

Cross Party Group for Shooting & Conservation

Tuesday 18th November 2014 6.30pm
Conference room 24, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay

Attending

Andrew RT Davies, AM – Acting Chair
Lindsay Whittle, AM
William Powell, AM
Mark Isherwood, AM
Rhodri Glyn Thomas, AM
Llyr Huws Gruffydd, AM
Vincent Bailey, Office of Andrew RT Davies
Gary Ashton, BASC – Director Wales
Tim Russell, BASC – Head of Conservation
Kate Ives BASC, – Business Intelligence
Annette Cole, BASC – Taste of Game
Derek Williams, BASC – Country Officer

Secretary

Esther Wakeling, BASC

Apologies

Angela Burns, AM
Alun Davies, AM

Welcome

Andrew R.T. Davies, AM, welcomed all those present to the inaugural meeting and expressed thanks for the lunchtime event held in the Senedd that day.

Aims and objectives

Gary Ashton, BASC said it was important to the British Association for Shooting and Conservation to establish the Cross Party Group and secure cross party backing for shooting sports. The group were also informed of Alun Davies, AM, intention of joining the group in the future.

William Powell, AM, said he thought the group should seek to address the perceived contradiction between shooting and conservation. He also suggested that the group should look at which partner bodies may want to join the group e.g. the Countryside Alliance (CA) and that collaboration between groups should be explored while retaining BASC's identity within the group. Andrew R.T. Davies, AM, thought that for maximum effectiveness outside bodies should be invited who could promote shooting and provide information to expand the reach of the group.

Lindsay Whittle, AM, said that the economic figures from the recent Value of Shooting report spoke for themselves and highlighted that shooting was not exclusively a rural issue. He also thought it was important to highlight the social aspect of shooting and shooting sports.

Tim Russell, BASC, thought the conservation was recognised as being important in Wales but the group could serve to break down negative perceptions and pre-conceived ideas. Mr. Russell saw the benefit in linking food, tourism and the economic benefit together with conservation and that would in turn play a role in influencing and shaping policy in the future.

Lindsay Whittle, AM, suggested that any good examples of diversification would be a useful topic for discussion at the next meeting. This was agreed by the group.

The group also agreed that the frequency of meetings should be 1 per term and that the next meeting would take place during the spring term.

Llyr Huws Gruffydd thought the group should try to reach beyond those who would normally and naturally engage and that this group will need to take a creative approach to successfully challenge stereotypes. Suggestions from the group were to involve the Tourist Board, restaurateurs and museums among others.

It was also considered to be a good idea to invite AMs to a seminar given by people not usually associated with shooting who would capture people's imagination. The group thought they should also consider the outdoor recreation theme and create wider appeal by highlighting the impact shooting has on conservation. The group should also highlight and champion examples of good practice with the sector.

It was generally agreed that any quarry species that were shot should be used and this was a key message for the group to communicate.

The key strands for this Cross Party Group are to;

- Address negative perceptions of shooting by raising awareness of the benefits of shooting; and
- Explore opportunities to promote and grow the sector for the economic, environmental and social benefit of Wales.

Electing officers

The officers were elected as follows

Angela Burns, AM– Chair

Esther Wakeling, BASC – Secretary

The Value of Shooting in Wales, presented by Kate Ives, Research Officer, BASC

The presentation focused on the economic, environmental and social benefits of shooting in Wales drawing on the findings of independent research, based on evidence from 16,000 respondents from across the United Kingdom. The research identified that shooting is worth £75 million to the Welsh Economy of which £11m was direct gross value added (GVA) [GVA is the grand total of all revenues, from final sales and (net)

subsidies, which are incomes into businesses]. £64m was first round supplier spend, and it generates 2,400 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs.

About 18% of the total land area of Wales, 380,000 hectares, is influenced by shooting and shooters contributed 120,000 conservation work days, the equivalent of 490 FTE jobs. Shoot providers spend £7.4m on conservation

98% of people who participate in shooting in Wales also reported benefits to their overall sense of well-being. At least 76,000 people shoot in Wales; there are 2,900 providers who provide the equivalent of 450,000 shoot days in Wales.

There is evidence of community benefit from shooting

87% believe it encourages social fabric

64% of staff live locally

81% benefit from employment and skills

54% take up overnight tourism

Shooting contributes to pest control which would otherwise cost £7,900 a year per provider, with the added benefit of increasing biodiversity.

The popularity of eating healthy game meat is increasing and consumption is higher in Wales than other parts of the UK.

Group Discussion

The group thought that the figures presented highlight the importance of shooting in Wales, and that the tourism benefit to Wales is predominantly out of season.

Social wellbeing and health were also important considerations.

The group agreed that the nucleus of the idea for this group is to address misconceptions and breakdown stereotypes.

Andrew R.T. Davies also reminded BASC that constituents make the most impact with Assembly Members and that it was important to use BASC members to lobby their AMs throughout Wales.

Gary Ashton extended an invitation to the Members of the Cross Party Group to attend the BASC stand at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society Winter Fair on Monday and Tuesday the 1st and 2nd of December.

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be the 10th February 2015, venue to be confirmed.