

West Knoydart Deer Management Group

Minutes of Meeting held 16/5/18

Inverie Village Hall 11.30 am.

Present: Davie Newton, Ally Macaskill, Ian Dow, Fred Rous, Iain Wilson, Jim Brown

Attending: Cathy Mayne

1. Apologies

Amie Dow, Grant Holroyd.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Draft minutes adopted. IW noted that a feral pig had also been culled at Inverguseran.

3. Proposed acceptance of new members

Barisdale, Camusrory and Kilchoan have confirmed that they are now happy to join the group. They will therefore be attending the next meeting on June 8th. DN has confirmed he is happy to chair the next two meetings, with the November meeting being the AGM, at which a new Chair will be elected. Effective chair will be important to maintain efficient meetings and equality between members.

4. Adopt proposed constitution

The draft constitution was discussed. It has been worked on by DN, JB and RS, to a point where they are now happy with it. All present agreed to adopt it, taking account of the minor amendments suggested by GH. To be taken to the AGM for formal approval.

5. Future subscription rates

There was discussion on different ways to set subscription rates in an equitable way, including by number of deer culled, area of ground or 3 tier system. DN to draft a short paper comparing options and making a recommendation.

6. Proposed appointment of Cathy Mayne as group Treasurer, Secretary and Data Manager

CM confirmed her offer of services and all agreed to accept. Not able to make next meeting due to a prior commitment, but happy to start putting work into DMP and Population Model this winter. Also already working on the group HIA data supported by the SNH funding. We now have a GIS system in place to display results which be a really useful tool. An initial observation is that the JMT and Kilchoan surveys really need a much greater spread to the sample plot locations. SNH random sample plot points could be used to achieve this. More woodland monitoring plots would also be useful, particularly where tree regeneration is getting away outside fences.

HIA was thought to be not seen as a requirement on agricultural holdings, where the Code of Good Agricultural Practice, to follow the principles of good husbandry, applies:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268691/pb13558-cogap-131223.pdf

In advance of the next SNH assessments (April/May 2019), ADMG are funding ‘health checks’ for DMGs, offering 2 days time per group. CM is one of the consultants carrying out this work, and she is able to do for WKDMG. It will assess progress against 35 criteria including the SNH Public Interest and ADMG Benchmark criteria and should happen in September and October.

7. Proposed deer population model

The format was displayed, and some of the variables adjusted to demonstrate its’ functionality. All were happy to proceed with the format. It was thought that it might however be useful to be able to adjust variables by property as well as just by the whole group area, though important to keep the summary information clear. DN to try out some scenarios before the next meeting.

There was some discussion on the purpose of the model, if individual managers are still going to be free to set their own cull targets regardless? In summary, it can be used as a guide for managers to set their targets, but also if culls are proposed outside the model guidance or not achieved, it can be used to project the effect this would have on the overall population if continued. Individuals will still need the scope to adjust culls to meet their own objectives, for example in response to high mortality or recruitment in certain areas, or incursions of deer within fenced woodland. Good data key to an effective model, so need to continue with annual foot counts, and try to include mortality and recruitment information. Could consider using data from the Rum study to help populate the model.

East group are planning a full count next year, so should then have better data to run their model in parallel.

8. Review of action points

Keep display area folder and web page up to date; minutes, DMP, etc.	JB	Done, ongoing
DMP annual review at next meeting	JB/DN	Postponed till DMP update to encompass new members
Member objectives scoring	All	As above
Review 2014 SNH assessment of DMG to ensure progress is still being made	JB/DN	Will now be covered by CM ‘health check’
Ensure cull targets are achieved	IB/AM/JB/IW	Done, ongoing
Coordinate and plan 2018 deer count	IB/JB	Done
Peatlands Action Fund – take forward feasibility	JB	Feasibility Study now

study		completed
Consider applying to SNH fund for HIA data interpretation	JB/DN	Done
Consider expanding HIA over the group area	All	Awaiting final HIA report recommendations from CM
Consider using Best Practice format for Rubha Rhaonuill monitoring results	GH/JB	Need for a standard format for woodland monitoring results
Meet to agree population model	JB/DN/LS	Done
Maintain exchange of information and data with KDMG	JB/DN/LS	Done, ongoing
RS offer to chair and bring on board other members - consider	All	Superseded
DMG costs and subs proposal - consider	All	Superseded

New Action Points

Adopt draft constitution at AGM	All
DN to chair next 2 meetings	DN
Subscription rates recommendation	DN
Complete HIA data report	CM
ADMG 'health check'	CM
Population model scenarios	DN

9. AOB

The issue of data protection was discussed. We need to be careful not to publicise information about members without permission. Agreed to have an agenda item at the end of all meetings, for members to have the opportunity to request anything discussed be kept confidential. Also, to ensure that all are happy with any updates to publicly accessible documents such as the DMP.

10. DONMs

Friday June 8th 2018

Tuesday November 20th 2018