

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 6 March 2018

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

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

Present: George Allan*, Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie), Carlos Oldani (Stockets HWC), Alison Mitchell** (Ramblers Scotland), Donald Thomas*, Ken Thomson* (Minutes Secretary), Dave Windle* (Chair)

1. Apologies: Peter Aikman (MBA), Alex Brown** (AMC), Catherine Lacy-Roberts** (Secretary and Cults HWC), Jean Robinson** (Cairngorm Club), Stuart Young (XXL), Richard Spencer (MBA)

2. Declaration of conflicts of interest: none declared.

3. Minutes of Council Meeting 16 January 2018: with minor corrections, the draft minutes were approved.

4. Matters Arising from above Minutes: none, except as below.

5. NEMT Management

5.1. Membership and Subscriptions: Catherine had reported by email that:

- a. She had understood that it was agreed not to chase gift aid problems, on the grounds that the previous signed acceptance would hold for the new account.
- b. She saw only a couple of queries to sort out in the bank statements.
- c. She intended to send out the membership cards shortly, and also subscription requests to cheque payers and to Clubs; the Stockets had just paid, though probably last year's sub.

She asked if subscription requests should be sent out in October, to make clearer the subscription year: it was agreed that it would be better to stick to current practice.

5.2. Finance: Alison reported that the accounts had been examined and certified as OK by Martin Lamont; however, in discussion, a number of queries arose, not all of which could be settled at the meeting, e.g. the relationship and some inconsistencies between the two sets of accounts – one headed “*Unrestricted funds*”, the other “*charitable activities*”. The following process was agreed:

- a. Donald to draw up a set of questions for Alison to put to Susie and Malcolm.
- b. Assuming that these questions were satisfactorily addressed, the accounts should be deemed as signed off by the Trustees, and sent to Catherine for her to email to all NEMT members for information and any comment (but not approval); she should then forward the accounts to George for forwarding to OSCR, and to Donald for the website, along with the Annual Report.

Alison also reported that recent financial transactions had included the £150 donation to Save Bennachie, and a £252 insurance payment.

5.3. Website: Donald reported that the website was up to date, and that the web-hosting subscription had been paid.

5.4. Annual Report: George would sign this when above process (5.2) completed.

5.5. Work Plan 2018-19: This was agreed, subject to revision of the wording of Section 2.4 (hill tracks), and in Section 2.5 omission of the reference to Natural Retreats, and revision to “sympathetic to the environment”.

- 5.6. *OSCR Notification re Safeguarding and Notifiable Events*: George noted that, since NEMT had no young or (explicitly) vulnerable members, action (in the form of risk assessment) would be needed only for a future Day Out or similar event.
- 5.7. (added at meeting) *Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016*: George noted that, as a small organisation, NEMT need not register under this Act, but that LINK would like to be notified if it was mentioned during face-to-face contacts between NEMT and Scottish Government officials. George undertook to draft a note for Council members.
- 5.8. (added at meeting) *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*: Donald agreed to investigate the implications of this for NEMT, e.g. from SCVO.
- 6. Garbh Choire Refuge**: Dave reported that he had spoken by phone to David Frew. He had pressed NTS to involve locals more closely, citing Hilltrek at Aboyne as an example of where things could go wrong, and had written a summary for *Mountain Views*. It was noted that David Frew could be questioned at the JMT talk on 26 April.
- 7. Consultations:**
- 7.1. *Cairngorms National Park*: It was reported that NEMT comments on the CNPA Main Issues Report had been submitted, and summarised for MV.
- 7.2. *Planning Bill*: George reported that he had attended a not very productive meeting in Stonehaven, but had submitted three comments thereafter.
- 8. Threats to Wild Land**
- 8.1. *Cairngorms*: George reported that HIE had contracted consultants for the uplift proposal, and that he and Dave had submitted comments, viz. the need for: no wider footprint; an overall environmental plan against which each component should be checked; a listing of mitigation measures; new vehicle tracks only if necessary (which would not be the case for maintenance); take account of hydrologies; no new paths (but rather maintenance of current ones); remove some existing vehicle tracks. All these points should be part of an overall Masterplan.
- 8.2. *Glendye Wind Farm*: This was reported as being on hold, perhaps until June/July.
- 8.3. *Tracks*: George reported that:
- a. The LINK report was being drafted, for possible publication in May.
 - b. Kerloch Hill: the Council had passed a “dreadful” forestry track to FCS, and it was to be re-instated, probably as result of FCS/NEMT intervention.
 - c. Kingshouse: the hotel extension had been approved, despite its incongruity in that location.
 - d. Glen Lyon: a small track in a designated area had been approved.
 - e. Glen Nevis: a full planning application had been made in a National Scenic Area (and on the edge of a Wild Land Area) where re-forestation was planned, with a further application to extend uphill to deal with (a possible second) forest fire and to maintain fencing. However, (i) planning applications should not be made on the basis of mere risk, and (ii) both tracks would only be infrequently used, and would not be suitable for walkers.
 - f. Amulree: a “worst ever” prior notification had been made, for a track most likely to be used for shooting. Perth & Kinross Council (unlike HC) did not allow “public comment” on such PNs, but George hoped that his views had been passed on.
- 8.4. *Bennachie*: No further news.

9. **Grouse:** Dave reported on a Perth/Edinburgh meeting held by RSPB and others on the licensing of driven grouse shooting, to consider how to pool resources, how to present the case for licensing, and what further evidence should be gathered, e.g. economic. The SG Committee was being headed by the ex-head of a SNH advisory committee, with 4 other members and some special advisors, e.g. on peat bogs.
10. **Hares:** Dave had attended a meeting to hear JHI/GWCT findings on methods to count mountain hares, e.g. dung counts, night-time counts. It was proposed to rely on keepers (autumn counts) and estates (game bags), reporting to SNH – all difficult, unreliable, and time-consuming.
11. **CNPA Draft Forest Strategy:** Ken to draft NEMT comments on the basis of his note to Council, and circulate to Dave and Donald for comment.
12. **Mountain Views:** It was reported that the forthcoming issue was in hand. Ken to supply a “snippet” on community acquisition of land, along Wild Land Area lines.
13. **Lectures:** the last in the winter series was due in two weeks’ time. Notification had been sent to UK Climbing though possibly at excessive cost for a charity: Carlos to investigate. Dave commented that the season had been an extremely successful one. Some discussion took place on the possible demise of the NEMT projector, and capacity to play videos and sound.
14. **Ramblers Scotland Council Meeting 10-11 March 2018:** Dave to contact Catherine re NEMT stand and Mountain Views.
15. **AOCB:** The uncertain future of the AGS FPCC as the Council meeting place was discussed briefly, but it was decided to stay out until more became known.
16. **Dates of Next Meeting:** 7:30pm, Tuesday 10 April (when Dave would be absent) and 22 May (when Ken ditto).

Ken Thomson, 11 March 2018