

Edinburgh Ski Touring Club

Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting
8pm on 27 May 2009
at The Grange Club, Portgower Place, Edinburgh EH4 1HQ

1. Present: Martin (Chair), Keith, Cathie (minutes), Pam, James, Alan, Caroline (for part of meeting), David, Guy, Ross, Tiana, John, Sarah, Andrew, Chris, Chantal, Sandie, Linda, Helen, Neil, Françoise, David, Yvonne, Robert, Linda, Clare, Simon. Late arrival: Mary, Charlie, Sam, Peter.

Apologies

Clare, Susan, Lindy

2. **Minutes of AGM held on 22 May 2008**

- (i) for approval – proposed: David B, seconded by David S
- (ii) matters arising (not listed as agenda items)
None

3. **Reports on the year 2008/09**

3.1 Chair/membership: Martin

I think that the Club has had another successful year. There has been a full programme of activities that were generally well attended.

The outdoor meets started off in wonderful spring weather.

The trip to Ardgour: excellent kayaking and walking.

Isle of Eigg: more great weather.

Invercroft, near Achnasheen, which is the Jacobites' hut.

There were two favourites: firstly, Glencanisp: third year running and as popular as previously, with a combination of walking, cycling, kayaking and sailing; and secondly, the Gourmet weekend: David's food proving to be as irresistible as ever.

There trips south as well: Dumfries cycling and Wanlockhead.

Regarding the winter ski season – fantastic if you were lucky to be out at the right time, but you had to be quick off the mark:

Great snow in November caused the cancellation of the trip to Braehead to get in some early season practise.

New Year: Morvich at Kintail. There was no skiing but cold and clear weather.

Glen Prosen: very comfortable bunkhouse – no skiing.

Pottery Bunkhouse: squeaky bunks – some skiing.

Slochd: family instruction – 10 adults and 13 children – Fantastic Snow! Very good to see more younger members on the meets.

Roybridge: ski instruction – what ski instruction, what snow?

Blackrock Cottage in Glen Coe: now famous for Francesco's crème caramel – not to mention Lynn's marriage proposal!

Muir of Inverey: plenty of snow, but all blown off the hill on to the road.

Moving on to Spring:

Glen Affric: return to Strawberry Cottage – with better weather but without the Trivial Pursuit.

Coruisk: first for the Club – long lie-ins and even longer days on the hills.

Overseas trips - mixture of official and unofficial taking in:

January week: no instruction, just lots of telemarking at Les Menuires in the Three Valleys – thanks to David Brown for organising the catering.

Norway: two trips hut to hutting in the south and ski-sailing in the north.
Steep and deep in the Dolomites.

On a social front, the first Tuesdays of the month pub meets at Cloisters and the meals beforehand continue to be popular – searching for exotic Edinburgh restaurants and a good way of introducing new members to the club. We also saw the combined opening/Christmas party, our Burns Supper, together with ever popular BBQS on both sides of the Forth.

On the membership side, perhaps our best year in the history of the Club. Total paid up members for 2008-09 season is 125, which is an increase from 110 last year and makes us one of the larger outdoor clubs in Scotland.

There are 18 brand new members to the club who are very keen and came on a number of meets. The website has been a key in attracting new members to the Club.

Obviously the majority of members come from Edinburgh and its immediate surrounds (East, Mid and West Lothian, and Fife), although nearly 20 come from further afield, including: Isle of Skye; Bournemouth; Brighton and Italy.

While I am mentioning members, I would like to mention Craig and Pauline, who as I am sure most of you are aware couldn't be here tonight as they are looking after their baby son Ryan, who is having a bone marrow operation. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to them.

The Committee have done a great job this year. They have been an incredibly efficient team and made the role of the Chair so much easier:

Jim for taking on the Treasury and making the numbers add up, without pulling out too much of his hair.

Cathie for being my right hand woman and kicking me at committee meetings if I go on for too long.

Caroline for combining the poisoned chalices of the membership and database and making the role of membership secretary seem easy.

Keith for doggedly pursuing winter meets venues across Scotland and for finally managing to get New Year at Mar Lodge, and for all his work in relation to the Burns Supper.

