



## **Inveraray & Tyndrum Deer Management Group**

### **Minutes of the Meeting on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 2pm at Strone House, Cairndow**

#### **Present**

Falcon Frost – Glenfalloch (Chair) (FF)  
David Lowes – Glenfalloch (Vice Chair) (DL)  
Tom Turnbull – Strone & ADMG Rep (TT)  
Deanne Hagan (Secretary) (DH)  
Jimmy Irvine – NatureScot  
Peter Kelly – NatureScot (PK)  
David Beaumont – LLT Countryside Trust (DB)  
Ellie Mayhew - LLT Countryside Trust/ Wild Strathfillan (EM)  
Harriet Donald – LLT Countryside Trust (HD)  
Ian Robinson – Scottish Woodlands (IR)  
Llinos Proctor – Strathfillan Community Woods (LP)  
Tuggy Delap – Achadunan (TD)  
Alexander McGrigor – Achlian/ Ardchonnell (AM)  
Virginia Sumsion – Ardkinglas (VS)  
Jason Ferguson – Ardkinglas (JF)  
Hugh Nicol – Argyll Estates (HN)  
Tom Kirsop – Argyll Estates (TK)  
Jayne Young – Argyll Estates (JY)  
Alan Cory-Wright – Auchreoch/ Strathfillan/ Auchessan (ACW)  
Martin O’Keeffe – Blarghour (MOK)  
George MacPherson – Brackley (GM)  
John Burton – Cononish (JB)  
Tiffany Douglas-Home – Glenfalloch (TDH)

#### **Apologies**

Stu MacLachlan - Achadunan  
Emma McGrigor - Achlian  
David & Virginia Sumsion – Ardkinglas  
Richard Lewis - Auchreoch  
John MacPherson – Balliemanoach  
Matthys Jooste - FLS  
Diane Davidson-Kinghorn – Glencroe Farm  
John Duncan – Inveruglas (JD)  
Fiona Roebuck – Scottish Woodlands  
Rolf Thornqvist – Strathfillan (RT)  
Colin Stark – Stuckendroin  
Samuel Bristow – Tilhill (SB)

1. **Welcome and apologies** – FF thanked everyone for attending and Tom for informative site visit. See above for apologies. Introductions from those present as some fresh faces.
2. **Matters arising from minutes of meeting 9<sup>th</sup> Nov 2022**  
Keppochan HIA – to be written off.
3. **Chairman’s Report** – Falcon Frost

FF still involved in the Common Ground Project, with ADMG, NatureScot, & NGOs looking to resolve conflicts & have constructive criticism in Deer management. There will be a meeting in June. Attended the ADMG AMG in Inverness on 23<sup>rd</sup> March which was very well attended with interesting presentations from NatureScot (looking to cull an extra 50,000 deer in Scotland). Focusing on other areas but ITDMG still need to continue their good work re counts & culls. Glenfalloch still pursuing an invite to Lorna Slater for a day's hind stalking to show all aspects of a cull etc.

#### **4. Secretary and Treasurer Reports – FF**

Most payments in apart from couple HIAs. Subscriptions may be increased to contribute towards the promotion & advertising of venison. Proposed a 5% interest charge for outstanding payments as time consuming to chase – no objections

#### **5. Culls & Counts**

a. **Results of hind cull 2022-2023** – FF – a good cull with some challenging weather, close to target – thanks to everyone. GM – if a better market the cull numbers would be higher. TT – There are issues with dealers in Scotland which is why ADMG will be making a one-off donation for promotion/ advertising. The dealers also need high quality larders. There is certain funding for community larders. Increasing pressure from England – less Scottish venison heading South. TK – with increasing cull numbers dealers are reducing their prices. No competition & English fallow deer is in better condition than our Red.

DL – Ardgay Game stated the point that no other industry has such an uncertain supply throughout the season and waits until the venison is in poor quality in October to shoot the most. TK – getting product to Europe after Brexit is a nightmare because of the paperwork involved. TT - would encourage trying to cull more before the rut when condition is better & to liaise with your dealer. The dealers have tried incentives but not all have taken up on these. DL – those in power must get on board – everyone must eat more venison to save the trees!

FF – SVA run on only a budget of £16,000 per year. TT – since Covid the Scottish Government have contributed £170,000 towards venison marketing & research, but mostly down South as more venison already eaten in Scotland. JI – venison price in 1970 was £3/kg, now closer to £1.60/kg or lower, so NatureScot realises the importance of Government being made more aware of the issues. TT – Lorna Slater is on board and is pushing venison hard. TT – aiming to cull 50% before rut.

b. **Foot Count 2023 – results & future plans** – majority counted – many thanks. FF counted less deer than expected. Aiming for all to count next year to improve Population Model. JB – Naturescot count queried & clarified. FF – getting close to target of 1400 hinds. HN – should Dunderave be included? TK – near impossible to count & would need to use drones. Queried FLS Dalmally South because hardest shooting & highest density. JI clarified. Discussion with accuracy of dung counting. HD – why not all drone counts? FF – foot counts take place on one day with communication between those counting therefore more accurate, drones more expensive & harder to achieve in one day.

