

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST
SCIO Scottish Charity no. SC 008783

Approved Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 1 March 2022
held via Zoom

Present: Hamish Clunas, Mike Duguid, Debbie Fielding**, Morna Harper**, Catherine Lacy-Roberts (Secretary), Alison Mitchell** (Treasurer), Roger Owen**, Donald Thomas*, Ken Thomson*, Dave Windle* (Chair) [* Charity Trustee as Individual Member; ** Charity Trustee as Organisational Representative; see Item 5.7 below]

1. **Apologies:** none received.
2. **Declaration of conflicts of interest:** none.
3. **Minutes of Council Meeting 25 January 2022:** the pre-circulated draft was approved.
4. **Other Matters Arising, other than as below:** Donald requested a signed copy of the Annual Report, for OSCR: Cath to supply.

5. NEMT Management

- 5.1. *Membership and Subscriptions:* Cath thanked Alison for a list of members paying by standing order, and asked Council for contact details for a few outstanding names. She had emailed clubs and cheque-payers for their subscriptions. After discussion, it was agreed not to draft and use a separate gift aid form, but that Alison would send Cath the names of those for which she did not have 4-year retrospective gift aid signatures, so that these could be contacted. In future, completed application forms (incl. gift aid signatures) would be kept by Alison for HMRC records, with a copy sent to Cath.
- 5.2. *Finance:* Alison reported that the bank balance stood at £12,328, after credits of £20.50 and £14.64 as EventBrite commissions and two new membership subscriptions, and monthly Zoom subscription payment.
- 5.3. *Website:* Donald reported that he had corrected some links. Roger reported that he had set up a Facebook group with himself and Donald as members. It was decided to trial this amongst Council members a few months, and then to extend an invitation to all individual NEMT members: Roger to initiate. Progress would depend on regular updates, e.g. hill “news” (preferably with photos) and/or discussion of NEMT “issues”.
- 5.4. *Mountain Views:* Dave reported that the spring 2022 issue was on track for delivery to Cath by 15 March, and onward transmission to the printers. Donald asked that Cath send him a copy of the front page and inside text for checking.
- 5.5. *Lectures:* Deb reported that the February talk had gone well, and that Roger was due to give the 10 March talk, with Donald to arrange a trial run beforehand. At Dave’s request, Ken agreed to introduce both the March talk [request later withdrawn] and the 21 April talk. It was agreed that the February speaker need not be offered or sent a thankyou gift.
- 5.6. *Discounts:* Cath reported that she had not yet acted on this.
- 5.7. *Council Membership:* Hamish Clunas and Mike Duguid were invited to serve as NEMT Trustees, the former as the Organisational Representative of the Aberdeen Hillwalking Club, and the latter as an Individual Member. Both accepted. Ken reported that he had asked the Stocket HWC to send an Organisational Representative to Council meetings but had not yet received a response.
- 5.8. *Dates of Next Council Meetings:* These were agreed as: 19/4, 31/5, 23/8, 4/10, 29/11 and 24/1/2023

6. NEMT Policies

- 6.1. *Biking*: Roger reported that he had not yet found a contact for Trailforks, who in any case acted only as a platform for local biking groups. Mike showed several Strava heatmaps showing bikers and others using the Ben Macdhui-Cairngorm and Ben a' Bhuid-Ben Avon areas over the last two years. Dave agreed to write the Cairngorms National Park Authority, with one or more of these maps, about preventing or discouraging biking on fragile terrain such as the Cairngorm plateaux.

7. Consultations:

- 7.1. *Wild Land Areas in National Planning Framework 4*: Dave agreed to circulate a draft NEMT response to the public consultation, along lines suggested by Mountaineering Scotland and possibly others such as JMT. It was agreed that all Council members should do likewise, as individuals, though in their own words.

8. Threats to Wild Land:

- 8.1. *Bennachie Bench*: Dave reported that his letter to the Pittodrie estate, the Bailies, and the Aberdeenshire Ranger Service had resulted in “Kafkaesque” responses, with no clear acceptance of land ownership or responsibility. It was agreed that no further action need be taken at this time, although erosion at the bench site over the next year or so should be monitored. Roger agreed to approach his ranger contacts informally.
- 8.2. *Dalwhinnie Rail Crossing*: No further news.
- 8.3. *Hill and Hydro Tracks*: Ken reported that George had reported that the application for the mast on top of Càrn an Fhreicheadain in the Monadhliaths (not within the Park's boundary but the Park was consulted) had been withdrawn, in view of a number of strong objections, including NEMT's.
- 8.4. *Cairngorm Mountain*: Dave referred to the current application for a bike trail in Coire Cas, and reported that he and George Allan had written to CNPA arguing against biking “creeping up the hill”, and requesting more tree-planting. Some discussion took place on “bike lifting” uphill via the funicular. Dave agreed to circulate the letter.
- 8.5. *Wind Farms*: It was reported that official reporters had been appointed to the public inquiry on the Glen Dye proposal, but that NEMT had not asked to make new representations at the inquiry itself. Dave agreed to investigate whether RSPB, JMT or others were similarly placed, and/or would welcome NEMT support.

9. AOCB:

- 9.1. *Aberdeenshire Ranger Service Charges*: Roger reported that these charges were only being considered for group visits by cruise-ship passengers etc., not for “normal” groups.
- 9.2. *Path Mapping*: Hamish drew attention to the current Ramblers Scotland exercise, and Mike to OpenStreet mapping.

Ken Thomson, 19 March 2022