

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

**Minutes of General Council Meeting, Tuesday 12th July 2016
7.30pm, the Aberdeen FP Club Centre, Queens Road, Aberdeen**

Present : George Allan (Acting Chair); Catherine Lacy (Minutes Secretary and Cults Hillwalking Club); Hamish Clunas (Aberdeen Hillwalking Club); Jean Robinson (Cairngorm Club); Ken Thomson (Cairngorm Club); Peter Aikman (Mountain Bothies Assn); Alison Mitchell (Ramblers); Maureen Stuchbury (Individual Member).

Apologies: Dave Windle (Chair); Susie Smith (Treasurer); Donald Thomas (Membership & AMC); Alistair Beeley (LINK rep); Brian Heaton; R John Hughes (BOOTS); Della Russell (Culter Hillwalking Club).

1. Previous minutes (7th June 2016):

Maureen proposed and Alison seconded acceptance of the minutes.

2. Matters Arising

- **Adopt a Path:** volunteers have heard from Tom Wallace that, providing there is enough support, there will be a meeting in Aberdeen on Tues 26th July.
- **Bridges:** the Cairngorm Club has handed over a cheque for £25,000 to the NTS for re-establishing the Punchbowl bridge.
- **Deer Management:** Peter reported an MSP has submitted a written question on how the Scottish Government will ensure that deer management plans are effective.
- **Save Bennachie:** Jean reported that she has met with Margaret Garden of the Save Bennachie alliance. The risk to Bennachie is still there – the route that would encroach on it is still on the table. Save Bennachie is promoting a route going east of Inverurie. The routing has gone to tender, taking an estimated 2 years, then there will be another public consultation. Save Bennachie will provide a piece for Mtn Views. Please sign up to support the campaign via their website www.savebennachie.com or follow on Facebook.
- **Special General Meeting 12th April:** the draft minutes of the SGM will be presented for approval to the AGM on 29th November 2016.
- **Open Evening: George** will write a piece on this for Mtn Views. NB electric bikes are considered to be bicycles, not motorised vehicles, and therefore have the same access rights as walkers.
- **Special Landscape Areas:** Jean reported that Aberdeenshire Council have closed their consultation on this, and their decision is due in the autumn. It is likely to include 8 or 9 areas, eg including Bennachie and Clachnaben and several coastal areas. This designation is not likely to lead to a high level of protection but still should be helpful regarding to future planning decisions.
- **NEMT Capacity:** George has met with member Rob McKay – he is willing to help out in various areas, and next year will take over Snippets for Mtn Views, but will not join the General Council or become a Trustee. Proposed changes to office bearers should be resolved by the next meeting.
- **R John Hughes:** unfortunately became injured and had to abandon his fundraising Walk Across Scotland.

- **MCofS:** George has responded to the survey on behalf of NEMT.

3. SCIO & new Constitution & Quorum at Council meetings

OSCR has confirmed that our updated constitution is in order and Part 1 has been accepted by them. Once we send in Part 2, OSCR will set the date we will become a SCIO and we need to set a date after that to transfer our assets. As dealing with Part 2 takes approx 1 month, **George** will submit Part 2 by mid August, so our assets can be transferred to the SCIO at the beginning of our next financial year (1st Oct 2016). OSCR has also confirmed that our name and charity number will remain the same, and our bank has confirmed that our account can remain the same.

George will write to those club reps on the General Council who have not yet responded, as to whether they are willing to become Trustees. He will also put out a brief note on any procedural changes we will need to make on becoming a SCIO.

Quorum: George proposed, and Alison seconded, that we should adopt now the same quorum rules as will pertain in the new SCIO constitution, viz the quorum for General Council meetings shall be six, and all decisions at GC meetings shall be made by unanimous agreement or by majority vote, each Council member having one vote which shall be given personally. If there is an equal number of votes for and against any decision, the chairperson of the meeting is entitled to a second (casting) vote.

The meeting agreed unanimously to this.

4. Membership Drive:

Dave still to talk to XXL club. **George** will invite the Deeside Hillwalking Club and the Westhill Walkers to join, in the autumn. He has contacted the Stocket Hillwalking Club, and they are now members; he needs to check whether their subscription has been paid.

