

WKDMG AGM and DMG meeting Minute, 20 November 2018

Venue: Inverie Hall, 12:00

ACTION POINTS

WHAT	BY WHEN	WHO
Finalise Constitution and update on website	12/18	CM
Send out invoices to members, with welcome letter from RS to smaller holdings	12/18	CM
Finalise last meeting Minute and update on website	12/18	CM
Finalise next meeting date – Friday or Monday?	12/18	CM
Add RS to bank account as signatory	12/18	CM
Update working plan/action plan to circulate to Group by email prior to next reassessment	03/19	CM
Develop co-ordinated population model with KDMG	03/19	CM/LS
Update main DMP with draft for approval at June meeting	03/19	CM
Co-ordinate and deliver foot count for whole Group	03/19	JB/All
Check with John G re count 2019	12/18	CM
Inform Group if OOS authorisation sought for Li and Coire Dhorcail	12/18	AM
Forward details of new woodland proposals to CM	12/18	GH
Send updated competence records to CM	12/18	All
Circulate report of ADMG meeting to members	12/18	CM

Present: Ally Macaskill (JMT), Rob Cooper (Camusrory), Rupert Soames (Camusrory), Jim Brown (KF), Iain Biggart (Kilchoan), Fred Rous (Barisdale), Grant Holdroyd (KFT), Davie Newton (KF), Amie Dow (KF), Iain Wilson (Inverguiserein), John Crosthwaite-Eyre (Camusrory), Cathy Mayne (Sec/Treas).
Attending: Graeme Taylor (SNH), Linzi Seivwright (KDMG).

1. Apologies

Apologies: Elisabeth van Basten Batenburg (Barisdale), John Gordon (Kinlochourhead), Jamie Lindsay (Glaschoille), Eric Delwart (Kilchoan), Lewis Robb (Knoydart Foundation).

2. AGM business

- a) Minutes of last AGM – none found to date
- b) Adoption of Constitution (draft attached) including new members. The draft Constitution was adopted. A full list of members will be appended to the Constitution once membership fees have been paid. Invoices requesting payment will be issued to all potential voting members but new voting members are welcome to join at any time by paying the appropriate membership fee.
- c) Chairman's report. Outgoing Chair Davie Newton reported on his long involvement with the group, since it first evolved from the previous Knoydart DMG. The present time represented the achievement of one of the original objectives of the West Knoydart DMG with the inclusion of the new Group members making a coherent group area. Davie's lack of previous experience of deer management has been an asset by allowing him to focus on writing down the principles of the Group and facilitating agreed purposes. Going forward he considered it important that all members understand that variance of purpose within the Group is the norm and that diversity is a strength. By looking forward and working together, this variance can be accommodated. The SNH assessment process has also been useful as a framework for the Group and in the provision of a DMP. Future conflicts within the Group can be resolved by working through the assessment framework which encourages people to look at the bigger picture and wider impacts.
The Group gave a Vote of Thanks to Davie for all his hard work and commitment.
- d) Treasurer's report and financial statement. Confirmation that the Group now has a bank account with Triodos Bank and neither credit nor debts.
- e) Election of Office Bearers. Rupert Soames was elected unopposed as the Group's new Chair and Jim Brown was elected unopposed as the Group's new Vice-Chair.
- f) Setting of membership fees. Fees will follow the proposal put forward at the June 2018 Group meeting and will therefore be a 3-tier system based on land area (slightly amended to reflect

distribution of ownerships with the boundary at 600 Ha – November 2018 by Chair, Vice-Chair and Sec/Treas).

Over 2000 hectares - £500

600-2000 hectares - £250

Less than 600 hectares - £50

Members will be invoiced by the Secretary/Treasurer

3. Minutes of last meeting

- a) Draft Minute of last meeting approved – to be uploaded onto the Visit Knoydart website. Updates on matters arising include the Carnoch Bridge, which it is hoped will be finished sometime between Easter and the start of the 2019 stag season. Willingness to have meetings in different places was explored and it was agreed that the June meeting would rotate around Estates willing to host it; 2019 is to be Camusrory. A Friday meeting was requested by Barisdale but a Monday might suit others better so this is to be checked with Elisabeth and Dirk.

