

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

**Approved Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 1 December 2020**  
held via Zoom

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

**Present:** Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie), Debbie Fielding\*\* (Cairngorm Club), Morna Harper\*\* (Aberdeen MC), Alison Mitchell\*\* (Ramblers Scotland), Carlos Oldani, Roger Owen\*\* (Stonehaven M&HC), Donald Thomas\*, Ken Thomson\*, Dave Windle\*

1. **Apologies:** Alistair Beeley, Catherine Lacy-Roberts\*\* (Culter HWC),
2. **Declaration of conflicts of interest:** None.
3. **Minutes of Council Meeting 6 October 2020:** Draft version approved without change.
4. **Matters Arising from above Minutes other than as below:** None
5. **Dates of Next Council Meetings** (via Zoom until further notice): 26/1/2021 (after AGM) and (provisionally) 2/3, 20/4, 1/6, 24/8, 5/10, 30/11 and 25/1/2022.
6. **NEMT Management**
  - 6.1. AGM 26 January 2021: Responsibilities were agreed as follows:
    - i) Donald to finalise Annual Report (approved accounts expected by end of this week, to be signed by Malcolm Lamont and one Trustee);
    - ii) Cath to circulate all members with agenda, draft minutes of AGM January 2020, and Annual Report before Christmas;
    - iii) Donald to issue Zoom meeting invitation after Christmas;
    - iv) Dave to chair; Ken to take minutes.
  - 6.2. *Membership and Subscriptions:* Cath reported that the Alford and Ellon clubs had indicated their intention to pay the current year subscription, and that another Individual Member (Peter Fraser. Aberdeen) had been recruited.
  - 6.3. *Finance:* Alison reported that (i) the year end accounts were with the Independent Examiner; and that Expenditure from year end to date had been: D Hetherington Talk £125, Zoom account £62.39 + £14.39 = £76.78, MV printing and postage = £616.13.
  - 6.4. *Website:* Donald reported that the website had received some attention; he had also been active with Zoom, Eventbrite, etc.
  - 6.5. *Mountain Views:* Dave to produce a draft contents list for the January meeting.
  - 6.6. *Lectures:* Debbie reported that next week's lecture was on track (test Zoom session to be arranged) although she had had little contact with the speaker (Dougie Baird of OATS). With no final title, she had not yet advertised, so pre-bookings were relatively few (21). However, she would advertise to clubs etc. Insertion of a notice into the P&J was suggested: Carlos to send Debbie details of how to do this. The next three lectures were arranged as: 13 January: Mike Reid, on snow cover and climate change; 10 February: Mark Aitken, on Nepal; 17 March: Tors Hamilton, on Cairngorms Connect (RSPB Abernethy having declined).

The two lectures to date were briefly discussed; while it was felt that these had gone well, some heavier "plugging" was agreed, i.e. of NEMT at the start, and of the next lecture at the end. Donald explained the recording arrangements for David Hetherington's talk, and Deb those (i.e. none) for the November talk. No recording of Dougie Baird's talk was

planned. It was agreed that Dave would announce the recording of any future talks, but that no NEMT archive of talks was planned.

There was also a short discussion of charging for talks: it was agreed that the Trust could afford the cost of £15/month for 6-7 months per year, and that charging (and even donations) would involve more administration while possibly discouraging attendance.

## **7. NEMT Policies**

7.1. *Mountain Biking*: Dave reported that he would update his paper before Christmas, in time for it to be discussed at the January meeting.

7.2. *Trees*: It was agreed that Ken's paper (circulated shortly before the meeting) was "comprehensive", and that: (i) Ken would draft a 2-3pp Mountain Views article summarising its "information" (facts, arguments, etc.); and (ii) members would be asked for any comments before any NEMT "position" or "policy" was considered. It was noted that the February lecture on Cairngorm Connect would cover highly relevant ground.

**8. Consultations**: It was reported that George had submitted a statement of NEMT's views on PDR extension for tracks and peatland work to LINK (where views were reported as diverse), mainly (i) tracks "left behind", and (ii) PDR to apply only to NatureScot peatland proposals.

**9. Threats to Wild Land**: George's report was noted, with discussion as follows:

9.1. *Cairngorm Mountain*: Recent SG/HIE developments were briefly discussed; it was agreed that NEMT representations were unlikely to achieve much at this stage, since planning permission was likely to be granted for an area "already trashed". It was also agreed that George could not be easily replaced, and that therefore NEMT would have to withdraw from most monitoring and representational work. However, Council would seek to act if a "red line" was encountered, e.g. opening up the closed system, or unacceptable environmental damage. The item would be kept on future agendas.

9.2. *Hill and Hydro Tracks*: Dave reported that the CNPA's Guide on ATV usage was being discussed at the Advisory Group level, and would eventually be issued.

9.3. *Wind Farms*: Nothing reported.

## **10. AOCB:**

10.1. *ACVO AGM*: Alison to attend, on 9 December 2020.

10.2. *Cairngorm Campaign*: The Campaign's AGM letter, advising of the charity's likely demise unless new Board members could be recruited, was reported, to general disappointment. However, given NEMT's inability to maintain constant watch over Cairngorm Mountain (see 9.1 above), it was felt that the Trust – despite its very similar interests though extending beyond the Park which is the Campaign's main focus - could do little to help or advise, except perhaps to remain alert to Speyside developments in general. [Note by Minutes Secretary: according to the OSCR website, the Campaign may have assets of some £38,000; Campaign members may like to participate in the AGM on 16 December, in order to engage in discussing the future distribution of this sum.]

Ken Thomson, 27 January 2021