

Strathconon Deer Management Group
Meeting
13/02/2018
at
Little Scatwell

Minutes

Attendees

Name	Estate / Organisation
Charles Aylesford	Chairman - Little Scatwell
Troels Bavnhøj	Secretary
Linzi Seivwright	Caorann (DMP consultant)
Alasdair Douglas	Glencarron & Glenuig
Annie Hingston	Strathconon Community Council
Sinclair Coghill	Scottish Natural Heritage
Troels Bavnhøj	Strathconon
James Guernsey	Little Scatwell
Mike Watt	Little Scatwell
Declan Wilson	Little Scatwell
Ben Gray	Little Scatwell
Glyn Robson	Lochluichart
Jamie Stewart	Lochluichart
Murdoch MacLean	Strathconon
Colin Hendry	Strathconon
Callum Stewart	Strathconon
Frank Spencer Nairn	Culligran

1. Apologies

1.1. Apologies from Finlay Clark, Angelia Douglas, Derick MacAskill, Peter Hingston and Eric Downie.

2. Approval of minutes of meeting held on

2.1. The Minutes were amended to incorporate the following changes by Frank;

2.1.1. Under 12.1. The comment should reflect that Frank has suggested a volunteer from the group should come forward not that he would participate on behalf of the group.

2.1.2. Under 8.2. Change 'compensation' to 'compensatory'

2.2. Following the agreed changes the Minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising from previous minutes

- 3.1. Peatland restoration is being carried on Glenmarskie.
- 3.2. Public Meeting – request by group to continue to the focus of getting an MSP to be available.
- 3.3. Community Council – Troels attended the recent community council and provided an update on what was discussed.

4. Cull Update

	Stags	Hinds	Calves	Comments
Strathconon & Scardroy & Ledgowan	109 red 10 sika	430	200+	Poor season observed due to weather. Poor weights. Not a lot of calves seen on Scardroy.
Little Scatwell	29 stags 1 roe 4 sika	42 9sika	10	Very short of calves even though observed good grouping of hinds
Lochluichart (Glenmarkie)	54 (11 out of season) 25	72 36	31 18	9 Sika and 5 roe stags. As observed by other members poor quality and had to leave some carcasses on the hill die to the condition.
Glencarron	35 2 roe	48	31	No Sika this season. Not very many mature stages and weather impact on calves was noticeable.
Fairburn (Post meeting)	77 1 sika 15 roe	111 8 doe	36	Observed poorer quality across the season. Observed 8 red, and 4 roe carcasses due to natural mortality.

- 4.1. Members noted serious concern for mortality across the group and neighbouring group. The overall view was not positive on the impact on the deer.
- 4.2. Agreed that group to record mortality to and to report by April 2018.
- 4.3. Observations by members that they were down on pregnant hinds so expectations of poor calving rate.
- 4.4. Stalkers did not see many calves on the hill. Everybody would keep an eye on the recruitment of calves.

5. Deer Management Plan Update and Working Plan

- 5.1. Linzi was happy with the efforts reaching the cull targets and if Fairburn was progressing on the same cull targets as last year then the group is progressing well. Added again that the reduction cull that is being carried out on both Strathfarrar DMG and Strathconon DMG are giving a mutual benefit for both groups.
- 5.2. On the back of the Stalkers/Members observation of the season Linzi recommended that winter mortality observations were needed. Culling rate may go up but group should be sensitive to this and share information.
- 5.3. The group suggested and agreed that spring counts should occur. Strathconon confirmed that this would be carried out.

- 5.4. Sinclair commented that a helicopter count was planned for 2018/2019. **#Now confirmed that SNH cannot support this delivery. Proposed 50/50 basis for 2019/20. South Ross to wait this extra year rather than attempt this large-scale count with your own resources.**
- 5.5. On the helicopter count Frank commented that any observations or challenges raised by members be actioned by SNH timeously. Sinclair commented that members should continue to challenge and question accordingly so that the process is done correctly.
- 5.6. Linzi commented that another Assessment would be required for Feb 2019. Further commenting that ADMG is to look at the detail of the assessment and provide advice to the groups. The working plan for the group should continue to be updated to reflect the groups progress.
- 5.7. It was noted that the group members are all carrying out Habitat Impact Assessments, and it was recognised that this was important to be consistent.
- 5.8. Sinclair suggested that the working plan should be colour coded for the benefit of the members and benchmarking progress with a midterm update prior to Spring 2019. Agreed that Angus and Linzi would review. Troels requested that any review be delayed until the count on Strathconon and this was noted by Sinclair.
- 5.9. Spring count for the Group – members agreed to support each other, and to avoid double counting.

6. Designated sites

- 6.1. Alasdair commented on SSSI data should be fed into the plan as it did not appear it was noted, in terms of good practice. Sinclair agreed that he would review the assessment carried on the groups plan.

7. Woodland Plans/Development

- 7.1. Sinclair asked the group to consider a woodland working plan so that members own plans supported the wider objective of the group. Linzi agreed to review and provide an update with the information provided to her from members.
- 7.2. Alasdair asked if this should also include forestry plans that were either rejected and this was agreed by Sinclair.
- 7.3. Troels commented on the wider approved forestry plan for Ledgowan and that they are currently reviewing the requirement to progress this as granted.

8. Peatland Action and Other schemes

- 8.1. Loch Lochluichart and Strathconon progressing at varying positions to funding and implementation.
- 8.2. Sinclair commented that where deer concentrations are high they then hags would be damaged and would need to be protected and questioned what would be required to protect peatland areas that had been restored. Sinclair agreed to speak to the Peatland Action Officer within SNH on deer density and peatland restoration and what is available to applicants to mitigate impact.
- 8.3. Linzi reiterated that it would be beneficial to go by the same approach as for woodlands again showing the positive impact from the members.

9. Training

- 9.1. The group discussed the opportunity for training in HIA and it was noted that additional funding has been awarded on the group to assist with this.
- 9.2. The group discussed the benefit of a group plan on the HIA plots and transect locations. Agreed that members would provide AMK with this detail.

#Cathy Mayne is available for training on the 18-19 June for a two-day refresher on HIA data collection. Location for event to be confirmed – For ease is Strathconon or Scatwell able to host?

10. Public Consultation

- 10.1. The Chair welcomed the attendance of Mrs Hingston on behalf of the community council to the meeting.
- 10.2. It was agreed that a Public Consultation should still be planned.
- 10.3. Troels attended the Community Council meeting 19th September to inform about SDMGs plan etc.

11. Other matters

- 11.1. Poaching was noted on Ledgowan with 4 stags taken off the hill. Members discussed the benefits of the Rural Watch and advised that those not connected should join.
- 11.2. Boar presence was raised and it was observed that very little boar presence found by the members.

10. Next meeting

- 10.3. Next meeting to be 26th June at Strathconon for 14:30 **#Now confirmed as 10:30**