4. Reports from the Chair and the Treasurer; report from SNH.

- a) Outgoing Chair's report above.
- b) Treasurer reported opening of bank account. Treasurer to bill each member for the appropriate fee. A list of smaller members to be drawn up with JB and a welcome letter to be sent out by RS inviting them to join if they wish to.
- c) SNH (GT) reported preparation for the 2019 re-assessment, working with ADMG to take this forward and looking at healthcheck results in anticipation of progress in delivery of DMPs. SNH have firmed up with ADMG what the re-assessment will look like, using the same set of criteria but focusing primarily on 35 of the 101 criteria which will give a national picture on which to report on the 2019 Deer Management Review to SG. Following Simon Pepper's unexpected demise in September, Andrew Barbour has been confirmed in the role of Chair of the Deer Working Group and no new members are to be appointed. A Lowland Deer Panel will report on issues around managing lowland deer and there is also a consultation on compliance with the Deer Code (link to be circulated to members) on the SNH website. Andrew McMaster and Lorraine Servant (SNH Fort William) are now assisting GT with Lochaber DMGs and Robbie Kernahan is now the SNH internal lead on the Deer Management Review. There are no plans for change at a local level but SNH is losing 6% of its budget annually and only replacing 1 in 5 posts. Discussion of how the revised Group DMP can be signed off prior to the April re-assessment led to a compromise agreement that the main DMP will have to be signed off by Group members in June 2019 at the next meeting, which means that this will be in draft form for the re-assessment. There will be a working plan/Action Plan which can be circulated electronically to Group members prior to the re-assessment and CM and LS will work together to develop population models for both east and west Groups.

5. Mechanisms to manage deer

- a) Action Plan review. A full count of the whole Group area planned for 2019, coordinated by JB and involving all members (CM to check with JG). It will take place in the first prolonged spell of good weather between 15 February and 15 March. Those opting to count their own ground ideally will coordinate with others to avoid double counting and assistance is available for all who request it.
- b) DMP review – healthcheck report and outcomes seen; update to DMP with new member information will progress over the winter.
- c) Preparation for the next assessment by SNH in April/May 2019; discussed above and any unforeseen requirements can be dealt with by email.

6. Delivery of designated features into favourable condition

- a) Herbivore impacts on Barisdale SSSI; other matters are a priority at Barisdale at the present time but assistance is available through the funding package from SNH for the Estate on request.

7. Manage deer to retain and improve existing native woodland cover.

- a) The meeting in June 2018 discussed fence changes on Knoydart Foundation, with the oldest scheme now to maintain the fence for at least another 5 years. AM reported deer movements around the sea end of fences on Li & Coire Dhorcail with resultant impacts on an area of unfenced native woodland regen at the mouth of Coire Dhorcail. JMT are going to try and manage these impacts with electric fencing and have approval in principle for this in their budget but may also try of an Out of Season authorisation (possibly in January) to protect this area if focused culling prior to that does not work. Major incursions into the woodlands last year happened in the poor weather but JMT will attempt to limit their cull to the 35 stags in the population model allocation. JMT will inform the Secretary if they apply for an OOS, which will then need to be circulated to members. The Group agreed that they understand the need for this possibility.

8. Contribution to woodland expansion target

- a) Future plans for woodland expansion to be forwarded for the DMP update – GH to forward info on KF plans, including Inverguserein 70Ha on Black Hills side of the glen. Funding is available through FCS for a Forest Cooperation Grant, allowing up to £10,000 for a consultant to draw up collaborative plans between 4 or more properties. The implementation would be done by individual properties in the ordinary way. At Kilchoan the north side of the shelterbelt will be felled but not the south side due to the difficulties of extraction. The north side will not be restocked but on the south side c40Ha of new planting on either side of the hydro pipeline is planned. GH is taking forward 4-5 new schemes under the Cooperation Fund outlined above. KFT are progressing a native woodland scheme on Foundation land at Mary Ann's Point (between Sandaig and Doune) with fencing going in late winter and planting in the spring. Airor Common Grazings are currently planting c40Ha within the existing deer fence and there is also woodland regen within an older woodland remnant taking place outside fencing at Rubha Raonuill.

9. Monitor and manage deer impacts

- a) HIA results and report considered, including new HIA data from Camusrory to add to existing member data. The lack of random distribution is highlighted as a potential issue but the extent of HIA across the Group area is good. On Camusrory the mapped plots are assisting more targeted culling. KF are thinking of adding some open woodland monitoring but not planning to change the existing open ground plots.

