



Inveraray & Tyndrum Deer Management Group

Minutes of the Meeting on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 10am at Argyll Estates, Inveraray

Present

Falcon Frost – Glenfalloch (Chair) (FF)
David Lowes – Glenfalloch (Vice Chair) (DL)
Deanne Hagan (Secretary) (DH)
David Sumsion – Ardkinglas (DS)
Julian Clarke – Glenfalloch (JC)
Peter Kelly – NatureScot (PK)
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)
David McPhie (FLS)

Apologies

Tom Turnbull – Strone & ADMG Rep (TT)
Harriet Donald – LLT Countryside Trust (HD)
Stu MacLachlan - Achadunan
Virginia Sumsion – Ardkinglas (VS)
Alexander McGregor – Achlian/ Ardchonnell (AM)
Jimmy Irvine – NatureScot
Richard Lewis - Auchreoch
John MacPherson – Balliemeanoch
Matthys Jooste – FLS
Tuggy Delap – Achadunan (TD)
Virginia Sumsion – Ardkinglas
Diane Davidson-Kinghorn – Glencroe Farm
John Duncan – Inveruglas (JD)
Fiona Roebuck – Scottish Woodlands
Rolf Thornqvist – Strathfillan (RT)
Colin Stark – Stuckendroin
Samuel Bristow – Tilhill (SB)
Tiffany Douglas-Home – Glenfalloch (TDH)
Ian Robinson – Scottish Woodlands (IR)
Jason Ferguson – Ardkinglas (JF)
David Beaumont – LLT Countryside Trust (DB)
Ellie Mayhew - LLT Countryside Trust/ Wild Strathfillan

1. Welcome and apologies

Chairman welcomed everyone present. Apologies noted.

2. Matters arising from minutes of meeting 26th April 2023

Nothing noted for discussion

3. Chairman’s Report – Falcon Frost

Has continued to attend ADMG meetings.

The Glenfeshie visit was very informative re deer management & expanding woodland with no fencing. Would encourage attendance at any future visits.

Common Ground Process – will be setting up best practice events to cover the use of drones, apps etc. in deer management & HIA. First in Invergarry 8th March 2024, mostly for stalkers at first.

Venison Summit, Birnam 20th November.

4. New Chairperson

David Sumsion has agreed to take on this position (for 2 years), and FF requested that everyone shows him the same support he has received.

5. Secretary and Treasurer Reports

Timing of payment of ADMG invoices mean 2 noted in Accounts. Outstanding subscription invoices to be chased by DH with reminder of 5% penalty for overdue payment. New invoices will be sent, and prompt payment encouraged.

6. Venison Collection Issues

Not as many issues as last year?

TK – still a glut at end of year & no response from request for earlier collections (apart from Ardkinglas). Simpson Game struggling & Highland Game had to step in. Discussion re lead free only collections.

Highland Game taking 80% of UK venison – concerning.

Pressure will increase with more venison from England and increased targets (additional 50k forecast).

DL would encourage attendance at the venison summit in Birnam.

SVA will receive £300k from Scottish Govt for venison promotion/marketing. Govt aware of challenges.

TK – Grants going to current processors who cannot cope, more processors required.

DL – better balance, integration & awareness needed between suppliers & processors. Ardgay Game offering to process and return for sale.

TK – no national marketing for venison.

Discussion re supermarkets selling NZ venison, promoted by FLS. Also difference in welfare & quality standards.

Forteith's Report very worth a read (attached).

FF – criteria for venison going into pet food higher than into the food chain.

HN – more freezers/ abattoirs needed to manage supply & demand through the year.

TK – would help if skin on carcasses could be frozen.

MOK – would be interesting to see why landowners are shooting deer – trophy, sporting, culling.

TK – monthly survey of cull figures?

G McP – practicality of shooting deer at same time as gathering sheep.

FF – Government initiatives such as Peatland Restoration will also impact deer behaviour & culls.

7. Culls & Counts

a. **Stag Cull Results 2023** - Cull figures not far off forecasts and show importance of accurate counts. Stags in good condition.

b. **Proposed Hind Cull 2023/24** - slightly more than Pop. Model prediction.

c. **Sika deer** – Couple of stags, very few hinds seen.

d. **Future Count Dates** – 4th & 5th or 11th & 12th March 2024. Possibility of WS helicopter count or making use of WS/NS drones. Emphasised importance of a full count & participation from everyone. Drone count still more expensive than helicopter.

e. **Population model** - looking on track for 1400 deer.

8. ADMG report – Tom Turnbull

Please see attached report

DL – would encourage signing up to the Accord.

9. NatureScot report – Peter Kelly

Mostly covered already in ADMG report re thermals, grain weight, closed seasons.

National Environment Bill – consultation in January.

Growing pressure on NS resources. Support will be focussed on DMGs who need it the most.

Ongoing work on SSSIs

10. Wild Strathfillan update – please see attached

11. Any other business

HN expressed the groups thanks to Falcon for his chairmanship.

FF – please feed back to the group re Peatland Schemes & HIAs.

HN – any other funding available from NRF, FGS etc.?

Group discussion about phone masts – good/bad?

MOK – attended Lynx re-introduction workshop, no feedback yet.

12. Date of Next Meeting

27th March 2024 at Ardkinglas Estates – site visit at 10am followed by meeting at 11.30am **TBC**

