

## **Newly elected ADMG Chairman Tom Turnbull thanks Richard Cooke for all his work for ADMG over his 10 years as Chairman**

I just wanted to say a few words to thank Richard on behalf of ADMG members for the frankly extraordinary work that he has undertaken on the behalf of deer managers in the highlands. I know he won't want me banging on, but he is far too modest to admit just what an impact he has had. Richard became Chairman in 2011 and we are all very aware of just how far deer management has come in the last ten years under his stewardship. Before this Richard was involved from the beginning, ADMG was formed in 1992 and he was the Secretary - a job he undertook for 17 years.

Richard has guided us through three DMG assessments various government reviews of deer management and related committee enquiries and has ensured that in the 2019 SNH Review of Deer Management, Deer Management Groups had clearly shown considerable progress, and the recent Scottish Government Response to the Deer Working Group Report highlighted and thanked the hard work of DMGs.

Richard has been tireless in his work on behalf of members and, as is so often the case with ADMG, much of the work largely goes on unseen to the membership. Having become more involved with ADMG over the years, I am frankly amazed and hugely impressed by the dedication that Richard has shown as Chair of ADMG, he is available around the clock on email or telephone, provides calm and good advice and has represented all the members of ADMG whatever their objectives, always fair and always even handed.

When I was asked whether I was interested in becoming Chair of ADMG my greatest reservation was the fact that I was following on from Richard. The very toughest of acts to follow. There is no doubt in my mind that without him, deer management would be very different for us all now and definitely not for the better. We all owe him a considerable debt of gratitude for leading the way and guiding us through a very difficult political period. Despite our detractors Richard has ensured that we are viewed quite differently as a profession. All Deer Management Groups have online Deer Management Plans which contain information on population modelling, HIA, woodland planning, peatland information, community engagement and a wealth of other information that is regularly updated. In the twelve years that I have been undertaking deer management in the highlands the change has been remarkable. I am delighted that he has agreed to take on the role of Vice Chair as his advice and guidance will be essential as deer managers face the challenges presented by the recommendations within the Scottish Government's response to the Deer Working Group's Report.

As a thank you to for all his hard work over the years we are organising a gift from the membership and following requests from members to be able to contribute directly to this, we will be sending out an e-scope shortly with details of how members can do this. We will then be able to thank Richard properly and in an appropriate manner once Covid allows, and we can all be in a room together again. But for now I would just like to repeat to Richard our huge thanks for his tireless work, his contribution to Deer Management Groups has been astonishing.