

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

DRAFT Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 17 January 2017

at the Aberdeen Grammar FP Club Centre, Queens Gate, Aberdeen

* Charity Trustee as Individual Member; ** Charity Trustee as Club Representative

Present: George Allan*, Hamish Clunas (Aberdeen HWC), Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie), Carlos Oldani (Stockets HWC), Alison Mitchell** (Ramblers Scotland), Jean Robinson** (Cairngorm Club), Ken Thomson* (Minutes Secretary), Dave Windle* (Chair)

1. Apologies: Peter Aikman, Alistair Beeley (Stonehaven M&HWC), Paul Jackson (Aberdeen MC), Catherine Lacy-Roberts** (Secretary and Cults HWC), Della Russell** (Culter HWC), Susan Smith (Treasurer), Maureen Stuchbury, Donald Thomas (Aberdeen MC)

2. Declaration of conflicts of interest: none declared

3. Minutes of Council Meeting 29 November 2016: with two minor corrections, the draft minutes were approved (Proposed by George; seconded by Alison)

4. Matters Arising from above Minutes

4.1: *Pathwatch (Minute 5.6): see 4.3 below.*

4.2: *SCIO (Minute 5.3):* George and Alison reported ongoing difficulties with setting up a new account with the Royal Bank of Scotland, but all was in hand. It appeared that new Standing Order forms would have to be completed.

4.3: *Next Issue of Mountain Views (Minute 13):* It was reported that Paul Jackson had agreed to supply material from Aberdeen MC as the “Club” article. Alison was suggested a 300-500-word article on PathWatch from Ramblers Scotland. Ken had drafted a Derry Lodge update. Dave undertook to circulate a draft Contents List, with authors. Catherine was to offer an email option to Individual Members.

5. Outstanding Consultations (with deadlines) for possible NEMT responses:

5.1: *SNH Guidance on Local Landscape Areas (3 March 2017):* Dave to submit a brief response dealing with coastal cliffs as landscape features

5.2: *SG Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (10 March 2017):* no NEMT response was thought to be required.

6. NEMT Management

6.1. *Handling of Incoming Enquiries:* Donald to pass any “non-obvious” ones to Dave rather than to George.

6.2. *Website design and responsibilities:* held over until Donald reports back.

6.3. *Work Plan (WP):* It was agreed to consider discussion as pertaining to revisions for the next Work Plan, i.e. that for 2017-18. Jean considered the current WP items as much broader than the rather tightly specified NEMT aims, and asked how items got onto the Council agenda and into the Plan. Dave reminded Council that the membership had been consulted over these aims some 6-7 years ago, and that current activity was largely down to the personal energies of individuals. Amongst revisions suggested were:

- NEMT’s involvement with Scottish LINK should cover pressure to (i) license grouse moors, (ii) give the SNH Wild Land map statutory protectionist status (both from George); (iii) mountaineering interests, given the withdrawal of Mountaineering Scotland from LINK (Ken).
- More specific attention to deer management (George to send material to Dave)
- Confining wind farm monitoring to the NE

- Clearer prioritisation of the NE.

It was agreed that **Dave** would draft a 2017-18 Work Plan and circulate this amongst Council members, in time for approval by Council on 7 March.

6.4. *Monitoring of Deer Management*: Dave agreed to monitor this area.

7. Threats to Wild Land

7.1 *Glendye Wind Farm*: George said that James Brownhill (JMT) had proposed that NEMT coordinate a campaign on this major proposal, which was in a prime tourist area SW of Clachnaben, and was likely to emerge more fully in February. It was agreed that NEMT could not adequately coordinate this, and that Mountaineering Scotland, which had much relevant expertise, should be asked to do so. Brian would lead for NEMT and liaise with Mountaineering Scotland, and George and Sandy McIntosh would pick up when the application is lodged.

7.2 George considered the NEMT aims as somewhat “old”. *Glencoe, Cullachy, Caiplich*: no decisions as yet.

The items immediately below refer to 29 November Minutes 10.1.3, 10.2 and 10.3.

