

Musselburgh Sub-Aqua Club

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting - 23rd March, 2005



The meeting opened at 7.35 p.m.

Attendees: Rab Malcolm, Susan Burrell, Dougie Ritchie, Kirsty Robertson, Sandy McPherson, Fiona Smith, Ian Smith, Russell Holland, Ann-Marie Jamieson, David Carruthers, Cameron Currie, Billy Symington, Myles Ewen, Gary Calvert, Kenny Donaldson, Gill Donaldson, Russell McMorran, Adrian Kidd, Iain Shaw, Jim Syrett, John Langlands, Tom Hares.

Apologies: Jim Brodie, Rhona Ritchie, Rachel Finlay, Paul Guiney, Tony Marsh, David Rillie, Catriona McLean.

1. Introduction

Sandy welcomed everyone to the AGM.

2. Minutes of 2003 – 2004 AGM

The minutes were agreed.

Proposed by: Ian Smith.
Seconded by: Tom Hares.

3. 2004 - 2005 Committee Reports

Chairman – Sandy McPherson

Good diving took place during the year in spite of bad weather experienced on the east coast.

A group of members rewrote the existing club lectures bringing them up to date and making them all available electronically.

The club van had to be sold off during the year as it was no longer economical to run.

There were some good expeditions last year and a number have been planned for the current year. To ensure we get the numbers some of these have been organised jointly with LotSAC. The calendar of expeditions is on the website at:

<http://www.musac.co.uk/EXPEDITIONS.htm>

Places are available on trips to Moray Firth (June), Sound of Mull (August), Farne Islands (September).

Branch Diving Officer – Davie Carruthers

A good diving year with no diving incidents in the club. This can be attributed to good training and diving practice.

The status of training is currently:

- Rhona Ritchie and Rachel Finlay are close to completing the Sport Diver award.
- Catriona McLean, Kenny Donaldson, Gill Donaldson, Myles Ewen and Colin Forbes are all carrying out open water training.
- John Langlands has joined as a crossover and is going through that process.
- Danny Dutton and Penny McDade are going through pool training.
- Jim Syrett has been certified to be medically fit to dive again and is keen to get back into training.
- Master Diver lectures have been taking place with Dougie Ritchie and Paul Guiney attending.
- Janette Moyes has completed some of her BI assessments. Gary Calvert is thinking about whether he wishes to complete the BI training. Ann-Marie Jamieson attended the BI course and is expected to begin working towards assessments.
- Sandy McPherson is going through the RI training having attended the course. Continue to be keen on seeing Ian Smith attend this course too.

Congratulations to Billy Symington on successfully completing the Club Examiners qualification.

Successful crossovers were made by Iain Shaw and Anne Goswell during the year.

Thanks to all the instructors for their efforts.

ScotSAC require all new BIs plus everyone from RI level upwards to go through child and vulnerable adult criminal record checks. No charge is made to individuals or branches for this.

Request that every diver practises a rescue at least once as year to keep skills current. This should be witnessed by an instructor and be based on the Sport Diver rescue from 10m.

Having completed the Deep Rescue from 30m during the year and found it a rewarding experience it was recommended to all divers with the relevant experience.

Finished by asking that everyone considers practising skills proactively to assist in keeping the good safety record of the branch.

Treasurer - Rab Malcolm

The treasurer's report contained the detail for the year to the beginning of February. Bill for pool hire from June still outstanding, but no other large bills expected.

A grant application is in progress driven by Ian Smith and Colin Forbes.

Hope to hold a fund raising event in August to celebrate MUSAC being 10 years old.

Pool bill to be chased up with checks on bill reflecting lack of pool when it was closed and also when it was not fully functional (deep end not lowered).

4. Committee Positions

Ann-Marie Jamieson is stepping down from the Secretary's position following the AGM.

Prior to the AGM Ian Smith was proposed as a Committee Member by Fiona Smith. After some arm twisting Ian took on the Secretary's position. Ann-Marie will carry out a handover to Ian.

Secretary: Ian Smith

Proposed by: Fiona Smith

Seconded by: Tom Hares

The 2005 Committee is therefore:

BDO:	Davie Carruthers
Chairman:	Sandy McPherson
Treasurer:	Rab Malcolm
Secretary:	Ian Smith
Committee Member 1:	Tom Hares
Committee Member 2:	Cameron Currie
Committee Member 3:	Martin Rowse

NON-COMMITTEE BRANCH POSITIONS

Equipment Officer will be undertaken by Dougie Ritchie in collaboration with Tom Hares.

The **Pool Training Officer** was discussed for some time with Jim Syrett raising a query about whether a rota could be put in place to provide a clear contact for trainees each week.

Due to the limitation on the number of instructors, the fact that they have other commitments (work, family, etc.) and that all instructors are volunteers this did not work when it was attempted previously.

Trainees are advised to be pro-active and turn up early at the pool to increase the likelihood of being matched up with an instructor. This is particularly true of open water trainees (7 in the branch currently) who may turn up wishing to carry out a simulated dive. They should contact David Carruthers prior to the pool session to try to ensure that enough instructors are available since pool trainees tend to be the focus of instructors on a Wednesday night.

