

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST
SCIO Scottish Charity no. SC 008783

Approved Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 25 August 2020
held via Zoom

Present: George Allan*, Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie), Debbie Fielding** (Cairngorm Club), Morna Harper** (Aberdeen Mountaineering Club), Brian Heaton*, Catherine Lacy-Roberts** (Culter HWC), Alison Mitchell** (Ramblers Scotland), Carlos Oldani, Donald Thomas*, Ken Thomson*, Dave Windle*

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

1. **Apologies:** Roger Owen**
2. **Declaration of conflicts of interest:** None.
3. **Minutes of Council Meeting 2 June 2020:** The draft version was approved.
4. **Matters Arising from above Minutes other than as below:** Re Minute 9.2 (NTS redundancies), Dave reported that he had written in June to the NTS CEO, Mar Lodge Estate and MSPs. It was noted that more recently the Scottish Government had approved a conditional (on efficiencies?) grant to NTS, but that staff redundancies of some 60% were still expected. Dave felt that in future such letters should target influential (non-SNP?) MSPs.
5. **Dates of Next Meetings** (via Zoom until further notice): 6/10, 1/12 and 26/1/2021.
6. **NEMT Management**
 - 6.1. *Membership and Subscriptions:* Cath reported that Aberdeen HWC had paid its annual membership fee, but that the Alford and Ellon clubs had not. It was reported that Jean Robinson(*) had resigned as a NEMT trustee, though remaining as a NEMT member.
 - 6.2. *Finance:* Alison reported that on 25/8/20 the bank account stood at £10,339, after £180 annual fee paid to Scottish Environment Link, and £25 received as membership renewal from Ramblers Scotland plus others via BACS. A Gift Aid claim had recently been made, with payment expected with 5 weeks. George requested approval for payment of a £25 Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations invoice; this was *granted*; details to Alison.
 - 6.3. *Website:* Donald reported no changes; NEMT responses to CNPA to be posted.
 - 6.4. *Membership Leaflet:* George noted this was usually revised each year, aided by Sandy McIntosh. With no physical meetings likely in the foreseeable future, it was *agreed not* to issue a 2020/21 leaflet, but new pictures would still be welcome, e.g. for the website.
 - 6.5. *NEMT Newsletter:* Dave and Cath were thanked for the appearance of this on 15 August.
 - 6.6. *Mountain Views:* A final draft currently with Dave, but no major revisions expected, so it should go to the printers this week, and thence to members in about 10 days' time. Cath commented that her main problem as Editor was formatting photos in Word.
 - 6.7. *Lectures:* Debbie reported that she had arranged three Zoom lectures for the rest of 2020:
 - 7 October: David Hetherington, "The reintroduction of the lynx in Scotland"
 - 4 November: Alison Hester & Ruth Mitchell, "Woodland expansion in Scotland"
 - 9 December: Dougie Baird, "The work of OATS in the North East/Cairngorms".The first speaker had requested payment of £125: given that there would be no other lecture expenditure (though also no entrance charges, at least for this season), this was *approved* (Debbie/Alison to arrange) After discussion, it was *agreed* that:
 - Publicity would be via a short *MV* entry, Facebook, and advance emails, but no flyer
 - Bookings would be via Eventbrite, as arranged by Donald
 - Lectures would be "live" (not recorded), with Q&A sessions held as well as possible.

Debbie agreed to consider 2021 topics/speakers in time for the next Council meeting.

Donald agreed to circulate details of a 15 Sept. OSCR “Meet the Regulator” webinar: <https://www.oscr.org.uk/news/meet-the-charity-regulator-webinar-15-september-2020/>.

7. **NEMT Policies:** Dave referred to his draft Wind Farms paper. Comments were offered. It was *agreed* that Dave could finalise this after comments emailed to him by the end of the week.

8. Consultations:

8.1. *CNPA non-statutory LDP guidance:* Dave had submitted a NEMT response.

8.2. *SLC Regional Land Use Partnerships:* Ken reported similarly.

9. Threats to Wild Land: George reported as follows:

9.1. *Cairngorm Mountain:* The campaign was developing on various fronts, i.e.

- Obtaining the date of HIE’s case to SG for repair of the funicular. After HIE CEO refusal to reveal this, he had complained to the Information Ombudsman but this might take a year to resolve. Two Speyside organisations were approaching local MSPs and the SP.
- Whether the signatory “Vision” organisations should in future work together or separately.
- Questions to be drafted by Nick Kempe for the SP Committee due to consider the Auditor-General’s June report on past funicular finances.
- It was planned to go public early in September with press releases urging SG to make public HIE’s case for the repair of the funicular.
- George had sent a detailed critique of the draft masterplan to the consultants, the CNPA and to HIE, and to Nick Kempe for Parkswatch a piece criticising the limited masterplan consultation exercise.

9.2. *Hill and Hydro Tracks:* The planning review had again been “kicked down the road”, due to the Planning Bill complexities and Covid-19. Two other reviews were related to tracks, i.e. those on digital infrastructure PDRs, and on peat restoration. SE LINK has commented on the latter, in advance of a formal consultation in due course. It had been reported that the CNPA track mapping exercise was now completed and would be published, but the public “problem” reporting mechanism was as yet unclear.

Two track issues in Angus had been reported: (i) 3 proposals in Glen Lethnot had been withdrawn but might be resubmitted, possibly as full applications; George had asked the reason(s) for withdrawal but was not hopeful of an answer; (ii) a “very bad” track in Glen Beanie (W of lower Glen Isla); LINK is pursuing this.

9.3. *Wind Farms:* Brian H. reported no new applications, but expected to receive shortly a “huge” additional information report from the Glen Dye developers. The scale of the proposal had become clearer, e.g. 1457 hectares, 31 km of track, 3 masts and 4 quarries.

9.4. *Mountain Biking:* Dave referred to email correspondence (initiated by Arthur Knight) that he had circulated on 13 June, and a possible NEMT policy in this area was discussed; this covered environmental damage, social interaction, high- and low-level biking, possible bye-laws, and enforcement. Dave agreed to initiate a draft policy document, for discussion at the next Council meeting, and to advise Mr Knight.

10. AOCB:

10.1. *Owain Bristow:* Alison reported the presumed death, after a fall at the Bullers of Buchan, of this regular NEMT lecture attender, and a leading figure in Aberdeen Young Walkers.

10.2. *More Woodland in the Cairngorms:* Ken reported that he had completed, at least *pro tem.*, a 20-page paper, which was available for any Council member interested.

Ken Thomson, 6 October 2020