

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

Approved Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 16 January 2018

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

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

Present: George Allan*, Alex Brown** (Aberdeen Mountaineering Club), Hamish Clunas (Aberdeen HWC), Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie), Brian Heaton**, Catherine Lacy-Roberts** (Secretary and Cults HWC), Carlos Oldani (Stockets HWC), Alison Mitchell** (Ramblers Scotland), Jean Robinson** (Cairngorm Club), Donald Thomas*, Ken Thomson* (Minutes Secretary), Dave Windle* (Chair)

1. **Apologies:** Peter Aikman (MBA)
2. **Declaration of conflicts of interest:** none declared
3. **Minutes of Council Meeting 28 November 2017:** with two minor corrections, the draft minutes were approved (proposed by George; seconded by Alison)
4. **Matters Arising from above Minutes:** George reported that Susan Matthews of the Cairngorms Campaign had been informed that upcoming vacancies on the Cairngorms National Park Authority Board would soon be advertised, probably in March.
5. **NEMT Management**
 - 5.1. *Membership and Subscriptions:* Catherine asked for information on 9 non-payee names, and reported that 3 or 4 others had not paid for 2017, so that current membership was about 13 down. Four Gift Aid queries were to be followed up. Reporting that 70 standing orders had been paid between 2 and 10 January 2018, Alison agreed to pass a copy of the relevant bank statement to Catherine for cross-checking.
 - 5.2. *Finance:* Alison reported that a £20 donation to LINK for Helen Todd's presentation had not been sent, due to their change of location. It was agreed not to follow this up. An invoice for the LINK subscription of £125 – a 4% rise – for April 2018 to March 2019 was expected soon, and one for £24 had been paid for the NEMT website domain. The current (16.1.18) bank balance stood at £11,604.09. The 2016/17 accounts could not yet be balanced, and she would have to see Susie Smith. It was pointed out that OSCR would need the accounts, along with the Annual Report, by 30 June. It was agreed that Alison would bring the approved accounts to the next Council meeting on 6 March.
 - 5.3. *Website:* Donald reported that he had undertaken some updating, e.g. of approved minutes, and was awaiting the Annual Report. George opened a discussion on the website, asking whether it should be made “properly communicating”, which would require considerably more input to supply monthly material including photographs attractive to viewers. Ken said that he found useful the current “archival” nature of the website in simply holding NEMT documents and useful links, and suggested that a more pro-active website would have to replace *Mountain Views* as the Trust's main communication vehicle since resources were not available for both. Brian suggested that some of the letters sent by Dave or George to CNPA etc. could be added to the website. It was agreed to keep the website as it is at present.
 - 5.4. *Annual Report:* see previous minute.
 - 5.5. *Date of Next AGM:* After discussion, this was agreed as the first Council meeting next year, i.e. on 29 January 2019.
6. **NEMT Work Plan 2018-19:** It was agreed that Ken would revise the 2017-18 Plan only for dates, for Council approval at its next meeting.

7. Consultations:

7.1. *Cairngorms National Park*: Dave reported that he and others were drafting a response to the Main Issues Report for the Local Development Plan 2020.

7.2. *Planning Bill*: George reported that this was currently with a Scottish Parliament Committee, and was aimed at making the planning process easier to negotiate by reducing points of conflict by “front-loading” some issues. Dave had sent a letter to MSPs arguing that:

- a. Wild Land Areas should be aligned with National Scenic Areas and National Parks in terms of prohibiting wind farms in these Areas
- b. There should be a third party right of appeal, parallel to those of developers
- c. Environmental Impact Assessments etc. should be carried out by consultants selected by the planning authority rather than the developer, so that they were seen to be independent (as well as competent).

Dave had submitted a letter to MSPs for the Parliament Committee’s consultation. George said that he had emailed LINK advising them of what had been sent to MSPs, and asking that they consider adding to their submission the need for planning partnerships to include eNGOs as appropriate. He had highlighted the risk that “simplified development zones” might include grouse moors, thus allowing tracks to be constructed without Prior Notification.

7.3. *Extension of Permitted Development Rights (PDRs) to tracks*: George reported that the Scottish Government had commissioned a report on extending PDRs, e.g. for masts. He had submitted that this should not extend to mast access tracks, and in fact that all such tracks should need full planning consent rather than Prior Notification. He also commented on other issues re extending PDRs.

