



LEWIS & HARRIS DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP (LHDMG)

NOTE OF MEETING

DATE: 19th March 2019
TIME: 11.00am – 1.00pm
VENUE: Third Sector Hebrides Offices, Isle of Lewis

Present: Scott Dixon (Aline Estate), Michael Wilson (Morsgail Estate) Sally Reynolds (Carloway Estate Trust), Lisa Maclean (Galson Estate Trust), Jason Laing (Grimersta Estate), Ivan Brown (Barvas Estate Trust), Chris Macrae (Eishken Estate), Gordon Cumming (North Harris Trust), Olly Alston (Aird Bheag), Donnie Whiteford (Garynahine Estate), Iain Watson (Garynahine Estate), Benjamin Inglis-Grant (Peatland Action)

In attendance: Mark Macdonald (Scottish Natural Heritage), Dr Linzi Sievwright (Caoran)

Apologies: Simon Hunt (Uig & Hamanavay), Iain Maciver (Stornoway Trust), Innes Morrison (Amhuinnsuidhe Castle Estate & Morsgail Estate), Fiona Stokes (Pairc Trust), Linda Armstrong (West Harris Trust), Iain Macleod (Aline Community Trust)

Item	
1a	Welcome and Introductions
1b	Declaration of Interests – none declared
2.	Minute of previous meeting – 12th June 2018
2.1	The note of the previous meeting was approved for accuracy and adopted with no amendment. Proposed by Gordon Cumming and seconded by Sally Reynolds
3.	Matters Arising – no matters arising from the previous meeting
	Consider 6.4 of June 2018 note of meeting – Scottish Crofting Federation on June 2018 minutes-LSM to contact local SCF representative.

4.

Working Plan Update

LS has created a working plan and circulated to the group. This will be updated on an annual basis and the information held here will be there most up to date information held. It will act like a progress report and the intention will be to work through this spreadsheet ensuring actions updated.

The aim of the plan is to review the past season, but also plan proactively for the year ahead rather than being reactive. We will try to update the population model, although we know that this comes with the caveat that it will only be as accurate inserted into the model. Feasibility of a full island population count is still imperative to allow us to have more accurate modelling. We would look to SNH to support this.

Support to look at longer term planning i.e. improved infrastructure.

Cull Updates

Each member of the group present provided current cull figures and Linzi recorded these figures.

Winter Mortality & Recruitment Counts

Update on condition from Chris (Eishken), small calves and condition of hinds good. LS indicated it is helpful to headcount.

Ask members for an update on winter mortality, but also what you can count what you see on the ground and sexing it also, so it can be recorded the ratio of stag/hinds etc. (ACTION)

Updated Population Models & Targets

Population count is critical and the lack of accurate numbers is an issue.

Deer Count 2019

North Harris Trust had a helicopter on NHT 2 weeks ago. SNH asked for an update if there was going to be support for an all island count or even for certain areas. Mark from SNH indicated this would be difficult. Graeme Taylor (SNH) has now moved to a different role and it hasn't been established yet who will take over this work. Mark will revert when he has more information.

Habitat Impact Results and Actions

SNH will be carrying out a review of all deer management groups in Scotland. There is 101 criteria to be assessed on and the last time we were assessed was in 2016. In the last assessment that was conducted we didn't have a deer management plan and therefore we weren't in a position to demonstrate any progress. Since that time, we now have an adopted deer management plan and the progress is measurable and this can then be reported back to Scottish Government. This is our opportunity to demonstrate that we can collectively manage deer effectively and there is no need to put any further management in place.

LHDMG have already gone through the health check as a "dummy" exercise in order to support us to get to where we need to be.