Ross for sitting quietly at committee meetings without portfolio, always ready to step in if matters get out of control, but also for coming up with some great venues for summer meets.

Sarah for taking over the website and making it the Club's showpiece to the world. The photo of the week has become particularly popular with members and Sarah would like to thank all that have contributed.

Guy for fighting his corner with the newsletter and still making it a favourite with the membership.

Helen for bravely allowing her arm to be twisted into taking on the role of ski-hire co-ordinator and for putting her own efficient style on the job.

Tiana for staying on the sidelines (!) out of the committee limelight but working tirelessly to keep the enews up and running; Tuesday mornings wouldn't be the same without it.

As you may be aware, I'm standing down from the Committee so it would be remiss of me not to thank all the previous committee (and non-committee) members that have contributed to the Club during the last three years: Pam; David; Alan; Lynn, Susan; Clare; Sam and Andrew to name but a few.

I used the theme 'Old favourites and new blood' during my report last year but I feel that it is more appropriate this year to emphasise the importance of recruiting new members into the club and on to the committee, and at the same time, not forgetting the stability and experience provided by long-standing club members.

3.2 Ski Hire Report 2008/09: Helen: Ski Hire Co-ordinator

We have had a further year of successful ski hire using Clare's garage as our store and base. Thanks very much to Clare for the use of this dry and convenient facility.

I started off the year knowing very little about ski gear, and indeed I had put myself forward for the post being very clear to the club that this was the case. I was assured that technical advice and help would be forthcoming from other members, and that has certainly been the case, and I have learnt plenty in the process. Both Martin and David have been very helpful in checking over the gear and advising on maintenance, and David led a maintenance evening where Aidan, Mark and Colin lent a hand with waxing, sharpening and leashing up the stock. David has also helped out advising non-members on kit for hiring, and Martin on the purchase of new kit. Mark kindly mounted a pair of bindings on a new pair of skis.

Throughout the season (from the end of December to the end of April) kit was available to be picked up and returned on a Wednesday evening by prior arrangement. This was made possible by a team of volunteers who manned the garage on a rota. Those offering their services were: Andrew, Colin, Guy, Aidan, Sarah, Susan, Beverly, Sandie, Tracy, Pam, Clare S, Clare C and Hamish. Also Mary helped with ad hoc logistics.

The hire season started with the Cairngorm powder of 2nd November closely followed by a hire request from a multi-national pharmaceutical powder company for a conference in Leith! It finished mid-April with a non-member hire for a classic tour in Norway. In between we've hired out for the club telemark week, club weekend meets and to both members and non-members hiring for holidays abroad and days in Scotland.

A summary of the season's hires are shown in the table below (note that the hire charges exclude voluntary contributions).

	Official club trip (w/e)	Non-club trip (< week)	Official club trip (week +)	Other trip (week +)	Total
No. hires - kit not used	5	8	1	0	14
No. hires – kit used	6	6	5	6	23
Hire charges collected	£106	£137	£257	£283	£783

At the start of the year we scrapped 6 pairs of skis and Mark kindly offered to dispose of them. However, it seems he couldn't bear to take them to the tip, and we keenly await the opening of the South Queensferry ski museum located in Mark's attic.

In the course of the season two new pairs of skis were added to the stock, together with skins and boots. This isn't sufficient replacements to be able to continue offering the current range and quality of kit and is something that needs reviewing and addressing in the coming year.

We couldn't offer this service without the help of all the volunteers mentioned above in this report. I count 17 in total; both old and new members and I'd like to finish by thanking all of them for their help.

4. **Financial matters**

Treasurer's Report: James: Treasurer

Our overall financial position this year is that the Club has continued to make progress, much in line with the last three years.

We are fulfilling our plan to grow our reserve. Since last year the general reserve is increased 20% (last year it increased 21%).

It should be noted that due to increased membership, on a per-member basis, our capitalisation remains almost the same at around £80 per member.

We have maintained the value of our hire equipment, after allowing for depreciation, although more investment will be needed there.

Two meets helped fund raising activities significantly this year.

Glassie Farm, organised by David Brown and Morvich NY organised by Keith, between them generated half of all the surplus of the 15 weekends we enjoyed.

