

**THE STRATHTAY DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING**

**HELD AT**

**DERCULICH HOUSE ON SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2015**

**PRESENT:**

Charles Butter	Cluniemore (Chairman)
William Jackson	Derculich (Secretary)
Michael Campbell	Edradynate
David Stirling	Findynate
Ed Fenton (tenant)	Edradynate
Alasdair Emslie	Lick
Steven Wade (tenant)	Lick
Mark Duncan	FCS
Brian Troup	Cluniemore
Iain Wotherspoon (tenant)	Farleyer & Glengoulandie
Linzi Seivwright	Consultant
Ian Hope	SNH

**APOLOGIES:**

James Duncan Millar	ADMG
Susan Sherriff	Pitnacree
Jon Lambert	Glengoulandie
Donald Skinner	Glengoulandie
Roly Angus	Edradynate
David Murray	Farleyer
Jimmy Lambie	Glengoulandie
Ali McNaughton	Farleyer

## **1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 17<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2014:**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2014 were approved.

## **2. CHANGES IN OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT:**

The existing plan covering the management area was circulated to the Group. All members were asked if there were any anticipated or had been any changes which would affect deer:

- a. Foss. The fencing lines indicated last year have been completed leaving approximately 540 hectares of open hill.
- b. Cluniemore. An area of planting has been completed.

## **3. CULL RESULTS:**

The cull results for 2014/2015 had been previously circulated. This showed a cull of 68 stags as opposed to a budget of 75, 90%. In addition, Cluniemore have culled 2 further stags. 278 hinds were culled against a budget of 300, being 92%. The general comments from the estates were as follows:

- Cluniemore found it difficult to find shootable stags. This combined with an extremely late rut. It is considered difficult to get a licence to shoot deer out of season even when they are marauders. There is a new panel looking at authorisation and Ian Hope indicated that this position is likely to improve.
- FCS. Mark Duncan suggested that in addition to keeping the records for the open hill, we should also have a separate column for those shot within the woodland. Most of the fencing is secure under the exception of the forestry fence between the open hill and woodland at Edradynate.
- Farleyer and Glengoulandie do have considerable disturbance from Highland Safaris who can be up on the hill as much as 3 times per day and certainly push deer on to Lick.

In summary, the members thanked Mark Duncan and FCS for their close co-operation with the Group. He asked that we keep in touch with him and let him know if any of the fences fail so these can be repaired.

## **4. DEER COUNT:**

The deer count showed a considerable reduction in the number of beasts but the consensus of the Group is that this is likely to have been an under count. The weather was extremely poor with limited access and it is thought that some deer could have taken shelter in the birches at Cluniemore and the woodland at Edradynate. The Group discussed alternative methods of counting including drones, helicopters, heat sensors and other possibilities. However, it is considered the best way forward is to ensure there is as much flexibility as possible from the deer counters and that we should wait for a good clear day when most beasts will be out on the open hill. It was agreed that Ali McNaughton would co-ordinate this.

## **5. TARGET CULL:**

There are 2 considerable areas of ground which are now lost to the open hill and this has put further pressure on existing fences. After long discussion, it was agreed to keep the cull at 75 stags and 300 hinds but to keep in touch and be flexible. With that in mind, we will undertake a number of interim results. These are as follows:

Interim stag cull  
1<sup>st</sup> October

Interim hind cull  
1<sup>st</sup> December, 31<sup>st</sup> December, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 31<sup>st</sup> January

If any estate has difficulty in achieving their cull, please let the Secretary or your neighbour know so that the total for the group can be achieved.

The figure will exclude the forestry that should be separately reported.

## **6. DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN:**

Linzi Seivwright was welcomed to the Group and thanked for attending the meeting and agreeing to prepare a simple document that will satisfy the requirements but is also likely to be suitable for our Group.

Linzi addressed the meeting and indicated that she wished to produce a document that could be effective, allow for an exchange of information and is a sustainable deer management plan. This should include a code of practice and public interest, the latter to include the environment, woodland, economic values and social requirements including access and collisions.

On SDMG, we benefit by having no designated sites. The questionnaire had been previously circulated and it is hoped that most estates have now returned this directly to Linzi. It is aimed that the new deer management plan should be available from the turn of the year.

## **7. TRAINING:**

Continuing training is vital for all deer management groups. All leading stalking on the estates held DCS 1 with some holding DCS 2.

## **8. ADMG:**

Richard Cooke had provided an extremely comprehensive response to the Land Reform issues.

**9. VENISON PRICES:**

Looks to be similar to last year.

**10. AOCB**

None reported.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 3.15pm on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.

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