

## **Morvern DMG Minute of meeting of 1 November 2022**

**In attendance at Lochaline Community Hub:** Peter Lawson (Chair, Kinlochteacuis and Killundine), Derek Lewis (Drimnin), John Jackson (Forestry and Land Scotland), Kevin Masson (Kingairloch), Izzy Baker (Glencripesdale RSPB), Neil Roberts (Laudale), Kez Selby Boddy (Laudale), Ross MacKay (Ardtornish), Ian Collier (Scottish Forestry)

**by Zoom:** Steve Fox (Vice-chair, Carnoch), Michael Skelly (Glen Sanda), Michelle Henley (SWT Rahoy Reserve), Gaetan Hannecart (Kingairloch), Hugh Raven (Ardtornish), Andrew MacMaster (NatureScot), Tom Edwards (3E Services)

**Apologies:** Iain Thornber (Local), Richard Cooke (ADMG)

### **AGM Business**

Accounts. These will be presented to group members as soon as they are available.

MDMG Fee and ADMG Levy. Agreed to maintain at current rates.

Treasurer and Secretary roles. TE was put forward as a candidate. TE introduced himself, and after some discussion amongst the group his appointment was agreed.

AOB. Ratify the constitution. Only change suggested was to replace references to SNH with NatureScot.

### **1. Chairman's welcome & any apologies**

PL introduced new faces to the group, and reminded that Keith Falconer – past chair of the group, sadly passed away this year. He was a very keen and enthusiastic contributor to the Group's work.

### **2. Minutes of April 2022 meeting and matters arising.**

Minutes of previous meeting – proposed by SF, seconded by RM and were agreed.

### **3. Individual Estate Reports (see table overleaf)**

### **4. Proposed spring 2023 count**

PL - Could there be a helicopter count? AM – noted that helicopter counts are funded 50:50 by NatureScot and DMG. Note ability of NatureScot to fund helicopter counts may change going forward due to continued pressure on public finances. Indicative cost of helicopter count - £30-40k NatureScot in initial discussions re: green finance with a possible investor. Could make the case for this investor supporting a baseline helicopter count as part of wider support for habitat restoration etc. within the DMG.

General consensus that a coordinated foot count would be good in Spring 2023, but agreed to explore potential external funding to support a helicopter count.

	Stags 2022	Condition	Poaching	HIA	Proposed hinds 2022/23	Impact on other LUs	Woodland expansion /opening	Peatland restoration	
Kinlochteacuis	10	Good	NIL		10-15		Woodland plan in prep. Liaising with neighbours re: Doire nam mart felling		
Killundine	18 inc 1 woodland	Good			40				
Drimnin	7	Good			12-18		Fencing planned on N of Killundine river		
JAME Forest Partnership	11				11				
Ardtornish	33	Average			Regen in some areas. Interesting to see after winter	143		Plans circulated to group and no objections received	Want to progress works identified in 2018 feasibility study
Glencripesdale RSPB	10	Mean weight 60kg			Bark stripping noted.	10		Objective is natural regen by fencing and culling	
Laudale	30 (plus 10 to come in restocked woodland)	Mean weight 71kg			Monitoring ongoing	60-70			
Glencripesdale	8	Mean weight 70kg				30			
Kingairloch	46	Mean weight 97kg				70		Considering opening some woodlands. New woodlands planned in W.	
Carnoch	17	Good (heads average)				30		Restock planned at Tarbert	Some scope on inbye. Monitoring condition elsewhere
Glensanda	10	Good			High browsing on heather in July	50 for 2022-23 to catch up, returning to 25 thereafter			
Rahoy hills	5	Good			Monitoring of sp rich grassland encouraging.	15			Revisiting in 2023

## **5. HIA for spring/ summer 2023**

PL – Need to assess impacts in non-designated woodland, as blanket bog and heath have been assessed, and designated woodland is assessed through Site Condition Monitoring by NatureScot (next round in 2023-24). Killundine and Drimnin should be included in the planned survey.

**Action:** Could members who have data that they are willing to share please provide to TE, who will review what is available and inform need for survey

## **6. NatureScot report**

AM - As noted earlier, NatureScot would be keen to gauge interest from Group in working with a financial institution. MS and GH – support idea of collaborating with green finance, both re: support for helicopter count and going forward. Key driver of NatureScot's approach is the main objectives under biodiversity strategy of stopping habitat degradation by 2030, and reversing it by 2045.

**Action** – AM to get estimate for helicopter count, and a proposal for initiating contact with the green finance investor. TE to then calculate cost per member of a helicopter count on an area basis.

## **7-Deer Management Plan and open range cull plan**

The Group's DMP ran up to the end of 2020. Given the recent changes in ownership PL suggested that work on a new plan, which would be a major exercise, should wait until new owners are established. Propose to continue to run with current open range cull plan in the meantime.

## **8- Updates from:**

ADMG – A written autumn update for DMGs from ADMG is available [here](#).

FLS – nothing additional to what had been covered earlier in the meeting.

## **9. Game dealer collections**

Main issue is reliability of collections. Return to this discussion @ spring 2023 meeting.

## **10. AOB.**

IB - RSPB working with Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest on the Saving Morvern's rainforest project. Initial aim is landscape scale Rhododendron removal. Applying for Nature Restoration Fund from NatureScot. Currently recruiting a project manager. Outcome of funding application known during winter 2022-23.

HR - With RSPB, Ardtornish are hosting a full day launch event for Saving Morvern's Rainforest on 17 March 2023.

## **11. Date of Spring 2023 meeting.**

Tuesday 11th April 2023.

Tom Edwards, 2 November 2022.