

## ADMG – Regional Meeting

HuntingTower Hotel, Perth

on Thursday, 7 June 2012

### Present

Richard Cooke	Executive Committee – Chairman
Andrew Gordon	Executive Committee – Vice Chair
Finlay Clark	Executive Committee – Secretary
Dick Playfair	Executive Committee
Jamie Williamson	Executive Committee
Victor Clements	Executive Committee
Lynda Campbell	Executive Committee
Donald Fraser	Executive Committee
James Duncan Millar	Executive Committee
George MacDonald	Executive Committee
Chris Murphy	Mar Lodge Estate
Christopher Gordon	Mansfield Estates, Logiealmond
Caitlyn Shardlow	Smiths Gore
Alastair J Riddell	N Chesthill
Julian Richmond-Watson	Glenelg Deer Group
Michael Aldridge	Glenartney & South Perthshire DMGs
Martin Robb	Carroglen, South Perthshire DMG
Peter Keyser	Associate Member
John Morison	SQWV
Heather Gow	North West Sutherland DMG
Hugh Rose	Associate Member
Charmian Holcroft	Glenbeich

### 1. Apologies

Willie Fraser  
Col B Bewsher  
Hughie Morrison  
Jim Payne

**2. Draft Minutes of ADMG Executive Committee Meeting of 19 January and Regional Minutes of 22 November 2011 and including Matters Arising.**

The draft Minutes of the Regional Meeting held in Inverness on 22 November 2011 were approved.

**3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

**4. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman had attended meetings of the Inveraray/Tyndrum, North West Sutherland, Northern, West Ross and East Grampian DMGs, and, along with the Secretary, a meeting of the Mar Lodge Stakeholders Group. In addition he had had a meeting with Forest Enterprise and meetings with SNH staff on various matters.

He had attended a Consultation meeting held by the Woodland Expansion Advisory Group and a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event held by Scotland's Moorland Forum.

He had also attended committee meetings of the Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group, Scottish Venison Partnership and a Board Meeting of Scottish Quality Wild Venison Limited. He and the Secretary had also had a meeting with the LINK Deer Task Force.

Meetings attended by the Secretary included East Loch Ericht, Strathconon, and Black Mount DMGs; Mid West Association, South Ross DMG Liaison Committee, and he had given a presentation to the Institute of Chartered Foresters, Highland Branch.

**5. Lowland Deer Network**

For information the Chairman reported that ADMG's new sister body, Lowland Deer Network Scotland, was making steady progress. It now has a Development Committee on which the broad range of lowland deer interests are all represented and had received start up funding from Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and Transport Scotland. The Committee had met three times and would be represented at a number of summer events across lowland Scotland. A pilot Lowland Deer Initiative in Angus had been set up and Committee members had now been tasked with similar local initiatives elsewhere.

The first AGM will be held towards the end of the year and at that stage members will be asked to ratify a draft Constitution and thus formalise the Network, appoint office bearers and give authority to the Committee.

## 6. Committee Reports

- a) National Access Forum – Stalking Sub Group – The Chairman reported that the electronic version of Heading to the Scottish Hills was making steady progress with those areas covered including Black Mount, Breadalbane, the Cairngorms National Park and all areas previously covered by Hill Phone. The Chairman reported that user groups found the website helpful and there had been much positive comment made to SNH from those accessing the hills. The standardised signage was also beginning to be used. The web address for Heading to the Scottish Hills is as follows – [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/hftsh](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/hftsh).

Alastair Riddell of Breadalbane DMG commented that the SOAC was good in principle, but in many ways was unenforceable. He had suffered personally from a loss of stalking in Lower Glenlyon and was currently discussing with SNH ways in which the Code could be used to assist.

- b) Scottish Venison Partnership Report - Dick Playfair gave a comprehensive report that sales of venison had increased dramatically over recent years, particularly within the Supermarket chains. The newly formed Scottish Venison Strategy Group, the members of which were John Fletcher, Allan Sneddon and Dick Playfair, would look at the future requirements for venison. The Group would report back in due course to the Scottish Venison Partnership and thereafter to ADMG.

Dick Playfair confirmed that the 1p a kilogram levy had raised in excess of £3,000 in 2011, albeit the levy monies had come exclusively from Yorkshire Game and Highland Venison. There was currently an action plan to encourage other dealers to participate and all should bear this in mind when negotiating with their respective dealers. Dick Playfair also confirmed that the support from Forest Enterprise Scotland was critical to the ongoing work of the Scottish Venison Partnership and thanked them for their financial and professional input

The Scottish Eat Venison Day would again take place on 4 September 2012 with publicity in advance through E-Scope and other medium.

- c) Best Practice – in the absence of Colin McClean, Donald Fraser confirmed that the next Best Practise Event would be held at Creag

Meagaidh with a strong slant on education and training. Donald Fraser also confirmed that SNH would hold a seminar at Drumossie on Wednesday, 13 June focusing on the Deer Management Code of Practise. He also commented that the Competence Stakeholders Group will circulate information relating to competence confirming that deer stalkers who had DSC 1 or equivalent would be regarded as competent.