c. **Proposed Stag Cull for 2023** – FF – close to last year. Dalmally proposing a bit higher. Glenfalloch aiming to cull a higher number earlier in the season, minimum 50, & targeting stags doing the most damage. Applying for out of season & night shooting licences. TT – only option in our area is Highland Game. TK – dealers have promised to take all shot, then did not. Still some targets to chase. **ACTION – FF to chase Tilhill**

d. **Sika deer** – a few sightings in Glenfalloch, Strone, Strathfillan, mostly young stags. FF has shot one since Nov meeting. TK has seen more roe & dealers will take all because saddles wanted for Europe.

e. **Population model** – To follow

## 6. Deer Management Plan Priorities

a. **Habitat Impact Assessments** – Feed back to DH once done. HN - Information sharing with NatureScot & National Park to continue. Data can be used to claim funding so would encourage to complete

b. **Native Woodlands** – Herbivore Impact Assessment becoming a bigger issue. Would there be an appetite for training days? JI/ National Park happy to support & possibly fund.

c. **Peatland Restoration** – Please feed back to group if undertaking restoration.

d. **Venison** – mostly discussed already. Hopefully better than last year.

**ACTION** – All group members re 6a, 6b and 6c

## 7. Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park update – Harriett Donald

From the Deer Working Group report there were 3 groups set up to implement actions:

– the Operational Delivery Workstream which several NGOs etc. sit on & develop projects, one of which is Priority Areas. LL&TNP is one of the designated areas – action plan to be set up & delivered within 6 months/ 1 year.

- National Park Partnership Plan – consultations live until 18<sup>th</sup> July. Outlined in email sent to group members 28<sup>th</sup> April.

- Future Nature Route Map – will be formally launched 11<sup>th</sup> May.

## 8. NatureScot report – Jimmy Irvine

There has been a lot of discussion about Deer Management, and the Scottish Government has increased the resources for wildlife management within NatureScot which is hopefully reassuring.

Strategic Deer Board – within the National Park the focus has been on designated sites, the Deer Management Plan now extended to public interest & benefits. Will still need to include discussions with landowners etc.

Legislation changes – discussions ongoing on the potential removal of the stag season, when hinds can be shot, use of image intensifying scopes for culling (report has been put to Government in hope that law from the 80s can be updated, with caveats), non-toxic ammunition (reduce weight to 85 grain). Group discussed advantages/ disadvantages of non-lead. JI confirmed no firm timescales to these legislation changes.

SSSI sites – Stuckendroin, Inveruglas, Ben Vorlich – discussions re herbivore and deer pressure. PK – still looking at erecting deer fencing dependant on costs etc., will keep DMG informed.

## 9. ADMG report – Tom Turnbull

Met 3 times with Lorna Slater, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity, and with Mairi McAllan, former Minister for Environment and Land Reform.

Talking with the Strategic Deer Board to discuss 92 recommendations of the Deer Working Group report – 4 workstreams including legislation, regulation, incentives & operational delivery.

Section 10 used on Loch Choire Estate as they failed to liaise with NatureScot. Local DMG & ADMG support this where warranted. Also, at Cairn Lochan Estate – local DMG requested to go into section 7 or 8 to force compliance with regulations.

Consultations ongoing on the Forestry Grant Scheme (TT would encourage participate in the consultation), the Land Reform Consultation and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. There are talks about incentives in particular.

Deer Map - ADMG is supporting the development of a predictive mapping tool for deer managers to better understand deer movements and distribution at a landscape scale.

Finding the Common Ground Project – trying to bring NGOs, FLS etc. together to collaborate.

Access - ADMG have helped create a Deer Management Working Group on the National Access Forum which looks to find solutions in particular access hot-spots, whilst raising a greater dialogue between access-takers and deer managers in the highlands.

Deer densities - We are under increased pressure to reduce deer numbers, particularly in those areas where densities are higher than 10 deer per km<sup>2</sup>.

Deer People Fund – funds raised from sale of Richard Cooke's book will support travel abroad for young people to learn about other approaches to hunting, conservation etc.

Jl/TT – South Uist issue with ticks/ Lyme's disease – 40% higher than mainland.

#### **10. Wild Strathfillan update**

**Dave Beaumont** – at the time of the November meeting an application had been put in for the Nature Restoration Fund for a development phase which was successful. Have since been putting together a project around the Glendochart – Tyndrum area, boundaries still to be set.

**Ellie Mayhew** – Wild Strathfillan is a landscape scale land nature restoration project & they are trying to involve land managers/owners in developing projects to put into a bid for NatureScot's Restoration Fund, including Woodland, Wetland/ Hedgerow restorations. Discussions will include herbivore management, venison marketing & native/ non-native/ invasive species. May include a National Lottery bid so hopeful for funding. NatureScot's funding will continue to 2026 and beyond. Also in training for Thermal Drone use. FF – a great tool for access going forward.

**DB** – also partnering with SRUC at Kirkton to develop courses on rural management skills which SRUC would host.

#### **11. New Chairman update – FF**

Falcon confirmed he would be stepping down after his 2 years at the Autumn meeting and asked if anyone interested in taking over. **ACTION – all members**

#### **12. Any other business**

FF- as per last Escop - Hannah Kirkland is a PHD student interested in upland birch woodland, not fenced with increased deer management. If anyone could help would be appreciated.

TT - Glenfeshie trip organised by ADGM on 28th June. TT would recommend DMG attendance so please sign up.

#### **13. Date of Next Meeting**

10am Wed 8th November 2023 at Argyll Estates – site visit followed by meeting at 2pm

