

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST
SCIO Scottish Charity no. SC 008783

Approved Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 19 April 2022
held via Zoom

Present: Alistair Beeley, Mike Duguid, Debbie Fielding**, Brian Heaton, Alan Henderson (Bailies of Bennachie), Catherine Lacy-Roberts (Secretary), Alison Mitchell** (Treasurer), Roger Owen**, Donald Thomas*, Ken Thomson*, Dave Windle* (Chair) [Charity Trustee as *Individual Member; as **Organisational Representative]

1. Apologies: Hamish Clunas, Morna Harper**

2. Declaration of conflicts of interest: none.

3. Minutes of Council Meeting 1 March 2022: the pre-circulated draft was approved. Discussion of “matters arising” then took place, as minuted below[¶], except for:

3.1. *Bennachie Bench*: no further progress, except repeated emails; item to be removed from future Council agendas.

4. Other Matters Arising, other than as below: None

5. NEMT Management

5.1. *Membership and Subscriptions*: Alison reported that under half of the NEMT organisational members had renewed membership, but more were expected. Dave suggested chasing these up after 31 May if nothing more had been heard by then. The recent death of John Hughes was mentioned: Cath to chase up details (e.g. photo, past MVs) for a piece in the next issue of Mountain Views. There had been no further action on Gift Aid[¶].

5.2. *Finance*: Alison reported that the bank balance stood at £12,815, after several Membership renewals (more expected from Cath) and a few small credits and debits. Three clubs had reported “cheques in post”.

5.3. *Website (incl. Facebook)*: Due to some public/private queries, Roger had not initiated a NEMT Facebook group[¶], but would do so immediately after the meeting, for Council members to join. Donald said that he had nothing to report on the website.

5.4. *Mountain Views*: Cath reported that the Spring 2022 issue had been at the printers (though without Donald checking the front pages) for two weeks; she would chase them.

5.5. *Lectures*: Deb reported that the membership had been circulated re the 21 April talk. Dave reported that he had renewed the Sportsman’s Club membership for himself, Donald and Cath. Donald asked if SWT were likely to be interested in using the Club; Roger replied not, since the University were making its facilities available again.

5.6. *Discounts*: Cath reported that she had not yet acted on this[¶].

5.7. *Council Membership*: Ken reported that he had again emailed BOOTS and the Sockets, but without response. Cath agreed to chase Trust membership and Council representation.

5.8. *Dates of Next Council Meetings*: These were agreed as: 31/5, 23/8, 4/10, 29/11 and 24/1/2023

6. NEMT Policies

6.1. *Biking*: Dave reported that he had not yet written to CNPA about Strava maps etc. [¶], but would do so ASAP. Roger reported that Trailforks (itself; not simply an Aberdeen group) had responded to the Capercaillie project[¶].

7. Consultations:

7.1. *Wild Land Areas in National Planning Framework 4*: Dave had circulated draft NEMT comments[¶], and hoped that Council members had also submitted comments.

8. Threats to Wild Land:

8.1. *Bennachie Bench*: Roger reported that his emails[¶] were being passed on (and this recurred during the meeting). Alan noted that the Bailies did not own the land. It was agreed that “awareness” had been raised, but to drop this item from future Council agendas.

8.2. *Dalwhinnie Rail Crossing*: No further news, but item to be left on the agenda.

8.3. *Hill and Hydro Tracks*: George’s paper was noted. In view of the comment on the Beanie track being “too wide”, Roger asked if there was an official standard. Dave agreed to check this with NatureScot and CNPA. It was noted that the Glen Clova housing rejection might lead to a reapplication for more clustered units.

8.4. *Cairngorm Mountain*: Dave had circulated the letter that he and George Allan had written to CNPA arguing against biking “creeping up the hill” etc.[¶]

8.5. *Wind Farms*: Dave reported that he had visited a member of the Feughside Community Council (now the active body rather than the Fettercairn CC) re the Glen Dye proposals, and thus transferred NEMT views for use at the public inquiry[¶]. Brian noted that CNPA had objected to the Tomnaclach application some 10 miles NW of Grantown-on-Spey, due to the need for red lights on 5 of the 17 turbines being over 150m in height. Discussion took place on this in the light of “wildness” and “dark skies”. Although this site was outside the Trust’s usual area of interest, it was agreed to object, due to the likely future importance of ever-higher turbines as replacements took place. Brian to act.

9. AOCB:

9.1. *Ellon HWC*: Dave reported a successful talk, and likely NEMT subscription payment.

9.2. *Deer Fencing*: Mike asked if this needed planning permission; it was thought not, though such fencing would normally be a planting grant condition. However, monitoring and enforcement (e.g. of stiles) was thought unlikely.

9.3. *Clachnaben Path*: Roger reported two fallen trees: Donald said that he was aware of these, and thought that the estate would probably remove them, with the path surface to be reinstated afterwards.

9.4. *Mountain Hares*: Dave reported that the final report was due to be published, but that more funding etc. was expected. He would re-advertise this when appropriate.

Ken Thomson, 8 June 2022