

Minutes APSG meeting 8 July 2019 3pm community room Lochinver Village Hall
Present: Cameron Kennedy, Michael Ross, Mark Turner, Fiona Saywell, Don O'Driscoll
(Interim chair), Jorine van Delft (secretary)

It is with regret that we inform the group of the passing of Robbie MacKenzie. He will be missed on a professional as well as personal level within the APSG.

1. Apologies

Andy Hibbert, Romany Garnett, Joe Land, Holly Deary (SNH), Kirsty MacLeod

2. Minutes last meeting

Changes:

- Fiona Saywell would like to correct the mentioned 'data analysis training session' to 'GIS training session'. (under point 3)

- Holly Deary would like to change '...it looks like the science does not support the current designation...' to 'it is the provisional view of the contractors that the science does not support the current designation...'

Changes are accepted. Minutes proposed by Fiona Saywell and seconded by Don O'Driscoll

3. Habitat impact assessments

Woodland Habitat Assessments have been completed and submitted for Ardvar and JMT. DO'D reports some high impact scores on the edge of the JMT estate.

The Habitat Impact Assessment is not yet finished for ACT or JMT. CcWT has not yet finished their HIA either. All present members (as well as Joe Land for ACT) are committed to continue with the HIA assessments for dry shrub heath and blanket bog. The HIA for dry shrub heath needs to be done every 3 to 5 years, the woodland habitat assessment (not to be confused with the HIA) needs to be done every year.

Holly Deary (SNH) would like to know how the group plans to input the HIA data and who is responsible for this. It is agreed that each estate will input their own data, however if any estate has any difficulties doing so they can contact Jorine van Delft (APSG secretary) to request assistance (to allow assistance when needed please make sure all data has been gathered in the standard format as instructed by Kathy Mayne).

Cameron Kennedy for the Vesty estate informs the group that although HIAs have not historically been done on the estate the Vesty estate is willing to join the group in doing HIAs.

Mark Turner has expressed concern regarding the ability to organise people to do HIAs on Oldanay Island seeing as there are no permanent residents and it is an island.

Action Points:

Jorine van Delft: to check with ACT regarding their woodland habitat impact assessment progress.

Jorine van Delft: to check with Kirsty Macleod how best to organise data collection and gathering/passing on of HIA data.

Fiona Saywell: will look into available funding/training/appropriateness of HIAs on Oldanay Island with Katy Mayne

4. APSG health assessment

Ongoing at the time of the meeting. Final version sent with these minutes.

Matters Arising:

- paid secretary: Funding has been agreed by CALL/P in principle. Approval is still needed from HLF and the CALL/P steering group. Funding will be for 2 years, funding for the 2nd year will be a lower amount. The steering group meeting was on 2/8/2019. Update pending.

Action points:

Fiona Saywell: send update when available

Jorine van Delft: circulate final version of the health assessment when available

5. Stag cull

Figures are discussed as proposed by Joe Land, taking into account advice and comments gathered from Bob Cook ACT, Holly Deary SNH, Calum Millar ACT and Don O'Driscoll JMT.

Ardvar: Michael Ross is hesitant to commit to the 15 stags that are allocated to Ardvar but is willing to accept a cull figure of 10 stags for the estate. He would however like to make sure the group understands that he cannot guarantee he can make up this figure if the animals are not present on the estate.

Oldanay: Mark Turner would like to increase the cull number to 5 for Oldanay.

Vestey/Lochinver: Cameron Kennedy notes that although stags are coming into the village regularly there seems to be a lack of animals on the hill. Willing to accept the allocated cull figure.

Brackloch/Middle Inver: no contact details yet for new owner.

JMT: accepts allocated cull figures, 8 stags shot out of season.

ACT: has accepted their allocated cull figures

LAE: Accepts the allocated cull figure. Might have to go over taken into account the number of stags known to be within the fenced area at this time.

Action Points:

Cameron Kennedy will forward the contact details for the new owner to Jorine van Delft

6. A.O.B.

- Helicopter count. Will there be funding for a helicopter count in future. SNH has previously informed the group that there will be no more funding for a helicopter count. If the group would like a helicopter count to be done they will have to finance this themselves. It is unclear at the moment if funding this from within the group would be feasible given the costs involved.

- ACT representative: Jorine van Delft will ask Jeanette MacCarthy to represent ACT at the APSG meetings to make it possible for the group to make decisions.

7. Next meeting? It is decided that a new meeting will be planned at the end of

August/beginning of September. Safeguarding good communication between estates during the stag season is a priority.