

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST
SCIO Scottish Charity no. SC 008783

Approved Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 28 January 2020
at the Sportsman's Club, 11 Queens Road, Aberdeen

Present: George Allan*, Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie), Debbie Fielding** (Cairngorm Club), Morna Harper (Aberdeen Mountaineering Club), Kris Howard, Catherine Lacy-Roberts** (Culter HWC), Alison Mitchell** (Ramblers Scotland), Maureen Stuchbury, Trevor Stuchbury, Donald Thomas*, Ken Thomson*, Dave Windle* (Chair).

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

1. **Apologies:** Alistair Beeley, Ann Campbell, Bob Elder, David Milne, Carlos Oldani, Roger Owen, Jean Robinson, Richard Spencer
2. **Declaration of conflicts of interest:** Donald and Ken declared their (organisational) interest in the Clachnaben Path item (6.2 vi below).
3. **Minutes of Council Meeting 3 December:** with the correction of the date of meeting, the draft minutes were approved.
4. **Matters Arising from above Minutes other than as below:** none.
5. **Dates of Next Meetings:** confirmed as 3/3 (Dave to be absent), 21/4, 2/6, 25/8, 6/10, 1/12 and (after AGM) 26/1/2021. Alison reported that the room was booked for all but the last date.
6. **NEMT Management**
 - 6.1. *Membership and Subscriptions:* nothing to report, other than that SOs had been taken in January. Alison handed Catherine a bank statement with details of the transactions.
 - 6.2. *Finance:* Alison reported that: (i) the bank account on 21/1/2020 stood at £12,487; (ii) payment of £500 had been made to LINK for the Environmental Rights Centre, as agreed; (iii) lecture moneys were being banked; also sales receipts for Adam Watson books (Dave to acknowledge); (iv) she had purchased a £5 cash box; this was authorised for reimbursement; (v) a form for bank account digital access remained to be completed.
 - 6.3. George had contacted Dougie Baird re TMTP, and been told of forthcoming repairs to the Glas Allt path. A NEMT donation for this purpose was approved, and decided at £1000, to be paid to OATS.

Dave raised the issue of a donation to AMRA in view of the recent Kenny Webster talk surplus of £140; a donation of £200 was approved.

George requested reimbursement of an Inverurie - Inverness return rail fare on NEMT business; this was approved.Donald outlined the current position re the Clachnaben path; it was agreed to donate £500 towards this project, to be paid directly to the contractor (ACT).
 - 6.4. *Website:* Donald had nothing new to report.
 - 6.5. *Mountain Views:* For the Spring 2020 issue, Dave to email all contributors with a reminder and deadline. For the Autumn 2020 commemorative issue, a number of comments and suggestions were made, for Dave to consider.
 - 6.6. *Lectures:* It was confirmed that arrangements for the February and March Lectures were in place, with Alison, Cath and Jean to coordinate door staffing. The venue was then discussed in the light of overcrowding at the January Lecture. It was agreed that Dave and Alison should approach the Sportsman's Club about the use of the larger room over the front door for the 2020/21 Lectures, to be planned by Debbie from May onwards. Ken confirmed that he had thanked the James Hutton Institute staff for their help with the Adam Watson Event, and Dave agreed to thank Will Boyd-Wallis.

6.7. *Work Plan 2020-21*: Several revisions to the 2019-20 Plan were agreed, e.g. dates, electronic media; Ken to circulate a revised version for 2020-21.

7. **AGM Matters Arising**: none. By default, the Council agreed that current office-bearers would remain in post.

8. Consultations:

8.1. *SG Permitted Development Rights (PDRs)*: a NEMT response had been submitted.

8.2. *SG Scottish Forestry Corporate Plan*: It was agreed not to submit a NEMT response, but it was agreed to consider the general issue of trees in the NEMT area at the March Council meeting: Ken to circulate a short briefing note.

9. **Werritty Report on Grouse Moor Management**: Ken's paper was noted.

10. Threats to Wild Land

10.1. *Cairngorm Mountain*: George reported as follows:

i. He had objected to a planning application for earthworks west of the base station, on grounds of lack of (a) information and (b) the MasterPlan. The Park had nevertheless approved the application, but with more information provided. Since current Cairngorm Mountain management has a poor record, the Park needs to ensure compliance with planning conditions.

ii. Following the Vision statement, he and others had held a one-hour meeting with senior HIE personnel, including the Acting CEO. Issues included:

– The MasterPlan process, i.e. Phase 1 (statutory bodies), and Phase 2 (the public)

– Finance: the case to SG for the funicular should go in only after the MasterPlan; but HIE is to press ahead, with “options”. The Auditor-General was reported as taking an interest. There was a need for whole life costings, to include repairs.

– A Coire na Ciste option

– Mountain developments should be restricted to mountain-necessary ones

– Mountain bikes were agreed as “problematic”.

He was concerned over the possible weakening or abandonment of the closed system (visitors restricted to the Ptarmigan); NEMT to remain alert to this. Dave to write to HIE defending this system, and to compose a MV article on this, with help as necessary.

10.2. *Hill & Hydro Tracks*: George reported that

i. The Campaign was approaching a critical phase, perhaps the last opportunity to change the legislation. The Minister had agreed to look again at track creation and management, and a SG consultation was expected in February. LINK had drafted a set of options, including no PDR for “agricultural” tracks; NEMT was likely to be asked to support this. A LINK request to meet the Minister had been declined.

ii. At Phonies, NE of Dalwhinnie, a track had been upgraded without consent; CNPA had issued ex post approval, but with conditions, e.g. re-seeding.

iii. At Clova, (a): George had sent a letter following no response to his email re breach of planning consent for the Glen Prosen/Clova ridge track; (b) following an appeal against consent refusal, the Reporter was due to decide very shortly on the Hotel track; (c) a full planning application had been submitted for a new track west of the river; George had not objected, but had commented re wild cats and aspects of the line taken. The Park should call this in.

10.3. *Wind Farms*: Nothing reported.

11. **AOCB**: none.

Ken Thomson, 4 March 2020