

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST
SCIO Scottish Charity no. SC 008783

Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 21 April 2020
held via Zoom

Present: Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie) (from about 8:15pm), Debbie Fielding** (Cairngorm Club), Morna Harper** (Aberdeen Mountaineering Club), Brian Heaton*, Alison Mitchell** (Ramblers Scotland), Roger Owen**, Donald Thomas*, Ken Thomson*, Dave Windle*

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

1. **Apologies:** George Allan*, Alistair Beeley (Stonehaven M&HWC), Catherine Lacy-Roberts** (Culter HWC), Carlos Oldani, Jean Robinson*, Richard Spencer** (Mountain Bothies Association)
2. **Declaration of conflicts of interest:** None declared.
3. **Minutes of Council Meeting 3 March 2020:** the draft minutes were approved.
4. **Matters Arising from above Minutes other than as below:** It was reported (via pre-meeting email) that Nick Kempe would not be submitting a lecture expenses claim, thanks to Dave's hospitality. The insurance policy had been renewed, and it was confirmed that all the Trust's assets were currently with Dave or Donald.
5. **Dates of Next Meetings:** confirmed as 2/6 (via Zoom), 25/8, 6/10, 1/12 and (after AGM) 26/1/2021.
6. **NEMT Management**
 - 6.1. *Council Membership and Charity Trustees:* list (attached to 3 March minutes) approved.
 - 6.2. *Membership and Subscriptions:* Catherine's report (sent by email) was noted, i.e. one new (couple) membership. Catherine to send out subscription reminders as usual. The issue of what NEMT postal address should be used, and where, was discussed. It was decided that such an address was not needed in *Mountain Views*, and that Dave's home address could be used (instead of 20 Norfolk Road) for incoming mail such as ScotWays newsletters; Dave to contact Maureen as necessary.
 - 6.3. *Finance:* Alison reported that the bank account on 21 April stood at £10490, after quarterly royalty receipts of £28.80, and significant lecture expenses payments. She and/or Catherine would continue to bank cheques as received.
 - 6.4. *Website:* It was decided to upload the forthcoming issue of *Mountain Views* as soon as the printed version became available.
 - 6.5. *Mountain Views:* The Spring 2020 issue was reported to be at the printers; Dave to chase up production, for Catherine to distribute as usual. Dave had not as yet done anything about the Autumn 2020 issue, but would bring proposals to the next Council meeting.
 - 6.6. *Lectures:* Debbie's email was noted. It was agreed that virtual lecture participation could be arranged via Eventbrite and Zoom (or similar). For autumn 2020, the following three proposals were approved (for Debbie to arrange as and when convenient/possible): Dougie Baird (OATS); David Hetherington (wild cats); Ruth Mitchell (tree colonisation). Dave offered to make the current cheap microphone available for inspection, but it was agreed that a better version was preferable (if desirable); Dave and Donald to seek and send out recommendation(s) as to a suitable model. It was agreed to continue use of the Sportsman's Club as a venue, once actual meetings became feasible. Dave to check with the Club on cancellations, payments, etc. (including those for Council meeting bookings).

7. Consultations:

- 7.1. *HIE Consultants Cairngorm Mountain Masterplan*: It was reported that the consultants were working with HIE as to how the public would be involved.
- 7.2. *Funicular Repair*: George had reported by email that the planning application had been called in by the Park. He had objected, on NEMT's behalf, on the basis that repair should only be considered in the context of a master plan which considers options for the mountain with, and without, the funicular. He also emphasised that, if approved, work must be carried out to the highest standards, and disturbed ground fully restored. A further application had been submitted to Highland Council for additional tube slides in the base station car park, and George had objected, again on the basis of the lack of a master plan. The main concern he raised was that of the colour which he argued must blend in with the immediate locale so as not to stand out when viewed from a distance. This application had noted that further applications for developments such as car park barriers and two new tracks are imminent.
- 7.3. *Trees*: A short discussion took place on Ken's paper; it was agreed that the Trust membership should be consulted on the subject, but only after further information had been gathered, one or more lectures on the topic had been heard, and focussed questions had been identified. Dave to draft information needs (e.g. current planting plans) for the next Council meeting.
- 7.4. *Permitted Development Rights*: George had reported by email (see report) that he had submitted comments on track aspects of digital communications infrastructure.
- 7.5. *National Planning Framework*: George had reported by email (see report) that he had submitted comments on issues relating to Wild Land Areas and other areas of outstanding ecological and landscape value.

8. Threats to Wild Land

- 8.1. *Cairngorm Mountain*: nothing more had been heard, though it is thought that HIE are proceeding with its case for repairing the funicular.
- 8.2. *Hill and Hydro Tracks*: George had reported that:
 - i. Prior Notification system consultation: the SG launch was still awaited.
 - ii. Glen Clova Hotel Track (upper): the reporter had rejected the appeal, and so the track must be removed within a year.
 - iii. Glen Clova Hotel Track (lower): the hotel had been asked to submit a retrospective planning application; George had lodged objections relating to the poor quality of the work.
 - iv. Lower Glens Prosen/Clova ridge track: in default of a wide-ranging meeting with LINK and Angus Council, George had written with areas of concern, and asked for comments.
 - v. Pitmain Estate (Monadhliaths): George had lodged an objection, as a test case, to the creation of a new track along the lines of an "informal" track created by regular vehicle use, and had asked to speak at a (now virtual) meeting of the planning committee.
- 8.3. *Wind Farms*: nothing to report.

9. **AOCB**: Donald reported that NEMT had been invited to support a children's/young persons' campaign on sustainability; he would circulate details for Council comment.

In closing the meeting, it was generally agreed that the Zoom format had worked well.

Ken Thomson, 3 June 2020