5. Threats to Wild Land

- **Windfarms:** Brian has now taken this over from George.
- **Culachy & Caplich windfarms:** these are now going to public inquiry.
- **Glen Dye & Fasque windfarm:** the windspeed mast will go up.
- **Stronelairg:** nothing further heard.
- **Cairngorm (Natural Retreats):** re the mess left behind when Nat Retreats erected a new tow and track – CPNA has now asked Natural Retreats to apply for retrospective planning consent. George has contacted Adam Gough, and, at his suggestion, George, Drennan (Cairngorms Campaign) and Tessa Jones (Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group) will meet with a Mr Cornfoot to discuss this further.
If the retrospective planning application comes up before this meeting – GC agreed we are happy to object and request the track be removed.
- **Proposed Quarry Glen Creran, Argyll:** local groups are opposed, no planning application has been submitted yet. Agreed not to comment.
- **Glen Gairn tracks:** all Prior Notifications seem to be improvements to existing tracks.
- **Beauly-Kintore:** the choice of route corridor (west of Bennachie) is being narrowed with the preferred line going out for consultation by mid 2017. Jean will continue to monitor.

6. Monitoring Planning Lists

- **Changes to Permitted Development:** the Scottish Government commissioned a review on the changes to permitted Development – this is now out (see <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/Roles/Scottish-Government/Guidance/reviewofprior>). It is mainly descriptive, but notes criticism of the Government's guidance notes. However there is unlikely to be any changes to such recently adopted law. NB NEMT will not support permitting forestry to opt out of Prior Notification.
- **Monitoring Planning Lists for Prior Notifications:** this will continue for another year, but although volunteers such as George and Sandy are doing excellent work in NE Scotland, there are problems in the system in a few areas, and LINK is considering employing someone to take over the monitoring. NB LINK is very happy to receive any photos of new tracks or bad examples of old tracks.
- **Hydro Scheme tracks:** in general there are no objections to the tracks put in for the current spate of run-of-river hydro schemes, but there is concern that the large tracks needed for the pipe-burying machines are not being reduced to landrover tracks suitable for maintenance. LINK intends to undertake monitoring of some examples, probably next year, to see whether reinstatement is being undertaken properly. Dave has agreed to monitor the tracks associated with the hydro development between Braemar and Linn of Dee.
- **Beauly-Denny tracks:** George has now been monitoring these for 3 years. He has contacted a senior manager at SSE who says that, by the end of 2016, all tracks will be either restored or removed or tidied – and George can then stop monitoring.

7. Open Evening:

Nothing further to add.

8. CPNA & LINK:

With other LINK members, Dave attended the meeting with CNPA to discuss the next Park plan. **Dave, Ken and Donald** are now working on the NEMT response. If interested, please visit the CNP website and feed any areas of concern back to Dave.

9. CPNA & Glenmore etc Plan:

This was a very useful meeting with the Cairngorm Partnership (CPNA, FE, HIE, HC & SNH), and was well attended by voluntary organisations. Main comments: the Partnership see it as a set of principles that should lead to a strategy to be set out in the final document due in autumn. Detailed plans for various aspects will be based on these. In particular, it was found the visitor experience in Glenmore is piecemeal, with little connection between sites or attractions, and improvement to this should be a priority. **The** Partnership estimates that visitor numbers may well increase by 15% in the coming years. The voluntary organisations raised a number of issues for the Partnership to consider (e.g. concerns re more housing and commercial development; ideas re reducing car use in the corridor; the status of the closed system at the funicular's top station; the mess the ski area is in). Following the meeting, George raised again the last issue with Hamish Trench (CNPA) who says that this will be given serious consideration.

10. Derry Lodge

Ken reported that a planning application has been submitted by NTS to transform the currently closed listed building into a hostel. The proposal is for access to be by foot or pony, and for prebooking only. It would take up to 20 guests in 6 bedrooms, with staff accommodation of two. It would include publicly available toilets, and all services such as power and water would be provided locally.

The meeting agreed George and Ken to respond that, in principle, NEMT will not object, but will submit any detailed comments they think appropriate (eg that the Mountain Rescue can maintain a base there). Please send any such comments to them (see the planning section of the CNPA website for details on the plans), and George will forward the draft response to GC when ready.

11. Mountain Hares: No further report from Dave.

12. Mountain Views

Articles for the Autumn/Winter ed to Catherine by 12th August, for publication by 20th Sept. **George** to send draft Contents list to GC. Financial control of MV to be discussed at next meeting – **Alison** to ask Susie for details of expenditure and income.

13. Lectures

George handed out the draft programme – congratulations to him for an interesting and well-balanced programme.

14. AOCB

- **Mail:** Rural Scotland newsletter; Scotways newsletter.
- **Bothies:** Peter noted he has taken copies of Mtn Views to bothies, where it has elicited enthusiastic responses.

Next meeting: Tues 30th August 2016 7.30pm, Aberdeen Grammar FP Club

2016 GC dates:

19th Jan, 1st Mar, 12th Apr (with SGM), 24th May, 12th July, 30th Aug, 11th Oct, 29th Nov (AGM).