7.3 *Cairngorm and Natural Retreats*: George reported that NR’s application for track retention (on top of retrospective planning approval) was to be on the CNPA Planning Committee agenda in 10 days’ time, and was 99% likely to be approved. **He and Dave** were to attend, and would express concern, pushing CNPA to take a much more robust attitude with NR in future. Areas were already eroding, and NR should establish heather cover. The Cairngorms Campaign, Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group and NEMT had written to the CNPA CEO and Planning Committee Chair expressing concern over poor management.

7.4 *Farragon Hill*: George had not yet contacted Perth & Kinross Planning

7.5 *Windfarm Approval on Wild Land Area 37 east of Foinaven*: George reported that Brian had probably written to the Minister the principle of allowing windfarms in any part of a Wild Land Area

8. Hill Tracks: The four items immediately below refer to 29 November Minutes 11.1, 11.3, 11.4 and 11.5. George reported that:

8.1.1 *LINK Hill Tracks Investigator*: funding had been secured from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and possibly others to employ someone part-time.

8.1.2 *Perthshire Hill Tracks*: Photos of the “double” tracks had been obtained, but P&KC had been told that these were for old tracks, and sheep management.

8.1.3 *Dinnet Estate*: Helen Todd of LINK had submitted a FoI request for all CNPA dealings with this estate.

8.1.4 *Candacraig*: He had written to Aberdeenshire Council; the reply had dealt with all points raised (track use, work information, grass strip).

8.2 Two meetings were coming up, involving Geirge, Helen Todd and Beryl Leatherhead: (i) a LINK Hill Tracks group meeting, and (ii) a week later, a meeting with Murray Ferguson of CNPA Planning and a SNH representative.

8.3 George has stopped monitoring Beaully-Denny tracks

8.4 A track above Loch Quoich in the W. Highlands was to service a proposed small hydro scheme on the N side, near Spidean and Gleourich. George had written to Highland Council for information (not an objection as such) on need, woodland, etc. He would raise this track at the LINK meeting.

9. Mountain Hares: Dave reported little further developments to date, though hares were being shot, e.g. on the Glen Livet estate.

10. Mountain Views: Ken relayed a message from Catherine, i.e. that she had as yet taken no action over contacting members over an email option. **Dave** agreed to send out a Contents List to all authors within a week.

11. Lectures: Dave reported that all was in hand for the next (remaining) two talks. Carlos agreed to act over the summer as Lecture series organiser for the winter season 2017/18: this offer was acclaimed by all.

12. AOCB:

12.1 *Mail:* Ken reported that Maureen Stuchbury had received no recent mail for NEMT.

12.2 *Forest Thinning near the Linn o' Dee:* Dave reported that he had sent a letter on behalf of NEMT to David Frew (NTS Mar Lodge Estate Property Manager) about the "mess" being created; this action was endorsed.

12.3 *New Quoich Punchbowl Footbridge:* Ken reported that this was now in place, after some adjustment to the handrail height, and that he was now arranging for a Cairngorm Club plaque for the bridge.

12.4 *Donation:* Dave reported that he had received a £400 donation from Mr and Mrs Appleby of Perth

12.5 *Natural Retreats:* Jean reported that the Cairngorm Club had received a reply from NR; this had argued that not enough time had elapsed for ground reinstatement to have completed, and had offered a meeting, which the Club would consider. George commented that NR were now aware that they are being "watched". Tree planting had taken place next to the new track downhill. CNPA lacked monitoring and enforcement capacity.

12.6 *Ramblers Scotland:* Alison asked for NEMT material which she could use when speaking about NEMT at the RS AGM on 11 March. George agreed to send her some relevant material.

12.7 *Bennachie:* Jean reported that a public meeting would take place on pylons west of the hill. Details were available on the WAPA website.

13. Dates of Next Meeting: 7:30pm, Tuesday 7 March 2017.

Note: Ken agreed to pay AGS FPCC for the above meeting and would seek later reimbursement, while Catherine and/or Treasurer would set up a longer-term scheme.

Ken Thomson, 28 January 2017