

# MULL DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

## Mull Deer Management Group AGM

Notes of a meeting held at the Salen Hotel on  
Sunday 13th October, 2019

### In Attendance

Angus Cheape	Craig	Chairman
James Corbett	Lochbuie, Community Council	Vice Chairman
Tom Corbett	Lochbuie	
Donald Bisset	Benmore Estate	
Roualeyn Thurlow	Killiechronan	
Tom Cheesebrough	Killiechronan	
David Johnson	Beach Forests/Argyll estates	
John Johnson	Beach forests/Argyll Estates	
Jan Dunlop	Mull and Iona Ranger Service	
Rory Forrester	Ardnacross	
Steve Irvine	Ardnacross	
John Jackson	FLS	
James Harmer	Gruline	
Nicola Harmer	Gruline	
Moray Finch	MICT	
Bill Bewsher	ADMG & Torloisk	
Jasper Heusdens	Ormsaig	
Mark Horton	Carsaig Estate	
Sam Hird	Carsaig Estate	
Anthony Weldon	Craig, Pony Boy	
Anthony Dod	Lochbuie	
Graeme Sinclair	Pennyghael	
Tiffany Laing	Rossal,	Secretary
Charlotte Laing	Rossal	Secretary's Wife
John Glaisher	Lochbuie	Assistant stalker Rossal

### Apologies

Apologies were received from Colum Scott, Richard de Klee, Rupert de Klee, Tim Radford Peter Corbett, James Greig, Hugh Nichol, Emily Wilkins, Edouard van Puijenbroek.

The Minutes of the Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

### Matters Arising

Estates Contact Leaflet

The leaflet has been printed with updated estate details and the DMG contributed £300.

### Torosay Forestry

The forestry project has begun with extensive fencing around a 600ha area, as reported at the previous meeting.

Jim Corbett mentioned that a 50ha block was being fenced at Cameron for a new planting. Rossal are clear felling approximately 20ha of spruce and larch following a Phytophthora outbreak. Planting may follow.

### **Accounts**

The Secretary had circulated the accounts, and there were no comments. The Secretary highlighted some anomalies including the payment to SQWV which has not yet been billed out to the Membership. The secretary also explained that the van was being financed by himself and that Jim Corbett also provided finance for a number of items including the winch in the van for £414 and the fibreglass in the van for £591.

### **Chiller and Van and Game Dealer**

The van is running well and there were no adverse comments regarding the collection service. JC stressed that we had tried to find a chilled van but that they were unaffordable. The chiller is working well although an engineer from KS refrigeration is coming to check an unusual noise reported by Tommy. In the event of chiller failure the Forestry Commission have kindly agreed to let the DMG use their chill facility.

There has been the odd problem the winch; JC has found a good second hand winch and is holding it in case of emergency.

TL confirmed that the price for the season is held at £2.00 for non SQWV and £2.20 /kg for those accredited. Members are urged to let TL know if there is any arbitrary reduction in payment rates by Highland Game.

### **ADMG**

Bill Bewsher as the ADMG representative for the Deer Management Group, provided an update on the assessment of Deer Management Groups by SNH, particularly in relation to their Deer Management Plans. The current view is that the review was pretty favourable. SNH will report to the Scottish Government and comment is expected in the spring.

Bill also explained that there a Parliamentary Reception at Holyrood, to which some members may be invited. The overall view was that DMGs had done a good job.

The next Annual General Meeting is on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in the Drumossie Hotel Inverness.

BB went on to explain that venison sales had been increasing by 20% a year, but that this has now stabilised. Imports from NZ are down.

The Scottish Agricultural Supply Organisation have been tasked to report on the venison market as it is little understood. A looming problem exists over the use of lead in ammunition, with Waitrose planning to ban game which has been killed by lead. There is likely to be industry pressure to use non lead ammunition, which is already used by FES. Copper bullets have had a mixed review, but there is a strong chance that they will become mandatory within three years.

Bill Bewsher also announced that he is standing down after too many years as our invaluable representative on all ADMG matters. The Meeting expressed gratitude for the work that Bill has done over the years in keeping the Group abreast of developments at ADMG level. The Group welcomed the suggestion that James Bewsher assume the role of ADMG member for the MDMG.

## **Culls**

Estates reported as usual. Killiechronan and Rossal reported an apparent shortage of calves. Pennyghael reported good calving. Lochbuie reported good weights and a lot of good young stags. Anthony Dod reported four hummels.

Overall stags were reported to be in good condition.

TL is to publish whole island cull data on the website.

The secretary asked if there had been calls from the general public to establish if stalking was taking place to which there was agreement that the number of calls had increased, which is positive news.

## **Sea Eagles**

Now 32 pairs of eagles and juveniles. Rory Forester at Ardnacross reported that the number of breeding golden eagles had decreased. JC reminded the meeting that there was a new grant to support Sea Eagle predation, despite the fact that SNH say that they do not take lambs.

## **Forestry**

Several estates reported forestry operations which may impact deer. Torosay as previously mentioned are starting their 600ha block, Ardura Forest now owned by the Community are to fell and replant with fencing. Rossal are clear felling some 20ha with planting planned in the future. The Pennyghael clearing will be finished in 2020. Scoor are finishing felling and will be fencing blocks and replanting

## **Training**

7 people from various estates attained DSC 1 on a recent course on Mull organised by BASC. Andrew Holman kindly hosted the course at Kilfinichen.

Habitat Impact Assessment

Rossal and Ardvergnish have had a full habitat assessment with favourable results. In addition, Rossal has carried out a Peatland restoration feasibility study and will be carrying out restoration work in the next 2 years.

Lochbuie have also carried out a Habitat Assessment.

## **Ranger**

Jan explained that she was still hopeful of securing some funding from the Rural Infrastructure Fund.

Jan confirmed that the new leaflet had been printed and that the DMG had contributed £300. The Ranger Service also hosted a Deer Management Day for the general public to show what was involved in deer management. 13 people attended and enjoyed the day learning from the experience.

Jan will send TL a PDF of the leaflet for the website.

Murray Finch (MICT) explained that it is now responsible for funding the Ranger Service, and the difficulties it faced in securing funding in the future after the revolution of Forestry Management to Forestry Land Management who confirmed that they are not able to support the service. From next year, the Ranger Service is in jeopardy. He went on to explain the role of the Ranger Service in Environmental Training, tutored walks for the general public, dealing with access issues, footpaths, providing guides and information about wildlife and signage. Everybody agreed that the loss of the service, particularly after Jan's 20 years, would be a disaster for the Island.

**Community Council Representation**

Jim Corbett confirmed that he was representing the Community Council and that no matters had been raised regarding deer management. There were few reports of RTAs and no reports of marauding deer.

**Any other business**

Discussions were held over the need to meet twice a year. It was agreed to continue with the twice yearly meetings.

**Next Meeting**

The February Meeting will be on 9th February at The Salen Hotel, 12.00 for 12.30.

The Meeting was closed and a vote of thanks given to The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary.

Angus Cheape  
Chairman