

## NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

### Approved Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 9 October 2018

at the Sportsman's Club, 11 Queens Road, Aberdeen

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

**Present:** George Allan\*, Alex Brown (AMC)\*\*, Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie), Brian Heaton\*, Catherine Lacy\*\* (Secretary and Cults HWC), Alison Mitchell\*\* (Treasurer and Ramblers Scotland), Richard Spencer (MBA), Donald Thomas\*, Ken Thomson\* (Minutes Secretary)

In the absence of Dave Windle, Donald Thomas chaired the meeting.

1. **Apologies:** Alistair Beeley (Stonehaven MHW), Carlos Oldani (Stockets HWC), Jean Robinson\*\* (Cairngorm Club), Dave Windle\*

2. **Declaration of conflicts of interest:** none declared.

3. **Minutes of Council Meeting 28 August 2018:** approved subject to a minor correction.

4. **Matters Arising from above Minutes:**

(i) *Minute 5.2 (first bullet point):* It was reported that the Trust's old projector had been found to be irreparable, and that a replacement had been purchased at a cost of £379.20, i.e. within the £400 from Sandy England's funeral donations.

(ii) *Minute 8 (second item):* Donald advised that two companies could provide a card payment facility for no more than 3% of usage. There was little enthusiasm, but Donald would discuss further with Catherine.

5. **NEMT Management**

5.1. *Membership and Subscriptions:* Catherine reported that (i) she was "carrying" from last year 12 Individual Members who had not renewed their SOs, (ii) 3 new members had been recruited, and (iii) she was uncertain over the situation as regards Organisational Members. In total, there were 105 Members, including Life Members and the above 12.

5.2. *Finance:* Alison reported that the current (end-September) balance was £10975. She had paid invoices for 350 copies of *Mountain Views* (£599), for MV postage, and for the projector (see 4(i) above); she had also paid £200 to the Mend Our Mountains project, as previously agreed. There was a good deal of work to be done to complete the 2017/18 accounts for inspection by Martin Lamont, and approval by Council at end-November and at the AGM at end-January. George said that he considered that only minor changes in formatting were needed for this set of accounts. It was agreed that Donald (with Dave and Alison) would take over from George in finalising the accounts and the Annual Report, which Catherine would send out to members after the Christmas rush, in advance of the AGM on 29 January 2019.

5.3. *Website:* Donald reported that further information had been added, including the Winter 2018/19 Lectures and the contents of the latest *Mountain Views*.

5.4. *Mountain Views:* Catherine reported that the Autumn 2018 issue had gone out, a little light in content but generally regarded as good. There was some discussion over copyright responsibilities in relation to national libraries. The next MV issue would emerge in April 2019.

5.5. *Lectures*: It was reported that all was in hand, including door volunteers. Donald offered to act as host for the November Lecturer. It was agreed that the 30 October JMT talk by Anke Addy could be advertised at the October Lecture.

5.6. *GDPR*: It was agreed that Catherine would email (using blind-copy) a link or copy of the NEMT Privacy Statement.

6. **Consultations**: It was reported that Dave had submitted a NEMT response to the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan consultation: no current and relevant consultations were reported.

## 7. Threats to Wild Land

7.1 *Cairngorm Mountain*: It was noted that the funicular was currently closed for safety reasons. George advised that the planning application for dry ski slopes (to which NEMT had objected) had been slightly modified in terms over colour, edging and heath planting; he would not be speaking at the Committee hearing on 12 October, but others would probably do so. [Officers have subsequently recommended approval.] NEMT had been the only objector to the Dalwhinnie quarry “extension”, which would be open for 30 years, and include quite a lot of tree planting. [Again, officers have subsequently recommended approval.] After 4 months of waiting, he and Dave had had an unsatisfactory response from the Minister as to a Glenmore Master Plan: the dry ski slope application had contained a limited “Cairngorm Mountain Long-Term Strategy”, but it was unclear whether this was meant as a type of Master Plan.

Ken advised of two recent tourism awards to the CNP area, one at Moor of Dinnet, the other on Speyside.

7.2 *Wind Farms*: Brian H. advised that the Glen Dye application had now been submitted to the Energy Consent Unit of the Scottish Government (i.e. not to Aberdeenshire Council, although it would be consulted along with SNH, SEPA, etc.): see <http://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx>. It was agreed that NEMT members should be emailed (by Catherine) asking them to object before the closing date at the end of October. A question was raised as to end-of-life commitments, as in Denmark and Germany: Brian agreed to see what he could find out in this area. George advised that Glenshero application in the Monadhliaths (when it comes) is almost certain to be approved, but otherwise it was thought the pace of large-scale wind farm applications was slowing down.

7.3 *Hill & Hydro Tracks*: George reported as follows:

- *LINK Campaign*: the report on Prior Notification (PN) had been published in mid-September, to generally positive comment, except for one email defending grouse moors. The Stage 2 Planning Bill amendment proposed by Andy Wightman MSP was in process along with several hundred others; if it failed, there was some hope in the Government’s forthcoming review of PDRs, although that would probably focus on extending PDRs rather than reducing them. The report had two annexes not directly related to the operation of the PN system to date: (i) a set of recommendations on how to improve the PN system; and (ii) other issues, such as hydro tracks, borrowpits, track design, ATV usage, etc. The timing of publication of these annexes was under consideration, so as not to blunt the impact of the main report. A further Planning Bill proposal would give Wild Land Areas the same statutory status as National Scenic Areas, but was thought to stand little chance of acceptance. Donald urged all to write to their MSPs re the report.

- *Pressendye*: the application for a mountain bike centre had now been approved, but with some response to NEMT's objections to the highest section of trail (now to be constructed so as to reduce visibility) and footpath crossings (now to carry improved signage etc.).
- *Glen Spean/Grey Corries*: the aluminium company's applications for several small-scale hydro developments (including on one the Allt a'Mhuillinn, possible as a stalking horse/sacrificial lamb) had not yet been submitted.
- *Loch Arkaig*: Two applications had been made for hydro developments to the north of the loch. One is in an area famous for rare butterflies- NEMT did not object as already many objections; the other is further west and involves a wide access track to which George had objected (with SNH raising concerns).

7.4 *Bennachie*: The new map of A96 route options, which excluded those near the hill, was generally welcomed, in the context of the public consultation meetings being held concurrently (e.g. at Blackburn, 11 October). It was agreed that Jean and Ken would draft a NEMT comment/objection to the Orange route which clipped the Bennachie designated landscape area at two points. The issue of non-motorised access was also raised.

7.5 *Lasers*: George reported that he had received an email from a NEMT member advising of notices, warning walkers of laser operation in the Donside area, possibly an experiment connected with insects.

#### **8. AOCB:**

- *Coul Beach Golf Course*: Donald advised that he had received an invitation to attend a pre-meeting gearing, but not in time to take this up.
- *Tollohill Woods*: Alex advised that notices had appeared warning of a proposal for 5000 houses to be built in the area.
- *SCIO/OSCR Contact*: George advised that he wished to step down from his role as the NEMT contact for constitutional and related matters. It was agreed to put this on the next Council agenda.

**9. Date of Next Meetings:** 7:30pm, 27 November, and 29 January 2019 (after AGM), in the Sportsman's Club.

Ken Thomson, 28 November 2018