



IRISH DEER
MANAGEMENT FORUM

**Tenth Meeting
Draft MINUTES**

**1 PM Wednesday, October 18th, 2017
Venue: Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2**

Chris Fox	Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association ICMSA	Farming
Damien Hannigan	Wild Deer Association of Ireland	Hunting
John Casey	Teagasc	Research/Technical
Paddy Purser	Pro Silva Ireland/SIF/AIFC	Forestry
Jim Walsh	Individual	Research/Technical
Declan O'Neill	Wicklow Deer Management Partnership	Deer Management Group
Michael Fenlon	National Association of Regional Game Councils	Hunting
Ferdia Marnell	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	Government Department
Gerry Leckey	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	Government Department
Liam Nolan	Deer Alliance	Training
Sean Eustace	Wicklow Forest Owners Group	Ministerial Appointment

1. Chairs business

Change of Representatives

The chair welcomed the members presented and noted changes to representation as follows:

- Coillte Teoranta will now be represented by Mr. Michael Power.
- Fidelma Farrell from DAFM has been reassigned to a new role within DAFM and will be replaced by Mr. John O'Neill.
- Teagasc will attend meetings as required to coordinate progress. Mr. John Casey will be the representative.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from the following Members:

Tim Burkitt, Co –opted Technical/Research

John O'Neill, DAFM

Seamus Dunne, DAFM

Pat Hennessy, IFA

John Fenton, Commercial Hunting

Wesley Atkinson, NPWS

James O'Keeffe, DAFM

3. Minutes of the 9th Meeting (reconvened) were presented to members and adopted without amendment.



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4. Matters arising –

4.1 Reworded statement

Declan O Neill again raised the issue of wording in a previous IDMF statement placed on the Forum's website.

The Chair Identified that the statement had been factual initially, had been modified considerable based on feedback from the IDMF membership, and lastly the word 'spring' prior to grazing had been removed at the WDMP representative's request.

Not all comments recommended by members had been included in the interests of issuing a statement that would be agreed by all as factual.

The document had now been published on the IDMF website for over 1 year, and the Chair indicated that she not propose to change it at this stage.

5. Correspondence

The Chair had corresponded with Ministers to encourage the implementation of recommendations by the Forum.

The following significant correspondence had been sent and received:

- Letter From J Annett, IDMF Chair to Minister Heather Humphries – about introducing E Licencing August 22nd 2017
- Letter from Deer Data/research Group to IDMF - 5th September – This took the form of a complaint. Since criticism was levelled at both the Forum and the Government Departments, the Chair had asked for permission to forward this letter to the Ministers and Tim Burkitt had agreed to this.
- Letter from Minister of State Andrew Doyle - 11th September – Coillte/Teagasc Involvement
Letter From Minister for Arts Heritage and Gaeltacht Heather Humphries 12th September – Muntjac and Killarney National Park Deer Management

ACTION POINT – As not all of this correspondence had been sent to members it was agreed that the Secreatry should do so as soon as possible. It was further agreed that Correspondence would be circulated to members as received and as sent by the Chair on Behalf of the Forum.

A discussion followed regarding E- licencing. Gerry Leckey (DAHG) stated that funding will eventually become available for an E-licencing system, under normal government procurement procedures. In 2017 4,000 licences were issued by the start of the season, and by Mid October this number was 4,800.

Members stated that the issue was not with the issuing of licencing but with the collection of data. The example of the Slovenian Deer Licencing system was cited, and this system was not expensive to establish. The Finnish system was also cited, and has been in use for over 10 years and is similar to the Slovenian system and that other suitable examples exist.



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Members also stated that the feedback from hunters regarding 2017 licence issues was very positive and the Chair complimented NPWS on their work in streamlining the 2017 process and preparing a system. She also stated that IDMF should be involved in the scoping and evaluation process for a new system.

The Chair also stated that it would be helpful if the Members focussed on issues within the control of the Forum and joint initiatives between Forum members. Members needed to recognise that recommendations to Departments often need time to be accepted and implemented.

ACTION POINT – The Forum will request from DAHG/NPWS what is contained in the Departments proposals for E- Licencing

6. Reports from Working Groups

The Chair thanked the Working Groups for their efforts to date, and reports from groups followed.

A. Deer Conflicts Group

A brief report was given by the Deer conflicts group regarding its activities, findings and concluding advice on further areas of the country that may require a regional deer management partnership approach. The group had been asked to identify specifically whether the issues with deer and road traffic accidents and other issues that had reached the national press could be addressed through this mechanism. The group made its recommendation, which was that no area other than Wicklow currently merited a regional initiative though one should be supported if it emerged. A hard copy report was provided. This report outlines structures required to deal with emerging deer conflicts, it went beyond its brief to express the need for a single centralised national authority to coordinate deer management issues.

The Chair thanked Sean Eustace for his efforts in chairing the group which had produced several very useful outputs.

ACTION POINT – The Deer Conflicts group is to stand down, having completed its tasks successfully.

B. Communications and Best Practice Working Group

Liam Nolan reported that the Best Practice Guides will be available shortly.

The Deer Alliance Stalker Manual will shortly be also available as a free to use PDF document, and a link will be made available on the IDMF website.

Liam Nolan also presented a report on cull returns and licences issued that demonstrated an imbalance between male and female deer, demonstrating the work required to correct this through training and education of hunters and land managers.