Events in Edinburgh, such as the Burn's Supper, have also helped.

Ski hire has again made a significant contribution. I think this is a particularly hard line of work which greatly helps new and recent members, so special thanks go to Helen, and all who have helped.

The healthy state of the Club's finances is something to celebrate. It means we can replace old skis; invest in new equipment and pay advance deposits for training courses, holidays and weekends.

Subscriptions

The MCofS had raised their club subscription rates at their AGM September 2008. The rate changed from £10.60 to £13.00 per person. This change did reduce our income from membership subscriptions; however, as the Club generates its main revenue from activities, I propose to keep members' subscriptions at the same rate as last year except, for reasons above, the discounted rate (unwaged/student/retired) should change from £10 to £13. Proposed by James, seconded by Keith.

Auditor's report: Chris CA

Report from Chris CA was partly distributed, partly displayed on the screen and explanations provided. Copies of the full report are available; please request a copy by emailing secretary@estc.org.uk

Questions / points raised:

- Clarification was sought regarding money sitting in the account being working capital for organisation of events that might not break even and whether that is the same as having a reserve policy.

Chris replied that it is not the same. The working capital relates to how much cash you have. Reserves can be tied up in non-liquid assets which are not very helpful and not very relevant for the club as it is the availability of cash that is important.

For example: organising holidays can require up-front costs of £2000-£3000 and with the club being involved in around 4 or 5 holidays a year, a reserve of around £10,000 is therefore not unreasonable.

- Discussion took place around members of more than one MCofS affiliated club. Members of two clubs only have to pay one McofS subscription. It is up to the individual member to inform the Club not to pay this fee to MCofS if they are paying through another club already. It was acknowledged that administering this could be difficult. McofS do have a page on their website regarding refunds to clubs where relevant. This raised the further question of when a club is refunded for an individual who is a member of another club, who will benefit i.e. the individual or the Club? Following further discussion, it was decided that the new committee should consider and make recommendation regarding this.

It was proposed by David that the treasurer's report and the accounts be accepted and seconded by Keith.

Discussion was held with regards to the role of the Auditor and it was proposed that the committee for next year examine this with regards to clarifying the role of the auditor and title as specified in the Constitution.

It was also proposed that the appointment of auditor for 2009/2010 be left for appointment by the new committee. Proposer: David; seconder Simon.

5. **Elections to the Committee**

The constitutionally mandatory posts were filled as follows:

- Chair: Clare, proposed by Sarah; seconded by Chris.
- Secretary: Chantal, proposed by Cathie; seconded by Sandie.
- Treasurer: Chris proposed by Cathie; seconded by Sarah.
- Newsletter Editor; Guy proposed by Keith; seconded by Caroline.
- Events Convenor: Keith proposed by Cathie; seconded by Alan.

Up to four members without specific portfolio:

Mary: proposed by Caroline; seconded by James.

Helen: proposed by Yvonne; seconded David.

Caroline: proposed by David; seconded by Sarah.

Ross: proposed by David; seconded by Martin.

The issue of encouraging new members into the committee was raised and a request made that the new committee address the issue of new membership and participation on the committee.

6. **Proposed amendments to the Constitution – paper distributed**

As the new Chair was unable to attend the AGM, Martin asked if members present were agreeable to his continuing in post for the remainder of the meeting; they were.

Helen introduced her proposed two amendments to the Constitution (see attached).

Amendment 1 was debated first as the amendment 2 would be subject to the passing of amendment 1. In support of her amendment she made the following points:

- Her main concern is how to get members involved in the running of the Club;
- She felt that members are reluctant to put themselves forward for the committee when they see other committee members have been on the committee for a long time - they feel reluctant to take on roles in case it becomes long term and are worried about not being able to get off the committee once they are on it;
- There is a danger of a lack of new ideas, or a danger of ideas being put forward and disregarded because these ideas have been tried in the club before;
- Danger for the Club of numbers and enthusiasm declining;
- She feels that given the culture of the Club that there is no competition, and that for

- members it would be brave to stand against someone else already in post;
- Helen stressed that she was proposing this amendment as she wishes the Club to thrive and encourage the participation of new members and that her proposed amendment was the best way of achieving this.

