



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

### **Minutes of the Meeting on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 12pm at Ardkinglas House, Cairndow**

#### **Present**

David Sumsion – Ardkinglas (Chair) (DS)  
David Lowes – Glenfalloch (Vice Chair) (DL)  
Deanne Hagan (Secretary) (DH)  
Tom Turnbull – Strone & ADMG Rep (TT)  
Falcon Frost – Glenfalloch (Chair) (FF)  
Julian Clarke – Glenfalloch (JC)  
Hugh Nicol – Argyll Estates (HN)  
Jimmy Irvine – NatureScot  
Peter Kelly – NatureScot (PK)  
Jayne Young – Argyll Estates (JY)  
Martin O’Keeffe – Blarghour (MOK)  
George MacPherson – Brackley (GM)  
John Burton – Cononish (JB)  
David McPhie (FLS West)  
Allan Kirsop (FLS)  
Duncan Tyler (FLS Cowal)  
Alan Cory-Wright – Auchreoch/ Strathfillan/ Auchessan (ACW)  
Ian Robinson – Scottish Woodlands (IR)  
Jason Ferguson – Ardkinglas (JF)  
Virginia Sumsion – Ardkinglas (VS)  
Tuggy Delap – Achadunan (TD)  
Colin Stark – Stuckendroin (CS)  
Rebekah Mayhew (LLTNP)

#### **Apologies**

Tom Kirsop – Argyll Estates  
Alexander McGrigor – Achlian/ Ardchonnell  
Stu MacLachlan - Achadunan  
Matthys Jooste – FLS  
Ellie Mayhew - LLT Countryside Trust/ Wild Strathfillan  
Tiffany Douglas-Home – Glenfalloch  
John Duncan – Inveruglas  
Samuel Bristow – Tilhill  
Rolf Thornquist - Strathfillan  
Richard Lewis - Auchreoch  
Fiona Roebuck – Scottish Woodlands  
Harriet Donald - LLTNP  
Diane Davidson-Kinghorn - Glencroe  
John Macpherson - Balliemanoach

#### **1. Welcome and apologies**

Chairman welcomed everyone present. Apologies noted.

#### **2. Matters arising from minutes of meeting 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

Nothing noted for discussion

#### **3. Chairman’s Report – David Sumsion**

Main item – the Consultation, which will be covered later in the meeting. All members encouraged to respond before the 29<sup>th</sup> March.

The Land Reform Bill – now past consultation & has been presented to Scottish Parliament. Will affect landowners with more than 3000 hectares & there may be a requirement for a Land Management Plan – more paperwork.

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

Accounts emailed to members. 5 subscription invoices outstanding, 3 of which are Tilhill and being chased (new contact for Kinachrechan). 1 HIA invoice outstanding. Thanks from DH for prompt payments.

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

- a. **Results of Hind Cull 2023-24** - waiting for 4/5 cull returns and targets.
- b. **Group Foot Count 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – results & future count plans** – Very successful.
- c. **Proposed Stag Cull for 2024**
- d. **Sika Deer**

#### **6. Deer Management Plan priorities**

- a. **Habitat Impact Assessments**
- b. **Native Woodlands**
- c. **Peatland Restoration**

**Following discussion, the overall opinion was that much more feedback on any ongoing work on a, b or c above should be fed back for collation and to update the Deer Management Plan.**

PK – NS would be willing to help with set up of monitoring, mapping etc., but would probably take longer.

HN – would be good to have an updated map of projects and restorations.

DS – may be more beneficial to 'go private'.

IR – existing native woodlands should be already mapped, although outlying areas may have been missed.

DT – John Taylor may be useful with recording data etc. and should be invited to next meeting.

#### **d. Venison**

DS – current consultation has a section on venison – mostly concerned with dealers & licences.

JI – 32 councils in Scotland with differing rules. Needs to be streamlined.

TT – at the ADMG AGM it was announced they would be doubling the funding to SV for venison marketing. Also looking for funding from Scottish Govt. Wrote to and meeting with Lorna Slater to request £5 million to subsidise the venison price – told no funds available.

JI - 130 venison dealers only allowed to sell within 50 miles.

RM – WS & NP put out a scoping document to find out the constraints of & opportunities for the venison market within the National Park. Report due back at end of month.

ACW – issues with overdue payments from dealers.

TT – issue not just with marketing, but also with availability.

GMcP – Tesco still selling Highland Game venison from New Zealand, sponsored by SLE.

TT – invite Dick Playfair & Richard Cooke to next meeting.

## **7. Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park update – Rebekah Mayhew**

Simon Jones (director) sits on Strategic Deer Board & Harriet Donald sits on the Operational Delivery Workstream.

National Park Partnership Plan approved by Ministers which is the NP aims for the next 5 years & is looking to see how best to support & deliver herbivore management on the ground.

