

**NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST**  
SCIO Scottish Charity no. SC 008783

**Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 27 November 2018**  
at the Sportsman's Club, 11 Queens Road, Aberdeen

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

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

In the absence of Dave Windle, Donald Thomas assumed the chair for the meeting.

1. **Apologies:** Alistair Beeley (Stonehaven MHW), Alex Brown (AMC)\*\*, Jean Robinson\*\* (Cairngorm Club), Dave Windle\*
2. **Declaration of conflicts of interest:** none.
3. **Minutes of Council Meeting 9 October 2018:** approved.
4. **Matters Arising from above Minutes:**
  - (i) *Minute 4(ii):* Due to lack of interest, the card payment idea would be dropped.
  - (ii) *Minute 8 (second item):* Donald advised that Alex Brown had reported that the Aberdeenshire Mearns area committee had not supported the proposal for 2869 (rather than 5000) houses near the Tollohill Woods, for a number of reasons include landscape and green belt designation, and drainage into the Dee.
  - (iii) *Minute 8 (third item):* Donald offered to succeed George as the Trust's OSCR contact; this was welcomed.

**5. NEMT Management**

- 5.1. *Membership and Subscriptions:* Catherine reported that (i) most Organisational Members (numbering about 12) had now paid up, and (ii) 2 new Individual Members had been recruited, bringing the IM total to about 108. She advised that the Trust's accommodation address had given rise to some delays, e.g. in receiving subscription cheques. It was decided to keep that address for public and OSCR purposes, but to use Cath's own address for membership and subscription purposes.
- 5.2. *Finance:* Alison reported that she had not yet been able to finalise the 2017/18 accounts, but that this would be done in time for Malcolm Lamont to examine them, and for issue to the Trustees and the AGM. It was reported that City sales revenue of *Mountain Views* had fallen, to about £10.
- 5.3. *Website:* Donald reported that a couple of links had been added, including one to the Hill Tracks Campaign.
- 5.4. *Mountain Views:* The timetable for the Spring 2019 issue was decided as: manuscript by 15 March, publication April. Dave and George would draw up a draft contents list, to include an article from the Aberdeen Mountaineering Club.
- 5.5. *Lectures:* Carlos reported that the recent talk had attracted 45-50 attendees, and that all was in hand for the December talk, with the new projector to be used.
- 5.6. *AGM Arrangements:* It was agreed that the following should be nominated as Individual Member Trustees: Dave, George, Brian Heaton, Donald, Ken and (having stepped down as Cairngorm Club Representative Trustee) Jean Robinson; while Cath would (if agreed) become the Culter (instead of Cults) HWC Trustee.

Cath to send these nominee names plus Annual Report and accounts to members by 7/1/19. Dave to book/check a room (same as for Council?) for the AGM.

- 5.7. *Dates of Next Meetings*: It was decided that these would be: 5/3, 23/4, 4/6, 27/8, 8/10, 26/11, and 28/1/20 (AGM and Council). George to ask Dave to book these dates at the Sportsman's Club.
- 5.8. *Council minutes*: It was agreed that Ken should circulate draft minutes to all Council members soon after each meeting, as well as (later) with the agenda for the next meeting.

## 6. Consultations:

- 6.1. *Glen Dye Windfarm*: Brian reported that he had submitted the Trust's objection, which had been quickly acknowledged by Aberdeenshire Council (rather than the Energy Consent Unit). George noted that, since the Council had objected to the anemometer proposal some 3 years earlier, it would be interesting to see their attitude to the current proposal. Ken drew attention to what he considered a high-quality objection from Mountaineering Scotland.
- 6.2. *Bennachie/A96*: Ken reported that, in light of the Save Bennachie campaign's decision not to object once it was known that the favoured route would impinge on designated landscape at only two small points, he, Dave and Jean had decided to follow suit, so that no NEMT objection to the favoured route had been submitted.
- 6.3. *Scottish Forestry Strategy*: Ken drew attention to Mountaineering Scotland's comments on this Strategy – focussed on deer management, native species and recreational access – on the current consultation, and it was agreed that he should draft a NEMT submission along similar lines.