Liam Nolan had at the request the chair, prepared a paper to guide a Communications Strategy for the Forum. This was taken under item 10



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C. TB in deer Group

There was no report from the TB in deer Group. A related report from Pat Meskill (DAFM) regarding the current Calary Deer Project was given on his behalf by the Secretary.

- Strain Typing. The bTB Strain typing process for samples taken from the initial Calary samples (130 deer) has begun. Results from this are expected at the end of October..
- Wicklow Calary 6 DED Project - The legal shooting season has commenced and shooting activities have been taking place on farms within the project area.
- 70 Head and Pluck samples have already been submitted to DAFM via the project Coordinator Mr. Joe Sinnott. The objective is to sample the first deer shot on each farm, in each of the 6 DED areas. 40 deer have been shot on farms so far.
- An Additional 30 deer have been killed and sampled on control areas managed by NPWS. These provide a scientific control to the project. The project Management team are happy with the rate of progress and level of coordination with regards to this sampling.
- It is the opinion of the project coordinator that shooting has taken place on some farms, and samples have not been submitted arising from this. The project team has requested that landowners comply with the project requirements and encourage hunters to submit the required samples.

D. Deer Data Group

Issues raised by the deer data group in their letter to the chair were discussed during the correspondence section of the meeting and no further report was made.

7. Forestry Technology Transfer Programme

Ciaran Nugent (Forest Service DAFM) outlined a forthcoming Deer Management training programme for the forest sector. (Copy attached)

It was suggested that the training measures should consist of two single events, separate in time. The training should be coordinated via the IDMF Best practice/ communications group.

8. Deer Awareness in Agriculture Programme

The Chair had asked Minister Doyle to include deer awareness in agriculture in Teagasc programmes in coordination with the Forum's other initiatives in deer management. This had



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been taken forward and the Chair and John Casey had met at the National Ploughing Championships to discuss content.

John Casey (Teagasc) further developed and outlined a proposed awareness programme for the Agriculture Sector. He outlined his previous experience in deer management in Co. Wicklow and an ongoing interest in professional deer management issues.

He proposed utilising the existing Teagasc Knowledge transfer groups to deliver deer management awareness training to farmers and groups suitable for this now exist in Cork, Kerry and Wicklow. The training consists of presentation ranging between 20 and 30 minutes.

A deer awareness module will be based on the Manor Kilbride Protocol, developed through the MKB Deer Management Group/IDMF deer conflict group.

A major element will be the normalising of deer impact assessment on farms, by farmer, to establish levels of burden and acceptability of these. A desired outcome is whereby a response can be made via normal farm mechanisms.

A discussion followed.

Members welcomed the inclusion of Teagasc in the Forum's work and stated that Teagasc will learn a lot from the landowners experience in this area. The agricultural discussion groups are a great place to start this. Common and scientific approaches need to be applied to grass measurement.

Members also offered support and assist Teagasc through their network of local Hunting clubs, Deer Management Groups and existing Forestry Knowledge Transfer Groups in farm forestry that can be used to explore issues. Overall there was strong support for Teagasc involvement in the deer management process and Mr Casey was thanked and asked to proceed.

ACTION POINT – John Casey to discuss programme with Forum Membership prior to Finalisation of programme and was invited to introduce the programme as outlined.

ACTION POINT – Teagasc Presentation to be circulated to the Forum.

9. Wicklow Deer Management Partnership Funding

This related to an application for funding by the Wicklow Deer Management Partnership, directly to the Department of Agriculture.

The chair stated that there was agreement in principle by the two Departments to provide funding to support expansion and ongoing management of the Wicklow Deer Management Group network. The funding will support a coordinator role and organisation of 4 new local



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level groups. The funding proposal was described by the Chair who had been consulted by the Departments. Whilst she had been supportive of the actions proposed she had expressed regret that this had not come through a coordinated funding proposal from the Forum as there were many aspects of members work that could benefit from funding. A written response by the chair is attached.

10. IDMF communications Strategy

A proposed communications strategy was tabled by the chair. This had been prepared by Liam Nolan on behalf of the Communications and Best Practice Working Group and further developed by the Chair.. This paper set out first principles and was intended to be fleshed out once the document was agreed.

It was agreed by members that there was a strong need for a communication strategy to support the work of the Forum. There is a duty to communicate with stakeholders, especially those not represented directly on the forum. It is important to rectify shortcomings in communication, to ensure common rather than disparate communications.

Members agreed with the majority of principles within the document but no agreement was reached on points 7 and 8 which principally addressed who should have authority to speak on behalf of the Forum without prior discussion with Members.

The majority of members expressed that the Chair should have the role of representing the Forum and that on occasions it would be appropriate to respond without recourse to consulting members. However it was agreed that the majority of representation would be on a planned basis where time would be available for prior circulation and agreement of material.

Suggested Action point – It was evident that, though there was wide agreement, not all members could mandate the entire communication framework as it stood. It was agreed to return to the document and to a wider programme at a later meeting.

11. AOB

Liam Nolan asked if there had been a clear cut statement by NPWS regarding the Mandatory Hunter Certification issue and recommendation regarding mandatory certification commencing on Jan 1st 2018 and introduced on a five year phased basis. Gerry Leckey stated that the policy was indeed in place to commence on first Jan

Action Point – Chair to clarify arrangements and report to the Forum.

Proposed Dates of the next meetings - Wednesday, 13th December, 2017
Wednesday, March 14th, 2018

Proposed workshop on Forum arrangements and forward programme February 2018