

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

**Minutes of General Council Meeting, Tuesday 30th August 2016
7.30pm, the Aberdeen FP Club Centre, Queens Road, Aberdeen**

Present : Dave Windle (Chair); George Allan (Vice Chair); Susie Smith (Treasurer); Donald Thomas (Membership & AMC); Catherine Lacy (Minutes Secretary and Cults Hillwalking Club); Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie); Jean Robinson (Cairngorm Club); Ken Thomson (Cairngorm Club); Peter Aikman (Mountain Bothies Assn); Alison Mitchell (Ramblers); Brian Heaton (Individual Member); Maureen Stuchbury (Individual Member).

Apologies: Della Russell (Culter Hillwalking Club).

Dave opened the meeting by noting with much regret the sad news of Gordon Strachan's death. An obituary will appear in the upcoming edition of Mountain Views.

1. Previous minutes (12th July 2016):

Noting the correction of Margaret Gordon to Margaret Garden under Matters Arising, Alison proposed and Maureen seconded acceptance of the minutes.

2. Matters Arising

None which were not covered under the main agenda.

3. SCIO

George has submitted Part 2 of our application to OSCR, and we are hoping to effect the transfer to SCIO on 1st October 2016. Although our name will remain the same, the bank now says we cannot keep the same account – we will have to open a new account which will have a different number. It will be a form of business account but we should have no charges. **Susie** will check with the bank how Direct Debits would be run (as an alternative to the current use of standing orders for individual membership fees). She will also check that members could make direct transfers into the account eg electronically.

The new office bearers will take over on 1st October. Alison Mitchell will take over as Treasurer, Catherine Lacy will take over Membership and Ken Thomson will take over Minutes. Dave and George will remain as Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

Dave and George have updated the membership spreadsheet and sent out the Club invoices for 2016. They will do a final update and send it to Susie, Alison and Catherine in early October.

George reported that we have six current Trustees of the SCIO (Individual Members: George; Dave; Brian. Organisational Members: Alison- Ramblers; Donald- AMC; Catherine-Cults). Ken has indicated that he is happy to be an IM Trustee, Jean will be a Trustee as the Cairngorm Club rep and Della is willing to be a Trustee as Culter's rep but her lack of availability on Tuesday evenings poses a problem. If AMC wants to put forward another rep as a Trustee at its AGM, Donald could become an Individual Member trustee, thus increasing numbers. George circulated all Individual Members canvassing for Trustees but to no avail. As the quorum for Council meetings under the SCIO is six Trustees, this issue

will need to be considered again at the next meeting. Existing and any new Individual Member Trustees will have to be voted in at the AGM.

4. Membership Drive:

Dave to talk to XXL club. George will invite the Deeside Hillwalking Club and the Westhill Walkers later, in the autumn. It was decided to postpone printing the membership flyer until we have details of the new bank account.

5. Threats to Wild Land (George Allan & Brian Heaton)

- **Dinnet tracks:** George noted there are upgraded and possibly new tracks here – CNPA has approved some, but with the requirement of considerable remedial work.
- **Glen Banchor track (Speyside):** concern about this track; it is unclear whether or not it was bulldozed without consent – CNPA is investigating.
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- **Culardoch tracks:** a NEMT member has raised concerns about tracks here which have been either extended or badly revamped. If anyone is visiting the area, please take photos and pass to George.
- **Cairngorm Natural Retreats:** per previous minutes, Natural Retreats has now submitted for retrospective planning permission to keep the track. George said that he sees no grounds to keep it other than it is convenient for them and also that it would be more costly for them to remove it. George has written on our behalf objecting to this, and is asking if an NEMT rep can speak to the Planning Committee as this is something of a test case regarding the Park's resolve. It is hoped that Dave can attend the meeting with Drennan Watson (Cairngorms Campaign), Tessa Jones (Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group), Adam Gough (Natural Retreats) and Jim Cornford (Natural Retreats), taking place this Friday 2nd Sept.
- **Stronelairg windfarm:** the previous decision which found in favour of JMT has been overturned, and the windfarm will now go ahead.
- **Tomchrasky windfarm:** this will be a huge windfarm of more than 20 turbines approx 145m high, partly in Wild Land area 24, impacting on the remote Munros north of Loch Clunie and the hills south of Glen Affric as well as the A87 Kyle of Lochalsh road. Brian to contact JMT and MCoFS to see how best we align our objections to this proposal.
- **Glen Dye windfarm:** waiting for the formal planning application to appear.
- **Caplich windfarm:** decision currently lying with Scottish Government – we have submitted an objection.
- **Cairnsmore of Fleet (Galloway):** outside our remit, although anyone welcome to put in their own objections to the erection of turbines on the most extensive area of open moorland (and biosphere reserve) in Galloway.