10. Ability to store carbon through ecosystem health

11. Reduce and mitigate invasive non-native species.

- a) Signs of boar seen up at the narrows and signs also reported at Lochailort. Robert Grant is also thought to have seen boar at Camus Darrach. 1 or 2 sika reported from KF but not taken yet. 3 goats have been shot across the Group area.

12. Protect designated historic/cultural features

13. Deliver higher standards of competence in deer management

- a) Competence records update; please send updated records of qualifications held to the Secretary.

14. Contribute to public health and well-being.

- a) Camusrory report far fewer visitors with the bridge down. Plans progressing to replace it.

15. Economic costs and benefits associated with deer management

16. Effective communication on deer management issues.

- a) Minutes will be published on the Visit Knoydart website.

17. Deer welfare at individual and population level

a) Cull plans as set out for 2018/19. Report of stag cull and hind cull to date

WKDMG 2018-19 cull plans	Stags	Hinds	Calves (est.)	Total
KF excl. woodlands	70	70	40	180
Inverguserein	6	5	3	14
JMT	35	25	15	75
Sgamadail ?	2	2	1	5
Kilchoan	32	130	65	227
Camusrory	15	30	15	60
Barisdale	20	35	20	75
Totals	180	297	159	636

Updated at June 2019 meeting

WKDMG 2018-19 actual cull to date	Stags	Av weight	Av age	Hinds	Calves (est.)	Total
Airor Common Grazings	1	85.3kg 13:06 max 19:06	7.7			
KF excl. woodlands	61+9 OOS + 6 in woodland + 2 roe (1 buck, 1 doe) open ranges + 11 buks, 5 does in woodland			69 + 4 in woodland + 5 knobbers Av age 5 (includes 10 yearlings) av weight 7:09 (10:13 max) 46% pregnant	35 av weight 4:01, (5:10) 63% male 37% female	76 S 69 H 35 C
KF woodlands	2 + 3 roe bucks					
Inverguserein	6	13:06	8.4	3 + 6	2 + 2	6 S 9 H
JMT	8+2 (w'land)			2 (KF)		15 S 12 H 3 C
Sgamadail ?						0?
Kilchoan	34	90.7kg 14:04 max 17:03	8.9	30 Av weight 7:08, av age 7	15 Av weight 4:01	34 S 125 H 54 C
Camusrory	14	83kg 13:07	9.5 max 12	3 7 pregnant, 10 not pregnant (41%)	4	15 S 17 H 5 C
Barisdale	6	96.6kg 15:03	10.5	Av age 4.5, av weight 8:01 36% pregnant		14 S 12 H 3 C
Barisdale 2 (JG)	3					3 S 0 H 0 C

Totals	137					163 S 244 H 100 C
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All members reported a sporadic rut, with some big stags coming to rut in September but with no interested hinds. Poor weather made the season a challenge.

Camusrory report very low hind numbers (down approx. 120), none in groups of more than about 6, so cull will be less than model suggests.

Knoydart Foundation will cull deer in the Inverie Woods during the winter as they are experiencing high browsing in areas of restock; JB has received a Night Authorisation for the red, roe and few sika in the Inverie Woods, from Dec 1st to March 31st. Target for browsing is <15% leaders browsed while actual is 82%.

Goats – 2 billies shot on Inverguiserein, 1 still resident. 1 billy shot on Kilchoan. Main group of nannies is on the coast but no recruitment (WTE?) so herd may be in terminal decline; no further culling planned.

SNH reported that the Rum herd of goats seems to be more sensitive to poor weather than the deer.

Iain Wilson, Inverguiserein, reported loss of 150 ewes from his flock, with little or no signs of carcasses.

Presumed succumbed to weather overwinter, so mortality may be higher than previously thought if this is also true for deer.

b) Count plans for 2019. Already covered. JB to organise.

18. AOB Regional meeting of ADMG tomorrow. CM will be attending.

19. Data Protection

20. Review of action points

Action Plan 2018 outlines actions required for re-assessment and mostly relates to work of Sec/Treas. Group member actions all dealt with above

21. DONM – proposed for Camusrory, Monday June 17 2019.