Habitats Regulations Appraisal Training – will continue next year

Venison Project – scoping work at start of year to continue

National Park has been marked as a priority area for herbivore management, within which are 'hotspots', including Cowal.

Please approach the National Park and ask if help may be available.

TT – NS looking to set up new DMGs including Cowal and Knapdale.

DT – Possibility of transferring FLS areas, Cobbler and Cruach Tarbet, to the new Cowal DGM. Data would still be shared with ITDMG, but subscriptions would be lost. Agreed to discuss at a separate meeting, set up by Duncan Tyler.

## **8. New Loch Awe National Park proposal**

Scottish Govt have invited expressions of interest for at least one new National Park. 6 have been shortlisted, 1 of which is Loch Awe. General view that not much public consultation.

This proposal seems to be driven by one person, looking to include Oban, Inveraray & Lochgilphead, which goes beyond original red line on their map.

GMcP – lack of support from Oban, Inveraray & his own council.

MOK – no qualitative analysis. Proposal under consideration by NS?

## **9. NatureScot update – Jimmy Irvine**

Biodiversity and Climate Crisis – deadlines in place. For 2030 & 2045.

SDB – Legislation, Regulation, Operational and Incentives – Govt agencies, National Parks, FLS, Scottish Forestry all feeding info back into.

Environment Bill – 6 parts to the consultation but there is a DMNRO which is gaining most attention. Seeks to deliver enhancement with increased legislation.

TT/FF – not enough detail to comment.

FF – could undo a lot of historical good work and people may walk away.

TT – likely to be the priority areas affected which include ITDMG. Threatens voluntary deer management. ADMG have consulted and are prepared to employ lawyers to dispute.

DL – should there be a group DMG response? Those present agreed that DL should respond on behalf of the group, excluding FLS and NS.

JI – male seasons removed last year, proposal of shortening the closed hind season added to consultation. Register of people who can shoot deer. Section 10, currently at public expense, looking to reclaim costs from landowners.

Hunting with Dogs licence in process – mixed views within the sector.

Grouse & muir burning licences – be aware.

New Licensing database now operational.

PK – new 100% ban on snares. Increased monitoring on designated sites.

Funding – see report attached.

Ben Lui – setting up more formal HIA and looking to upping limit on stag culls. They are also getting an initial batch of cattle GPS collars to assist summer grazing.

## **10. ADMG report – Tom Turnbull**

Meeting with NS, Scottish Govt and Lorna Slater – pushing back on whether proposals in consultation are compliant with ECHR legislation.

Also meeting with Jim Fairley (Environment Link) to discuss improved incentives for deer management from agricultural budget. Proposed subsidy of £5m cannot be funded

Land Reform Consultation – implications for selling land over 1000 hectares there would be an obligation to report proposed sale to SG who could then direct how land was to be allotted to facilitate local community participation / purchase.

Common Ground Forum & Environment Link – work ongoing.

Deer Management Round Table – general agreement how things should proceed but consultation may drive a wedge between groups again.

Press release issued today re consultation and there will hopefully be an upcoming article in the Scotsman.

AGM – surprise presentation from lawyer.

Helicopter count – if ITDMG want, then NS could look into.

**11. Wild Strathfillan update – please see attached noting the following advances:**

- NRF (Nature Restoration Fund) NatureScot funding confirmed and project delivery now underway. This project runs to March 2026.
- Three new project staff members recruited – a Project Manager, an Education & Engagement Officer, and an Ecology and Monitoring Officer – all of whom will bring much-needed capacity to deliver projects and free up some of my time to further develop projects e.g. venison. We will also be recruiting a further staff member in approximately 6 months – a Partnership Support Officer – whose role will be to support Wild Strathfillan partners with project development and delivery.

**12. Wild Estates Scotland – DL on behalf of Miles Montgomery (Chairman)**

Accreditation body whereby landholdings can reach certain standards and be accredited to prove best practice and achieve certain standards of conduct and land management. There is a considerable amount of work required in the accreditation process, but it is a recognised Europe wide standard of accreditation. Miles Montgomery is interested in encouraging more land holdings to achieve the accreditation and would be prepared to speak further to any interested parties. Inveraray and Glenfalloch are WES members. Strone would be interested but time to achieve accreditation is the key issue. DL undertook to report back to WES.

FF – a lot of work!

**13. Any other business**

Discussion re cull figures versus count, and issues with accurate counts, wind direction, ingress etc.

FF – we would like NS to undertake a helicopter count.

JI – would the group be willing to co-fund? Would there be flexibility in time of year for count? £45,000 for a helicopter count in ITDMG.

DS – difference between statistics and the reality on the ground – both important.

TD – asked to minute and note the passing of Iona the Dowager Duchess of Argyll, a very keen stalker.

JB – a balance is required as we have, in general, moved too far away from farming and lost too much arable land.

**14. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November at Glenfalloch