5. Motions/Amendments

No motions or amendments were proposed.

6. Any Other Competent Business

ScotSAC AGM – Tom Hares

- A Junior Snorkellor award is being developed aimed at 7 – 15 year olds.
- ScotSAC will become a Limited Company from the 1st of January 2006. This is to protect the membership from potential claims based on incidents. The current structure allows GC, NDC, membership to be sued. Limited status will protect against this through appropriate insurance cover being setup at a company level.
- Other branches report that grant applications of £5-6K are typically being won.
- Letter from MUSAC required by ScotSAC to support members from Midlothian joining: Stuart Bowie, Neil Campbell and Tom Baxter.

Summer Pool Closure – David Carruthers

Discussion took place about the pros and cons of closing the pool over the summer. The following points were made during this discussion:

- It may be a challenge to ensure that pool trainees have reached a point where they can go in the open water by summer.
- Last year there were a number of pool trainees so the decision to keep the pool open was made on that basis.
- Other clubs close for summer as far as pool training is concerned and MUSAC has had a number of referrals and members join us since we offer pool training the year round.
- The definition of safe, confined open water is open to interpretation.
- It is known that other clubs in the area have stopped pool sessions completely due to the drop in trainee numbers they have experienced.
- ScotSAC reported a continuing decline in membership at their AGM.
- 6 weeks closure was thought to be too long but July is peak holiday period and could be an option.
- The benefit of the pool session is more than training, there is the meeting up aspect to consider in terms of the club communication chain.
- If the pool is closed it will be to enable open water diving to be promoted in the evening and encourage an increased number of diving options for the membership.

A decision on whether to close the pool in the summer will be taken closer to the time with July the likely period under consideration for a pool shutdown.

Children in the Pool

A discussion on children in the pool during diver training took place based on consideration of the following factors:

- Insurance
- ScotSAC Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult policy
- Junior Snorkellor award being created by ScotSAC
- Constructive time in the pool – Snorkelling vs “Messing About”
- Occasional vs Regular
- MUSAC constitution

The key points raised in the discussion are summarised below:

- Guidance received from ScotSAC Child Protection Officer is that the best way to address children in the branch is for them to be members of ScotSAC and to follow the good practise guidelines laid down by ScotSAC.
- MUSAC constitution is based on Ordinary membership being offered to people aged 18 and over.
- The use of a parental/guardian disclaimer form might provide some protection from insurance aspects, but more information and guidance is needed.
- The Junior Snorkellor award is comprehensive and will take a number of weeks to complete.
- Junior Snorkellors would have to be trained by Instructors leading to potential conflict with the club's objective to train divers.
- Once qualified Junior Snorkellors would still require on the surface supervision.
- A branch Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer is a requirement for branches with child members.
- Many of the members have children they'd like to bring to the pool during school holidays to learn what diving is.

- Children in the pool is not necessarily conducive to a calm training environment for trainees and can be distracting for instructors.
- Only a small number of children have attended the pool to date, but there are many other members with children who could bring their children if the decision was made to allow children in the pool.
- Impact of allowing children in the pool on membership – members current and future who don't have children.
- Clubs with a Junior Snorkelling group usually hire the pool for a separate session which is safer than combining children snorkelling with adults diving. The option for this does not exist on a Wednesday night.
- Many of the instructors would enjoy training children but not at the expense of the diver training.
- Potentially require additional smaller equipment in the branch to cater for smaller bodies.
- What would be the limit on the number of children in the pool?
- Possibility of setting up a Junior Snorkelling club in the area by working with other branches to create a single session and share instructors.

A number of issues for further clarification and investigation were identified:

1. Disclaimer impact on insurance liability of branch members in the pool of having parents/guardians sign this.
2. Requirement for lifeguard/supervision with children in the pool.
3. Purpose behind considering having children in the pool – age, instructor impact, policies, training plans, equipment, limits. A clear policy would be required.

A vote was taken on whether children should be in the pool based on the information currently available, particularly the potential insurance situation and practicalities around providing adequate supervision. The result was AGAINST children in the pool at this time.

The following future considerations are to be explored, based on addressing the issues identified:

1. Organise child friendly nights using an appropriate disclaimer form throughout the year at appropriate times.
2. Find out more about the Junior Snorkellor award and consider if it could be offered, subject to changes in the constitution around membership of MUSAC.

Lottery Application – Ian Smith

The application value is currently £2,100 based on laptop PC and projector.

Ideas on what further items could be added should be emailed to Ian who will collate the ideas to allow a decision to be made by the committee.

Van

With the demise of the old van a show of hands was taken on whether members would like another van with a big majority in favour of a club van.

Today the branch has insufficient funds to buy another van, but fundraising could be a way of changing that.

The possibility of hiring vans was raised. Myles Ewen agreed to find out the current position re hiring from councils.

The Meeting Closed at 8.50 pm