8. Threats to Wild Land

8.1. *Cairngorms*: There was still no sign of the “Masterplan” for the Glenmore and Cairngorm Strategy, only a management plan, and no more had been heard of the Save the Ciste campaign or from Natural Retreats. The Scottish Government was commissioning a review of the Cairngorm ski uplift infrastructure, and NEMT and Mountaineering Scotland will be consulted.

8.2. *Glendye Wind Farm*: No more heard: Brian said that the next application was expected in March/April. In an interview, the Minister Paul Whitehouse had been “aggressive”, arguing that WLAs should not inhibit “sensible development” – which might include replacing “old” windfarms with much larger turbines.

8.3. *Hill and Hydro Tracks*: George reported that:

- a. Drumochter: Although he had not attended the planning meeting, CNPA had rejected the application to remove tree-planting requirements next to the A9. However, the issue may get swept up by the A9 dualling process.
- b. Enforcement: He was encouraged by recent CNPA efforts, including plans to use air photographs to map all hill tracks as a baseline, and to insert a public reporting item on their website
- c. Glen Clova: About halfway between the hotel and the glen head, he had found a “very bad” track west of the river and behind a wood. CNPA had investigated quickly but considered that it had probably been established before the Prior Notification system had come into play.
- d. Loch Treig: he had submitted comments (not objections) re forestry plans, which had been approved.
- e. Glen Feshie: In response to Ken’s reporting of newish moor tracks, Nick Kempe understands from Tom MacDonnell that the estate has a ‘big job’ in hand for both track establishment and removal. New forestry tracks may not be needed for planting but early establishment avoids later difficulties for

- forest management and felling. The estate had been experimenting with establishing mid-track vegetation, and had found that turves brought in served better than using edge material.
- f. Kerloch Hill: George is to report to Aberdeenshire Council the “mess” reported by Hamish, once the latter has forwarded the map reference.
 - g. Glen Prosen: a hydro track is to be removed, and the Park was investigating a track going uphill west of Mayar.
 - h. Glen Lyon: A short track to a hydro scheme was not being assessed which had not been acknowledged as being in a WLA, and ATVs already in use were probably damaging the SSSI.
 - i. The Hill Track Group (of 3) had accumulated a lot of information and knowledge for their report, but national reporting of tracks would cease at end-January. However, George and Sandy McIntosh would continue to monitor Aberdeenshire and probably the CNP.
- 8.3. *Bennachie*: Jean reported that she had contacted Margaret Garden of the Save Bennachie campaign around 8 January, with a new report launched at the Scottish Parliament with maximum publicity. Funding was likely to be required for more marketing material, e.g. T-shirts, roadside banners, displays, and consultants might have to be hired in future. She proposed a NEMT contribution: Alison suggested £100; Ken thought this unrealistically low although no spending estimates had been put forward. It was agreed that Alison and Jean would enquire further and were authorised to contribute up to £250.
- 8.4. *Coul Links*: As agreed, Donald had sent a letter of objection before Christmas; it was now on the Highland Council website.
9. **Mountain Views**: Dave pointed out that the contents list of the forthcoming issue had been circulated. Catherine would insert an offer to send MV by email in future. It would include an article from the Stockets, with suitable photographs, and a similar one from the Aberdeen Mountaineering Club was suggested for the September issue.
 10. **Lectures**: Carlos reported that flyers and emails for the forthcoming talks had been issued. For the 24 January talk, door staff was agreed as Catherine and Liz, and, since a high attendance was expected, Dave would try to book the upstairs room at the Sportsman’s Club. He would also check on computer facilities, and enquire from the speaker about the text of the talk, as requested by Jay Turner. Arrangements for the 21 February talk would be agreed by email.
 11. **Ramblers Scotland Council Meeting 10-11 March 2018**: Alison to identify timings when a NEMT stand should be staffed, likely to be Saturday afternoon and early evening (when Donald said that he would probably be available), and Sunday morning (possibly Dave). Various displays (banner, photographs, looped computer presentations, MV copies) were suggested: Catherine to check on her holdings.
 12. **Garbh Choire Refuge**: Information was reported as received from Peter Aikman on MBA refurbishment, and earlier (2012) consideration of this issue by NEMT was recalled. There was a general feeling against NEMT now helping with funding. It was uncertain whether CNPA would be consulted, and/or would approve. It was agreed to write to David Frew at NTS Mar Lodge about the lack of recent consultation over this decision (Ken to draft; Dave to finalise and send).
 13. **AOCB**: None, except to confirm the last 2018 Council meeting date as 27 November.
 14. **Dates of Next Meeting**: 7:30pm, Tuesday 6 March 2018.

Ken Thomson, 10 March 2018