

Ptarmigan Hillwalking & Mountaineering Club

Minute of Annual General Meeting, 7.30 pm on Tuesday 29 November 2022 at the Royal Navy & Marines Club, 1 Broughton Road, Edinburgh

Attendance: Richard Love, Adrian Casey, Douglas Tullis, Tim Featherstone, Lynn Youngs, Alex Williamson, Walter Kelly, David Barber, Cheryl Ford, Alistair Haig & Wendy Farmer (11 members)

Apologies: Christine Thomson, Eric Brown, Colin Shepherd & Hugh Cowan

Minutes of last year's AGM: The minute of the 2021 AGM was formally approved. No matters arose from them.

Chairman's report: Richard reported that it was good to have got going again after the lifting of Covid related restrictions but that it had proved harder than expected to build our numbers back up again. Of the 11 meets this year two had been cancelled, February because of low numbers and adverse weather and August because of problems with the bus – the latter a great pity as it looked like our best turnout of the year. Nine outings had taken place as well as a very successful weekend at Morvich in June. While it was good that a few new people had come on outings, sometimes only once or twice, we need to pull out more of our current membership. Richard thanked the Committee for their support during the year, especially the split secretariat of Kev (newsletter), Christine (membership) and Douglas (everything else), Adrian for looking after our finances and Tim for dealing with bookings and the website. Apart from the general lack of numbers coming on meets, Richard's main concern was the non-availability of bus conveners which had resulted in our having to call on Colin and Lynn to help out on occasions.

Secretary's Report: Douglas confirmed that the split responsibility was working well and, as one of the bus conveners who has himself recently been unavailable, agreed with Richard's view that finding some new bus conveners is a priority.

Treasurer's Report: Adrian produced the accounts for the year 2021/2022. He had hoped to present a positive report on the Club's return to financial health but was concerned that, without changes, the future of the Club is jeopardised. At the end of the year the Club had a bank balance of £1,668 – £1,010 down on last year's figure. Trip average numbers worked out at only 15 with some months leaving us with big losses, to the point that the February outing had been cancelled to avoid a loss in excess of the cancellation charge for the bus. The overall loss on trips was £1,315 which was offset by a surplus on administration including a "donation" of £1,370 represented by the writing off of our liability to Mountaineering Scotland during the pandemic. The Club had 50 members at the end of the year.

The basic membership subscription has been £25 for seven years and the coach fare has been set at £20 since 2018. McLeod coaches have quoted for 2023 with an increase in the cost per trip from £460 to £540 for the 30 seater coach with the possibility of using a 16 seater for £440 if numbers remain low. Adrian was of the view that on current numbers the Club would be unlikely to survive a further year without change and proposed that we increase both the subscriptions and the bus fare. A discussion took place in the course of which a range of possibilities were discussed, the conclusion of which was that subscriptions for 2023 should be increased to £30 for an individual, £50 for partners sharing the same address, £17.50 for those who are already members of Mountaineering Scotland, either individually or through another club, and should remain at £10 for non-walking members. The bus fare for 2023 will be £25 per person per trip.

Adrian reported that for family reasons he is to be moving to the south of England next year and proposes to stand down as Treasurer in the summer of 2023.

Webmaster's Report: Tim reported that website traffic was back to pre-pandemic levels with an average of some 90 clicks per month. He had concerns about the reliability of our Easyspace webmail service for which we now pay £280 per year. He was particularly concerned that outgoing emails were on occasion being rejected for no good reason by the outgoing spam filter and understood that there may have been issues between Easyspace and Microsoft. It was agreed to carry on with Easyspace meantime but to be aware of the problem.

Auditor: Walter reported that he had signed off the accounts and is willing to continue as our independent examiner. He was formally reappointed.

Election of office-bearers: At the time of the 2021 AGM Richard had indicated his intention to remain as Chairman for only a further year. He did not consider it would be appropriate for him to step aside at this time. Subject to Adrian's stated desire to step down next summer, the other committee members confirmed their willingness to carry on. The meeting confirmed the re-election of the Committee as follows:

Richard – Chairman
 Douglas – Secretary
 Adrian – Treasurer
 Christine – Membership
 Kev – Newsletter
 Tim – Webmaster

Bus Conveners – As already mentioned by both Richard and Douglas, we have a shortage of bus conveners and urgently need more support in this area. Our current conveners are Douglas, who has recently had a hip replaced and not been hillwalking recently; Kev, who now lives in Cockburnspath and is only able to attend outings very occasionally and Adrian, who has been unable to come on outings for some time for health reasons.

It was considered that we might be able to simplify the bus convener's job by encouraging those going on outings to use the WhatsApp group to exchange plans in advance and by having a simplified list for people to fill in their own proposals which would reduce the need for the bus convener to walk about the bus. Tim offered to come up with a list which could be pre-populated with the names of those attending.

Alistair offered to bus convene on a trial basis for the December outing to Moffat – an offer that was gratefully accepted.

Future of the Club: As referred to under previous items there are concerns for the future of the Club about which a discussion took place. While the meeting hoped that the revised subscriptions and bus fare would stabilise our financial position it may be that they will have the effect of further reducing our numbers. It was noted that the Highways Club, which operates in very much the same way that we do, have enough members prepared to pay £180 up front for membership and bus fares for them to have avoided financial difficulty. It was agreed that we should have a discussion with Highways to consider ways of working more closely with them, including the possibility at some future stage of amalgamating with them.

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Draft programme for 2023

Programme for 2023 - The programme was agreed as below:

5 Feb : Balquhiddy

5 Mar: Glen Esk

2 Apr: Ballachulish
7 May: Coire Cas
4 June: Glen Lyon
23-26 June: Weekend away – see below
2 Jul: Glen Nevis
6 Aug: Glen Muick
3 Sep: Braithwaite, Northern Lake District
1 Oct: Newtonmore
5 Nov: Blair Atholl (High Tea)
3 Dec: Ochils

The suggestions for the weekend away were either (a) the Kylesku Chalets, to which the Highways Club had a successful outing last summer (b) the hostel at Strontian or (c) possibly the bunkhouse at Tomintoul. Douglas will confirm prices and availability and the Committee will take a decision when we have that information.

AOCB

Alex Williamson suggested that it would be a good idea to publicise in a future newsletter the discounts available to Club members through our affiliation with Mountaineering Scotland.

A discussion took place as to our position on bus cancellations. As regards McLeod coaches we understand that Jim will accept cancellation with a charge of £200 up to 8 days beforehand. We accept cancellations from members and guests provided they are notified by 08:00 on the Friday immediately preceding the outing. It was agreed that when doing a newsletter prior to any outing we should encourage those coming to sign up as early as possible.