

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST
SCIO Scottish Charity no. SC 008783

Approved Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 24 August 2021
held via Zoom

Present: Brian Cornock, Jackie Cumberbirch**, Debbie Fielding**, Morna Harper**, Brian Heaton*, Catherine Lacy**, Alison Mitchell**, Donald Thomas*, Ken Thomson*, Dave Windle* (Chair) [* Charity Trustee as Individual Member; ** Charity Trustee as Organisational Representative]

Jackie Cumberbirch was welcomed at her first meeting representing the Bailies of Bennachie.

- 1. Apologies:** Alistair Beeley
- 2. Declaration of conflicts of interest:** None.
- 3. Minutes of Council Meeting 1 June 2021:** the circulated draft was approved without change.
- 4. Matters Arising, other than as below:** none.

5. NEMT Management

- 5.1. *Membership and Subscriptions:* Cath reported that she was awaiting payment from an individual member and from a club.
- 5.2. *Finance:* Alison reported that the bank balance stood at £10,768, after receipts of £45 and £250 from the Stocket and Cairngorm clubs respectively. Payment of £170 had been made to Link as NEMT's annual fee. No action had yet been taken as regards HMRC Gift Aid: it was agreed that she and Donald would meet to progress this as soon as possible, using the existing membership list.
- 5.3. *Website:* Donald reported "a quiet summer", with only NEMT consultation responses and policy uploads. The most recent *Mountain Views* was ready to go live, a reversion to normal practice.
- 5.4. *Mountain Views:* Cath reported that she had assembled all the material, and would aim for production and then publication by end-September.
- 5.5. *Lectures:* Debbie reported the following events, all on Thursdays, and by Zoom in 2021:
October 14: Grant Farquhar, on a climbing topic: title and summary awaited
November 18: Will Clark, on mountain biking: ditto; short talk plus discussion
December 9: Charles Dundas, on the Borders Forest Trust
January 13 or 20, Gill Mathews, on Bennachie; general or specific (e.g. a dig)
February 10 or 17, Roger Owen, on Albania trip
March 10 or 17, a speaker on skiing, e.g. an Alpine tour: two possible contacts supplied.
A decision on physical/"blended" delivery in 2022, including charging/donating arrangements, would be made at Council after the October talk (see 5.7 below). Donald to explore technical requirements for blended delivery, possibly by sharing equipment. He would also extend the Zoom subscription month by month. A possible 2022/23 speaker on mountain recycling in Nepal was suggested.
- 5.6. *Bailies of Bennachie Representation:* see start of Minutes above.
- 5.7. *Dates of Next Council Meetings* (via Zoom until further notice): 19/10, 30/11 and 25/1/2022; October date changed (from 5/10) to avoid clash with "Upland Futures" event at Perth, and to gather venue/media feedback after 14 October talk.

6. NEMT Policies

- 6.1. *Trees*: Dave asked for final comments on his draft consultation questionnaire on Forestry; none were forthcoming. He would therefore finalise, and arrange distribution to all members.

7. Consultations:

- 7.1. *ESS complaint*: No response re Invercauld from ESS; no further NEMT action.
- 7.2. *Aberdeenshire Access Officer Response*: Donald to follow up and report back.
- 7.3. *CNPA Partnership Plan*: When this became formal in September, DW to repeat previous NEMT Working Group practice, in a two-stage process.
- 7.4. *RSPB Strathnethy/Loch Avon Planting*: Dave reported that he had written – sceptically – to RSPB, and would circulate this to Council members [done 25/8]. Discussion focussed on the “need” for deer management tracks, as at Mar Lodge and Glen Feshie.

8. Threats to Wild Land:

- 8.1. *Corrievarkie Pumped Storage*: Dave suggested that NEMT’s attitude should be to accept the scheme in principle, but to argue for strict planning conditions; this was agreed. Donald raised the issues of the “tidal” effect on Loch Ericht, the use of overhead power lines, and tracks (6km).
- 8.2. *Dalwhinnie Rail Crossing*: Dave reported that he had written – supportively – to Mountaineering Scotland.
- 8.3. *Tracks*: Council noted George’s report, on (i) Morrone mast track (planning approval, with “satisfactory” conditions), (ii) new mast in Glen Lethnot (NEMT has objected, since in wild land area, and alternatives exist), (iii) “old” Letterewe ATV track, and (iv) increasing numbers of peat restoration applications (GA has commented on some).
- 8.4. *Cairngorm Mountain*: Dave reported that there had been no Council member responses to his 2 June email advising that the Masterplan was now available for comment. Hence, there will be no NEMT comments to HIE on this document.
- 8.5. *Wind Farms*: Brian reported no new applications, but that JMT had objected to wind farm extension to Glen Cassley, near Lairg. It was decided that NEMT need not do likewise.

9. AOCB:

- 9.1. *Allt na Reigh Cottage, Glencoe*: No NEMT action needed at this time.

Ken Thomson, 20 October 2021