## 7. Threats to Wild Land

7.1 *Cairngorm Mountain*: It was noted that:

- i) CNPA had rejected Natural Retreat's proposals for two dry ski slopes, to which NEMT had objected. [Note: CML went into administration 29/11/18: see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-46389488>]
- ii) The funicular is closed for the winter, with engineering inspection delayed by 2 weeks due to weather. See <http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/area-information/inner-moray-firth/cairngorm.html>.
- iii) The HIE-commissioned report on uplift facilities had been submitted but only a summary published. Within a £27 million "Vision for Cairngorm" and a 10-year plan, it contained a proposal for two high-speed chair lifts into Coire Cas (a known avalanche area), along with upgraded buildings, extended paths, a bike route, a zipwire and an Alpine coaster. The funicular would not be for most skiers, some existing uplift would be removed, and there would be no development in Coire Ciste. George suggested that NEMT's main concerns should be with the environment rather than financial viability or skiing needs. He and Dave had identified four areas of concern:
  - (a) extended mountain biking leading to increased plateau use and erosion
  - (b) the location of the zipwire
  - (c) the long-range visibility of the aluminium coaster
  - (d) the risk to protected areas from increased walkers using the new chair lifts.

At Drennan Watson's suggestion, LINK, Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group, the Cairngorms Campaign and NEMT would consider making a public statement. The implications for increased road access and car parking at Coire Cas, and the removal, abandonment or renewal of the funicular were mentioned.

7.2 *Wind Farms*: The Glenshero application was now in, with objections from MS, JMT and NEMT. If this proposal went ahead, it and Stronelarig would mean 168 turbines very near the Munro Geal Charn, and across a nearby Corbett.

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

- (a) Hill Tracks Campaign: Andy Wightman's amendment at Stage 2 of the Planning Bill had failed, and would succeed at Stage 3 only if enough SNP MSPs supported it. This seemed unlikely in view of the promised review of permitted development rights, even if this review was aimed at "simplifying" rather than strengthening planning powers, and its timing had not yet been decided. LINK may want people to write again to MSPs; it was discussed whether NEMT would support this. Ken suggested that it should do so, since it might get members into the "habit" of making MSPs aware of their views. Two campaign "sub-reports" would be on (i) improving the prior notification system (this would be delayed until Stage 3), and (ii) "other issues" (to be published soon, with a targeted officer readership including the Scottish Government, Argyll & Bute, the National Parks, and Aberdeenshire.
- (b) Glen Spean/Grey Corries: the Allt a'Mhuillinn proposal had been withdrawn due to area designations; the other proposals were "very good", e.g. two involving maintenance access on foot rather than by vehicles requiring tracks, and construction tracks to be reduced from 4WD to ATV standards. MS had submitted objections, but not NEMT, which had commented only on items near the Lairig Leacach bothy, i.e. tracks, the use of stone, and tree planting.
- (c) Glen Banchor: a Prior Notification had been submitted re regrading and extension "for sporting purposes", after "discussions" with CNPA and SNH. George had got in contact, the PN had been withdrawn, and will come back as a full application.
- (d) Ardtalnaig (south of Loch Tay): New tracks involving illegal work had been retrospectively allowed by Perth & Kinross Council with (bridge) conditions to which the estate had objected on technical grounds; George had written suggesting a "legal" counter-objection.

Brian wondered how to disseminate good practice, as seen in the Grey Corries applications; George suggested that he could seek for this to be done in the Campaign sub-report (see above), and he would raise the same issues when commenting on future cases.

(e) *Glen Clova*: no recent news.

## 8. AOCB:

- (a) *NEMT Minutes*: Richard suggested that NEMT minutes, submissions and other documents should carry the SCIO number. Ken agreed to do so in future.
- (b) *Grouse Moors*: the REVIVE campaign had recently been launched: see [www.revive.scot](http://www.revive.scot).
- (c) *CNPA*: Donald reported that Dave, as NEMT Chair, had been invited to be a member of the Park's Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group; this was welcomed as official recognition of the Trust's role.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**: 29 January 2019 (after the AGM), in the Sportsman's Club.

Ken Thomson, 1 February 2019