the period ending 31 August 2018, since the inception of the deer management group in 2017.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Change of Chairperson</u> Jason outlined that he had been appointed as Chair to take over for the interim period from when Steve Woodhall stood down.</li> <li>- <u>Habitat Impact Assessments</u> Jason commented on the training that had taken place to support estate to undertake Habitat Impact assessments.</li> <li>- <u>Adoption of Deer Management Plan</u> It was reported how the adoption of the plan was a major milestone for the group during the period. Significant progress has been made and it is now important to continue to use the healthcheck that was carried out in July to progress the implementation of the plan.</li> <li>- <u>Deer counts</u> Foot counts have taken place in some estate but there was reference made to the hope of a helicopter count in 2019.</li> <li>- <u>Membership</u> Jason reported on the excellent membership of the group and all estates across Lewis and Harris are members.</li> </ul> <p>A number of weak areas for the group were highlighted as per the healthcheck and these need to be focused upon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Woodlands is potentially a weak area, but this is understandable</li> <li>- Habitat Impact Assessments are progressing, but there may be a need for more training sessions to be arranged.</li> <li>- Deer Vehicle Collision – some guidance may be required on how best to report and record</li> <li>- A survey will be issued to enable members to feedback on all aspects of the plan and this will be how cull figures are collated.</li> </ul>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Treasurer’s report for period ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018</b>
3.1	<p>Gordon Cumming, treasurer, provided an update and a simple finance report was circulated. Gordon highlighted that the constitution stipulates that we need to appoint an auditor and a view should be taken on this by the group.</p> <p>It was agreed by consensus that an auditor is not required and an amendment would need to be made to the constitution to reflect this decision. The accounts are basic and at the current time appointing an auditor is deemed not necessary.</p> <p>Please refer to accompanying financial statement.</p> <p>All estates have paid membership for 2017/18.</p> <p>3 estates have outstanding fees for the production of the deer management plan. It is imperative that these bills are paid. The Group has yet to pay its Association of Deer Management Groups (ADMG) fees for 2017/18 and cannot do so until the outstanding bills are</p>

	<p>paid.</p> <p>Our fees to ADMG are based on deer cull data from the membership.</p> <p>From an SNH £1800 grant received, £885 has already been paid out of the account leaving a balance of £913 which is restricted. It is allocated towards Habitat Impact work as monies were received from SNH.</p> <p>Gordon highlighted that the group needs to consider a mechanism to provide ongoing support. A quote has been received from Linzi Seivwright, Caorann Consulting. Jason detailed the itemized plan for the year ahead, that was within the quote.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed by consensus that in principle the quote received from Caorann Consulting should be considered and accepted, providing our financial situation allows for this. It was recognized by all present that measurement and collation against the plan is essential and we would not manage this without support.</p> <p>Graeme Taylor (SNH) clarified that the £1800 grant was a one off to support DMGs but is not available again.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Appointment of Office Bearers</b>
4.1	Sally Reynolds (Carloway Estate Trust) proposed that the current office bearers remain in place for a further year. This was seconded by Iain Macleod (Aline Community Woodland). This was agreed by all and accepted by the office bearers.
<b>5.</b>	<b>AOCB</b>
5.1	<p>It was outlined that the next helicopter count might be during the 2019/2020 financial year by SNH. Graeme stipulated that the focus tends to be on less well performing DMGs. Some discussion was held around the North Harris Trust count and if there was scope to do additional count work at that time, since the helicopter is on site. It was agreed this would be looked at, but the priority for this particular count is the NHT as it is being taken forward under a different scheme. Discussions can be picked up with NHT.</p> <p>Much discussion undertaken around counts and the constraints of technology etc. There was a linkage made to the Peatlands Officer who has been newly appointed by Carloway Estate Trust and how those using set routes would possibly pick up on winter mortality rates etc.</p> <p>Some localised issues were discussed relating to shareholders within a township. It was agreed the DMG is not a regulator or is it in a position to enforce anything and acts simply as a forum.</p> <p>Graeme outlined that audits take place Mar/April 2019 and the health check identifies what we need to do as a group.</p> <p>Other considerations for the group may be to look at collective working on:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Peatlands</li><li>- Woodlands</li><li>- Collective larder</li></ul> <p>Funds may be available to assist with this, one fund mentioned was for up to £35k</p> <p>It was agreed some clarity was required on how to report DVCs. It was highlighted there is a website, but it isn't perhaps as widely known or used as it needs to be <a href="http://www.deercollisions.co.uk">www.deercollisions.co.uk</a></p> <p>It was agreed the new Peatland Action Officer's details should be shared with the group.</p> <p>A press release may be a good idea to show progress and we also need to ensure websites are up to date.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>DONM – Date and venue to be confirmed but will be Spring 2019.</b>

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