## 7. Administrative Report

Finlay Clark reported that as the end of the Financial Year End approached (30 June 2012) the Management Accounts to 31 May 2012 indicated that the total income for the year would be £77,448 versus a budget of £64,820. This equated to a positive variance over budget of £12,628.

Expenditure amounted to £61,274 versus a budget of £61,961 a variance within budget by £687.

The Secretary also reported that the year end position was likely to be very close to budget, ie a deficit of approx. £4k, as there were a number of invoices to process in the final month of the financial year.

Cash reserves as at 1 June 2012 stood at £16,533.

## 8. Political Report

Dick Playfair reported as follows:-

On the political front, since the AGM in February, there was little to report compared to last year when the Wildlife & Natural Bill process was in full swing.

Of the few relevant snippets, the following were of note.

**CWD (Chronic Wasting Disease)** - appears on the Farming and Rural issues/Animal Health and Welfare section of the Scottish Government website. It might be argued that, given the severe threat this represents, more prominence could be given to it. It appears only as 'not yet in Scotland' although its consequences, should it arrive, are understated. Perhaps we could press the Minister to make an announcement on bio security grounds.

**Venison Exports** - There was a renewed push by the Scottish Government to re-open the US export market for Scottish beef, lamb, venison and haggis. This was announced in December last year. The

next steps are for the US Department of Agriculture to approve the application and for the EC to continue its ongoing dialogue to have US import controls relaxed. The ban on the import of red meat from the UK to the US has been in place since BSE in the 1980s, subsequently extended in the 1990s to cover the rest of the EU. Information updates are not easy to find.

**Illegal Venison Trading** - There is continuing concern about the illegal trade in venison – whether poaching or just unlicensed dealing, and the need for the part of the sector that remains in the ‘dark ages’ to get its act together. This will feature once again in the Newsletter. It was interesting to note therefore in the Court reports that an individual had been fined £350 at Selkirk Sheriff Court for illegally removing a deer carcass from somebody else’s ground and subsequently butchering it.

**Rural Apprenticeships** - For those not attending the SL&E AGM last month, the First Minister there backed calls for the implementation of a Modern Rural Apprenticeship scheme, to teach land-based skills applicable to rural businesses. There is a proposal from SL&E to establish dedicated rural apprenticeships that would cover both game keeping and deer stalking among other skills. The First Minister said that a working group would investigate how this area of skills training could be improved.

**Venison Supplies** - Finally, also in May, Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, reaffirmed the importance of addressing the shortfall in venison production, endorsing an announcement by Scotland Food & Drink on this topic. He said:

“We need to increase our venison production by a third to keep up with demand. Our venison is another high quality and delicious product that is increasingly desired by consumers at home and abroad.”

## 9. Scottish Natural Heritage

1. A Socio-economic Impact Assessment and Guidance Paper is being written relating to the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act. The purpose of the assessment is to provide guidance as to how the Code of Deer Management could deliver Socio-economic benefit. ADMG would be invited to join the Steering Group.
2. Donald Fraser confirmed that a project was being undertaken to look at how to use deer census data more effectively in identifying appropriate areas for woodland expansion particularly in the red deer range.
3. There was a proposal to hold a Best Practise event for Chairmen and Secretaries of DMGs later in the year.
4. There would be a Best Practice event at Creag Meagaidh directed

at students.

5. Count Programme 2012/13 – the priority areas for Counting in 2012/2013 were the Monadhliaths, and Northern DMGs with the possibility of Inveraray/Tyndrum in addition.
6. Donald Fraser commented that the authorisation process had worked relatively well from SNH's point of view. There had been a number of refusals and relatively few authorisations had been issued.
7. Donald Fraser commented that deer culled were now requested on Agricultural returns, albeit this was voluntary.

## **10. Local Issues**

- a) Julian Richmond-Watson brought up the subject of Habitat Monitoring and suggested to SNH that the format and process should be standardised, easily understood and delivered. Donald Fraser of SNH replied that the Best Practise Guides explained Habitat Monitoring and set out the procedure.
- b) Peter Keyser made a plea that the Estates and properties in the Kirkmichael area should be encouraged to join West Grampian DMG. Andrew Gordon commented that it was at times challenging to get all involved.
- c) Andrew Gordon confirmed that the Beinn a Ghlo SAC, which was within the West Grampian DMG, was currently subject to an ongoing management plan with SNH.
- d) Michael Aldridge of Glenartney DMG requested clarification on general licensing. The Chairman confirmed that licensing was covered fully in the forthcoming Newsletter.

## **11. Any other business**

The Chairman confirmed that ADMG would be at Scone and he looked forward to seeing as many members as possible.

## **12. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 27 November 2012 in Inverness, the venue was confirmed as Kingmills Hotel.