6. Monitoring Planning Lists

- **Changes to Permitted Development:** Helen Todd (Ramblers/LINK) has confirmed that the Scottish Government is unlikely to revise the guidance notes on the changes to Permitted Development in the near future. LINK will therefore write to all Scottish Planning Authorities to advise them where the guidance could be improved on, and to make suggestions as to where they could require improvements

such as suitable maximum track width or the insertion of grass strips down the middle of tracks.

7. Open Evening:

Nothing further to add, drop from agenda.

8. CNPA:

Nothing further to add at this point. Note, however, that **Dave, Donald, Ken and Roger Owen** are meeting to take forward our joint response to the CNP National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022 consultation. Hopefully the proposal for voluntary organisations to meet with CNPA will happen.

9. Cairngorm & Glenmore Strategy:

Final Strategy paper is due in Sept, **George** will circulate the link for it.

10. Derry Lodge

George has submitted our comments, which will be forwarded to the appropriate officer. These were copied to David Frew at Mar Lodge. The Cairngorm Club and Ramblers Scotland have also put in comments.

11. Mountain Hares: Dave reported no significant updates, but commented that there has been much useful publicity recently concerning driven grouse shoots.

12. Mountain Views

MV should go to the printer by the start of next week. List of lectures to be included within the magazine, and also included in the mailing as a separate A5 flyer.

13. Lectures

George to send lecture programme to Donald for updating the website. **George** agreed to produce the monthly publicity for each lecture. **Dave** agreed to be responsible for the overall organisation of each evening and for each lecturer. Help on the night: **Liz Lindsey** (taking over from Maureen, to whom huge thanks is due for all her work over the years of lectures), **Brian, Dave, Catherine**, Rob Mackay when possible. Susie and Maureen said they could be contacted if we were stuck.

Electronic keys to Sportsman's Club – not used any more.

Membership of Sportsman's Club – **Dave, Liz, Catherine** to join.

14. AOCB

- **Annual Report:** accounts (**Susie**), Chair's report (**Dave**), Membership (**George**) all to be sent to Catherine for mailing before end Oct.

- **Treasurer:** Susie will stand down at the end of Sept. Many thanks to her for all her work this year.
- **Webmaster:** Donald will continue as Webmaster. Agreed that **Catherine** will send the approved minutes to Donald for putting on the website, after the meeting at which they are approved. **Donald** also to set up a separate email address for membership, to go to Catherine.
- **Mail:** Rural Scotland newsletter.
- **Bothies:** Peter noted that Anders Povlsen, the owner of Glen Feshie estate, has submitted plans to make substantial improvements to Ruigh Aiteachain bothy (also known as the Feshie bothy). It is likely that the bothy will then continue to be looked after by the MBA.

The MBA are also replacing windows at the Callater stable bothy.

- **CAPS/Adopt a Path:** Ken reported that the Adopt-a-Path scheme now forms part of a wider Conservation Volunteering programme, led by COAT, called The Mountains and the People. This spans both Scotland's National Parks, and will hopefully see further improvement of upland paths, although there is no current intention to make significant alterations to the scheme. Rosie Winch has taken over Chris York's role as coordinator, and a meeting was held in Aberdeen last month to discuss its future. If anyone wants to get involved, please contact Rosie on volunteering@themountainsandthepeople.org.uk. George also commented that if anyone out and about spots new ATV tracks, please photograph and forward to him.
- **Cairngorm Club:** Ken noted that the Cairngorm Club is considering becoming a charity (but not a SCIO...), and that, having donated £25,000 to replace the unsafe footbridge at the bottom of Glen Quoich, nothing has been heard or done.

Next meeting: Tues 11th October 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).