

Irish Deer Management Forum

Sixth Meeting MINUTES

2pm Tuesday, March 8th 2016
Venue: Knights Building, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2

Independent Chair: Ms. Judith A. Annett.

Attendance:

Sean Eustace	Wicklow Forest Owners Group	Forestry
John Fenton	Association of Game Shoot Operators (AGSO)	Hunting
Liam Nolan	Deer Alliance	Training
Jim Walsh	Individual	Research/Technical
Damien Hannigan	Wild Deer Association of Ireland	Hunting
Declan Little	Woodlands of Ireland	Conservation
Seamus Dunne	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Government Department
James O Keeffe	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Government Department
Fidelma Farrell	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Government Department
Wesley Atkinson	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	Government Department
Ferdia Marnell	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	Government Department
Barry Coad	Coillte Teoranta	Forestry

1. Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed Ms Fidelma Farrell, DAFM to the Forum.
A tour de Table of introductions followed.

2. Correspondence

Correspondence was received by the Chair outlining a meeting between NPWS and DAFM relating to a proposed cull of Deer in Wicklow. A two page report has been prepared suggesting cull activity in 6 DED's concerned with the earlier DAFM TB sample survey. This operation would require the use of a coordinator, as with the Ballinastoe Project, and would utilise local hunters.

It is understood that the proposal is at early stages.

James o Keeffe undertook to circulate a copy of the report to the Forum.

There is an expectaion from Landowners that the cull would happen during the legal season.

It was noted in discussion that the IDMF has not been involved directly with the development of this plan.

There was a request that any such measure would be repeated in West Wicklow, with subsequent TB sampling.

Action – The Chair will request an update on Progress from Technical Group members who met on the 22nd of October in Dublin via the TB subgroup. (These members were absent)

The issue of comments in the National Press by Farming representatives, disparaging the forum was also raised and it was stated that if there was a lack of confidence by the farming representatives in the Forum, then this needs to be queried.

Action – The Chair undertook to meet the Farming representatives again, to discuss their apparent concerns.

3. Apologies

Mr. Gerry Leckey, Department of Arts Heritage and Gaeltacht
Mr. Paddy Purser, Pro Silva Ireland/Society of Irish Foresters
Mr. Sean Doris, National Association of regional Game Councils
Mr. Pat Hennessy, Irish Farmers Association
Mr. Tom Shortt, Irish Farmers Association
Mr. Declan O Neill, Wicklow Deer Management Group
Mr. Chris Fox, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association
Dr. Tim Burkitt, Convenor, IDMF Deer Data Group

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were adopted.

It was requested that the Secretary would circulate minutes within two weeks of the meeting, subject to resource availability.

It was also requested that action points arising would be recorded in bold text.

5. Matters Arising

Mr. Liam Nolan raised the issue of mandatory certification of hunters and stated that this was a redline issue for several groups on the Forum, and the previous motions brought to the forum should be either adopted or rejected formally.

Work was progressing on the adaptation of best practice guides, and initial 8-9 guides were being examined. While the Deer Alliance was subsidising production costs on the new Best Practice Guides, an IDMF website is required to carry the guides and make them available. The Deer Alliance is not in a position to fund this website and funding for this must be defined.

Action – BOTH NPWS and DAFM have discussed funding and inputs of other bodies in Benefit in Kind will be deemed cross funding. A Letter of funding offer from DAFM/NPWS offering joint funding will permit Deer Alliance to act as a funding mechanism for the Website.

The website will be DEERFORUM.IE

Arising from the previous meeting a motion was forwarded regarding the recommendation for mandatory certification of hunters. The motion was re-read to the forum and a vote was taken.

Proposal for recommendation 1 was unanimously supported. Copy attached.

The Chair undertook to forward these recommendations to the Ministers.

The Deer Data Group raised the issue of a draft letter to the Ministers prepared by the group in relation to Deer Hunting Licences and associated issues. The Letter was Read to the Forum.

Action – The Letter will be sent to Ministers by the Forum on Behalf of the Data Group.

6. Reports from Working Groups

A) Communications and Best Practice working group

Issues relating to this group were dealt with in preceding items.

B) Deer Hotspots Group

Mr. Sean Eustace, Convenor, forwarded a copy of a discussion document outlining how hotspot areas could be defined and managed (Attached).

Comments on this document and the approaches taken were requested and fForum Members were invited to make written comments to the Hotspot group. A brief discussion followed.

A number of issues cannot be progressed at present due to the absence of data etc. Other subgroups were invited to review the document and identify any issues that relate to their core areas of interest.

C) Deer Data Group

Tim Burkitt, Convenor will attend future Forum meetings on behalf of the Deer data group.

D) TB Subgroup

Tom Shortt, Convenor was not present and the TB group has not met since July 7th, 2015.

8. Members Updates

Sean Eustace outlined activities by the recently formed Manor Kilbride Deer Group, in West Wicklow. The group is now established and has developed a questionnaire for landowners, farmers and hunters. The group is also interested in the collection of data and is particularly interested in adopting the DAI method demonstrated by UCC to the forum.

Ferdia Marnell, DAHG outlined recent EU developments in relation to invasive alien species which may impact on deer. A link to EU invasive species project will be forwarded. These include a plan for the eradication of Muntjac. The role of Sika seer as a similar invasive species is now being discussed by several members of the project at EU level. Ferdia undertook to update the IDMF on any consultation measures that may arise.

Damien Hannigan, WDAI, outlined a number of events that took place in Roscommon, Tipperary and Wicklow in relation to carcase handling, and a recent schools outreach programme in relation to deer awareness being undertaken by his association.

Both Jim Walsh and Liam Nolan raised a number of issues in relation to the long term funding, forward planning and future terms of reference of the forum. These issues will be dealt with as

an agenda item at the next meeting. Liam Nolan also outlined new training measures in relation to Advanced Marksmanship being developed by the Deer Alliance.

8. AOB

The issue of recent comments in the media by forum members, where the Forum was described as 'Not Fit for purpose' was raised. Such comments are of major concern and this issue will be dealt with at the next meeting as a distinct agenda item.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday June 7th, at the same Venue at 2pm.