The Chair asked Andrew, as seconder to the proposed amendment, if he wished to say anything further. Andrew confirmed his support for Helen in everything she says and that he too feels this is a good way forward.

Discussion took place around the issue of the amendment. The Chair pointed out that the Constitution did not include a procedure for formally dealing with amendments to the proposed amendment and that therefore these and any other comments would be debated at the forum of the meeting.

The Chair read out those comments that had been received by members unable to attend the meeting.

Tiana then spoke to the meeting and her comments included:

- Everyone is in favour of encouraging new members;
- She felt that the committee should have examined the amendment;
- She had recently spoken to a member of another club who had to abolish such a clause in their constitution as they were left with no new members;
- She felt that the proposal is demotivating for any members of the committee. The club has managed to keep the membership going with change;
- Some of the changes to the club have not come from new members, old members can still think out of the box and be creative;
- Some older members can stay on for a couple of years, others for longer, in addition to new members; it keeps the continuity going;
- Regarding the issue of Treasurer, Tiana advised that she has been in situations where the treasurer has been forced to multi-task, which she does not feel is good. She believes that a good treasurer is a valuable asset and should not be forced to stand down.
- Regarding the issue of members staying on the committee for 5 years, most people do not want to stay longer and this is therefore not a problem.

Mary read out her comments and added that she does agree in principle that it's good to have rotation on the committee, but because it is a small, friendly club it is not necessary to regulate in this way, but rather encourage rotation as an informal principle.

Comments received from other members attending included:

- Agreement for not regulating but encouraging a culture where rotation happens;
- Any method to get new members onto the committee is a good thing;
- It was highlighted that within the last six years membership has grown from 50 to 125 approx and that the AGM six years ago was barely quorate. There was just a small group of people keeping the club going;
- Importance of committee members not serving in the same capacity for too long highlighted as protection for the club and the individuals concerned;
- Some feeling that a cultural change is not enough, there is a need for constitutional change but not necessarily the proposed one;
- A suggestion was made that the next committee should consider a new committee post of "new members committee post";
- The difference between encouraging and including new members and wanting them to take on "jobs" was emphasised. Many new members need time to check out whether the

- club is suitable for them before making commitment to helping in the running of it;
- Proposal that the committee should consider the issues and the club rules and present an amendment at the next AGM.
 - The Committee members do need to discuss the issue of encouraging new members but also should recognise that many of the ideas for the club are coming from old members;
 - If the aim of proposal is to attract fresh blood, it is not a complete solution but it is a step in the right direction.

Helen rounded off the discussions with the following comments:

When she sees people in a role for a long time she sees them as experts, which discourages other people to stand. It is human nature that if something needs done and no one else will do it, others are more likely to step forward. She acknowledged that there is also space for people to stay on, as well as new members coming in.

The amendment was then subject to a vote of the meeting with the results as follows:

Those who are in favour of the proposed amendment: 8

Those against the proposed amendment: 13

Those abstaining: 7

The proposed amendment was therefore not passed.

In the light of the vote David recommended that the new committee should review the constitution drawing on the expertise of the members. He suggested that it may be appropriate to review the Officers named in the Constitution and to review on the basis of the experience of other Clubs and Associations whether there was any grounds for distinguishing between Officers. The review should consider whether a longer term for Treasurer was appropriate. It should also consider whether there should be any version of Chair elect and Chair past as Officers to provide continuity. The review should also consider in the light of the changing and largely very successful division of tasks between Committee and non-Committee membership whether it was appropriate to name any Officers other than those of Treasurer, Secretary and Chair. He suggested that a small review group, made up of committee members and members of the Club, would be most appropriate to provide a balanced and careful review of the Constitution and a recommendation as to an integrated set of proposals such that the Constitution should allow the most effective discharge by the Committee of the wishes of the membership. He suggested the group should report initially to the Committee, but be separate and independent from the Committee, and should present its proposals to the next AGM.

He proposing to the AGM that the review be undertaken; seconded by Pam. No objections to the review were received from the AGM.

7. Any other competent business

The Chair expressed thanks to Sandie for organising the venue, to Keith for organising the food, Andrew for organising the entertainment and to all helpers.