The key areas will be the Habitat Impact Assessments for this coming Spring. LS is able to provide

	<p>support either by analysis of results, but also half day support out on the land. We need to establish a good baseline to allow for this work to be carried out every 3 years.</p> <p>The assessment will be ready in April and SNH will be meeting with GC and JL the third week in April to consider how the group are performing against this.</p> <p><u>Peatland Restoration</u> Ben provided a brief overview of the Peatland Action Project and is currently working with land managers to facilitate the restoration of areas that are suitable. Two potential sites are currently being drawn up (One in Barvas and one is a Scottish Water site). Event – 2 day event in later April open to all (25th & 26th April)</p> <p>Peatland Action Officers can carry out feasibility of sites, but there is only funding available for restoration, not for the feasibility element of this.</p> <p><u>Deer Vehicle Collisions</u> This is something we need to keep under review. Police could be contacted for numbers, but CNES might be better as they are generally are the ones who remove deer from the road. Community engagement needs to be a focus to ensure there is understanding of how to report DVCs. JL to make contact with Calum Buchannan at CNES. ACTION</p> <p><u>CWD & Lyme Disease</u> LS highlighted that Scottish Water should be included in the group and the potential impact of deer and water catchment. JL to contact Scottish Water to establish a contact. ACTION</p> <p>CWD present in Scandinavia and therefore important that clients don't bring equipment and kit when here.</p> <p>Discussion around tick management and the need to ensure that we continue to raise awareness of this. ACTION</p>
5.	ADMG Health check
5.1	<p>LS went through the headings on the healthcheck.</p> <p>Woodlands – send any info through to LS to collate. ACTION BY ALL</p> <p>Native Woodland Review – discussion as to whether this is required when we have a woodlands officer (Viv Halcrow)</p> <p>Clarification around the responsibility of shooting around areas of woodland that are fenced Police may be able to advise on this.</p>

6.	Funding Opportunities
6.1	General funding discussion around funding for communal larders. LS previously sent information through on possible funds.
7.	Training Update
7.1	Training – need to consider where and how can we do collective training. Interest around some courses. DMQ L1 there are already a number of people who have specified an interest in this.
8.	Community Engagement
	<p>General awareness raising within the local community.</p> <p>Open meetings might be a good idea and the possibility of having the website updated more easily.</p> <p>Duke of Edinburgh, ranger groups, school groups etc. this should be fed back to LS too. ACTION BY ALL</p> <p><u>Communal larders</u></p> <p>Rural Innovation Funding – this could be used to look at the possible use of funding to consider feasibility of a communal larder.</p> <p><u>Training</u></p> <p>Look at investigating the possibility of a course that would look more at the detail, more like the DMQ Level 2, but perhaps without all the assessment requirements. ACTION</p> <p>Possible to consider asking practitioners to age stags – information to be sent to LS. ACTION BY ALL</p> <p><u>Costing of Deer Management</u></p> <p>Considering the cost of managing deer, but also considering the income (direct and indirect).</p> <p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>Plan is on the website and some work has been carried out to create a draft of an annual report. Outward facing document to use to promote the work of the DMG.</p> <p>Minutes to go on website. ACTION BY LS & LM</p>

	Monitoring and review schedule – we are on track and the priority is the Habitat Impact Monitoring.
9.	Treasurer’s Report
	<p>Gordon provided a verbal report.</p> <p>Financial Year - Financial Year 1 Sept – 31 Aug Year 1 - 17/18 – All income accounted for.</p> <p>Year 2 – 18/19 – Cull data in and ADMG have invoiced (£1292) and this cost has been passed on to all members of the group. Invoices have gone out and payments coming in.</p> <p>The new cull data has been submitted to ADMG and this will soon generate a new invoice.</p> <p>We’ve paid in arrears to date, but we will now be working to pay in advance.</p> <p>Positive report and membership progress has been excellent.</p> <p>ADMG Membership runs from 1st July to end of June.</p>
9.	SNH Update
	<p>Health check and outcome will be forwarded to JL and GC and that will be a couple of weeks ahead of the arranged April meeting.</p> <p>Some clarification required around the count and the fact that the DMG.</p> <p>SNH have facilitated the deer count but it is unknown whether this would be sustained as a duty of SNH.</p> <p>ECAF was available to support the costs of a deer count and the logistics of a count make it a difficult and expensive. It is expected that SNH will be reasonable to</p>
10.	AOB
	Deer Poaching - raised as a discussion point and if there are suspicions it’s worth contacting everyone in the group.
11.	DONM
	TBC