

NORTH EAST MOUNTAIN TRUST

DRAFT Minutes of Council Meeting held 7.30 pm Tuesday 7 March 2017

at the Aberdeen Grammar FP Club Centre, Queens Gate, Aberdeen

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

Present: Peter Aikman (MBA), James Brownhill (Culter HWC, replacing Della Russell), Hamish Clunas (Aberdeen HWC), Brian Cornock (Bailies of Bennachie), Brian Heaton, Catherine Lacy** (Secretary and Cults HWC), Carlos Oldani (Stockets HWC), Jean Robinson** (Cairngorm Club), Maureen Stuchbury, Donald Thomas, Ken Thomson* (Minutes Secretary), Dave Windle* (Chair)

- 1. Apologies:** George Allan*, Alistair Beeley (Stonehaven M&HWC), Paul Jackson (Aberdeen MC), Alison Mitchell** (Ramblers Scotland).
- 2. Declaration of conflicts of interest:** none declared
- 3. Minutes of Council Meeting 17 January 2017:** the draft minutes were approved.
- 4. Matters Arising from above Minutes:** none, other than as below.

5. NEMT Management

- 5.1. Website design and responsibilities:** Changes/insertions to be notified to Donald
- 5.2. Work Plan 2017-18:** After various confirmatory comments, the draft was agreed, with Ken to finalise with numbering rather than bullet points, for easier reference.
- 5.3. SCIO status:** George (via Dave) reported that the new bank account had been opened, with £120 compensation from RBS. Requests to transfer standing orders would be made along with the next issue of *Mountain Views*, with a few SOs due in May/June, but most not until 1 January 2018. Ken again recommended not closing the old bank account until a full transfer of SOs etc. could be confirmed. A note on the change of account would go out with *Mountain Views* in April/May, and the new details would be changed (by whom?) on Trust paperwork etc.
- 5.4. AGS FPCC Room Payments:** In the absence of the Treasurer, no year-round arrangements were discussed. Catherine and Ken would request reimbursement for the January and March charges to the Treasurer.

6. Consultations

- 6.1 SNH Guidance on Local Landscape Areas:** no NEMT submission had been made.
- 6.2 SNH Technical Guidance on Wild Land Assessment:** a group chaired by George was preparing a submission, and would meet on 14 March.
- 6.3 Onshore Wind Farm Policy:** Dave had suggested that, in view of a lack of a NEMT policy on wind energy in general, no NEMT response was needed, but Roger Owen had expressed “doubts” over the proper consideration of peatlands. After some discussion of this aspect (e.g. peatland “protection” and “restoration”), Dave agreed to submit a Trust response in this area, after circulating a draft for comment. Jean suggested a NEMT lecture on peat next winter, possibly by Clifton Bain.
- 6.4 Planning Policy Review:** George (by note) reported that he had sent comments (summary on file with minutes) to LINK for inclusion in their submission, and also directly to the Scottish Government; these covered ‘communities of interest’, hill tracks, and CNPA planning powers.

7. Threats to Wild Land

- 7.1 Glendye Wind Farm:** George reported (by note) that no planning application had yet been made. James reported that Coriolis was now expected to apply in May or June, and for about 26 (rather than 38) turbines. A local group was being formed, with a title such as “Save Clachnaben”. One local Community Council was believed to be somewhat pro-windfarm, perhaps motivated by the £5K/MW payment, i.e. a potential £500K to be shared between 2 or 3 Councils. Reference was made to Aberdeenshire

Council windfarm plans and policies, one to be approved on 8 March: based on these, the proposal should be rejected, but a public inquiry was almost inevitable. An article would be included in *Mountain Views*.

7.2 *Windfarms in Wild Land Areas*: discussion covered various of these, e.g. Altnaharra (WLA5), Caplich (Peter reported that bothy funding had been offered, though not to the MBA), and Culachy (PLI to start April 2017?), Tomchrasky in Glen Moriston (scoping application). A summary of these would appear in *Mountain Views*.

8. Hill Tracks:

8.1 *Cairngorm*: Dave reported that he and George had attended the CNPA Planning meeting at Boat of Garten, when both Natural Retreats (NR) and the two objectors were given strict time limits. Several Board members had spoken strongly, and so, although retrospective approval for NR's tracks had been awarded, he considered the meeting a "success" in terms of warning NR, and strengthening the hand of CNPA Officers. Ken reported that NR had replied to the pre-Christmas Cairngorm Club letter, and had offered a site visit which would be taken up in summer. Meanwhile, a local Club member had offered to monitor the area. A LINK group had met, usefully, with CNPA's Murray Ferguson and Gavin Miles.

8.2 *Donation to LINK Hill Tracks Group*: It was agreed to make a donation of £200 towards the employment of a part-time worker. **Alison** to effect??

9. **NE Mountain Biking Centre**: A scoping study was reported as currently underway. Some welcomed the Centre idea as a means of providing and concentrating bike activity, although greater bike ownership and enthusiasm might lead to wider use elsewhere. No action other than monitoring seemed needed at the current stage.

10. *Mountain Views*: George's contribution was "ready to go", and that publication by mid-April should hold. Catherine strongly advised against announcing an e-version at the same time as the bank changes, and this was accepted, with the matter to be re-considered for September. **Maureen** would continue with shop distribution.

11. **Lectures**: **Dave** undertook to look into the microphone issue, and to coordinate door staffing.

Dave reported that next season was "in reasonable shape", e.g. with the gamekeeper from the recent mountain hares talk, David Frew of Mar Lodge, and two other speakers. A "The Mountains and The People" project contribution was suggested.

Carlos and George would hold a planning meeting in April/May.

Maureen reported that she had received a request that at the March lecture, funding for locator beacons be requested. After discussion, it was agreed that this would be inappropriate, might be difficult to manage, and would create an unwelcome precedent. Instead, a "snippet" in *Mountain Views* would be offered (**Dave**).

12. AOCB:

12.1 *Geldie Bothy*: Peter reported that this (with toilet) was in hand for 2017 or 2018, with the hope that it would take the pressure off Corroul.

12.2 *Bennachie*: Jean reported that a contractor had been appointed to evaluate 4 route options over 2 years. An MSP had joined the Save Bennachie campaign, still self-funding. The pylon threat had been removed by National Grid, but only for a year.

12.3 *Glen Dee Fencing*: Ken reported that a 1 km stretch above the Chest of Dee had been enclosed by riparian fencing.

13. **Dates of Next Meeting**: Tuesday 18 April (as re-arranged subsequent to meeting)

Ken Thomson, March 2017