

The Merchistonian Club
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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Merchistonian Club

held at Merchiston Castle School

on Saturday 26 May 2007 at 9.30 am

Present

Barclay Low (President)
Steve Abram (Vice President)
Roger Baird (Immediate Past President)
Charles Abram (Chairman of Governors)
Chris Gray
Alan Mickel
Jamie MacLean
Colin MacPherson
Donald McIntyre
Graeme Scott
Iain Wright (Treasurer)

In Attendance: Kirstine Hogg [Club Secretary]

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ronald Aitchison, John Armstrong, Peter Blyth, Robert Bruce, Pat Bryson, Len Douglas, Neil Falconer, David Fulton, John Glen, Charles Guest, Murray Henderson, Frank Hunter, Neil Kilpatrick, Inglis Lamont, Campbell McLaren, John McLeod, David Montgomery, Jim Rennie, David Robertson, Douglas Rodger, Bruce Rollo, William Russell, Pete Rutherford, Alastair Turner, Peter Wilmshurst, Andrew Wilson, Walter Yellowlees.

2. MINUTES OF AGM HELD ON 27 MAY 2006

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 27 May 2006 were approved. They were proposed by Roger Baird [GRTB], Steve Abram [SPA], seconded by Graeme Scott [GRCS]. All matters arising were deemed to be covered by the Agenda of this year's AGM.

3. ACCOUNTS

The accounts for 2006 were tabled and considered. A deficit of £3,634 was recorded. Iain Wright [IAW] reported that income was broadly similar to previous years, helped by a larger contribution from sales of merchandise and by increased commission from rugby tickets. Expenditure was dominated by the production of the Newsletter and increased postal charges. The Club continued to support the Sixth Form House Appeal with its second (of three) donations of £5,000. Members were broadly in agreement with the need to produce a quality product in terms of the Newsletter and the support being given to the Sixth Form House Appeal. The budget for 2007 was approved. It reflected anticipated increased charges for administrative

office assistance and reduced costs of the Newsletter due to the success in attracting advertising revenue. Consideration was given to increasing the membership fee for leavers but a final decision was deferred. **The AGM gave the Club committee jurisdiction to consider this item further and discuss the implications with the school [Bursar and Headmaster].** IAW agreed to investigate a bank account attracting a good rate of interest to which Club funds could be transferred. Barclay Low [WBL] warmly thanked the Treasurer [IAW] for his significant input to overseeing the Club Accounts.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Barclay Low began his report by remarking that the last 2 years in which he had held office seemed to have passed remarkably quickly! He recalled some early "advice" from Alan Mickel [present at the AGM by good fortune] and hoped that many of the areas highlighted for action had indeed been progressed.

Club finances had been challenging with heavy expenditure items in the "redesigned" Newsletter and the commitment to support the Sixth Form House Appeal – good financial management in future years should see income more closely match expenditure which is the main priority of the Club. It was also important to be able to support Club activities where necessary whether they be sports related, dinners or reunions.

The role of the Club – indeed many FP Clubs – had altered subtly in recent years. Still focussing on encouraging Merchistonians to meet and interact in various ways, the Merchistonian Club has developed a much closer interface with the School. The Club is a part of the Merchiston Brand and the membership now stretches worldwide – this in turn requires a different approach to meeting the needs of the members and will be reflected in the way in which the Club develops in future years.

Events staged in recent months have been disappointing – reunions maintain their attraction but the more traditional dinners have been harder to gain enthusiasm for. The new committee will certainly be looking not only at the type of events which are now most appropriate, but also the format, mixed or members only, formal or informal. This is another of the challenges for the future but which can be addressed with support from the membership.

One of the **exciting developments** in the last 2 years has been the influx of new blood to many of the Club's activities. The committee is greatly strengthened with the appointment of a dedicated Treasurer and the fact that nominations are being made for both Vice Presidents at this year's AGM is a very good development. In addition the committee will be further enhanced by having a number of dedicated committee members who will not have Area responsibilities and thus will be able to focus on broader Club activities. The appointment of a number of new Overseas secretaries reflects the growing global nature of the membership. In Scotland some changes to Area and Sports secretaries will inject new ideas to how the Club conducts its business – all of our representatives deserve the support of the membership wherever possible and the Club is very grateful for their time and commitment. In closing the President wished to record his appreciation of the dedication, patience and encouragement given by the office team – Kirstine Hogg and Sue Allison - as well as the support of the broader committee. In particular Steve Abram, the President-elect and Iain Wright, the Treasurer had been wise counsel. Changes to the office team due to retirements and other moves would bring new challenges but hopefully the high quality service provided to the membership would be maintained. WBL concluded by remarking that it had been an honour to serve as Club President for the last two years and wished his successor Steve Abram every success as he took over the reins.

5. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEE

Barclay Low proposed **Steve Abram** as **Club President**, which was seconded by Roger Baird. Steve Abram accepted the nomination and was duly elected.

Barclay Low proposed **Chris Gray** as a **Vice President**, which was seconded by Graeme Scott. Chris Gray was duly elected.

Steve Abram proposed **Jamie MacLean** as a **Vice President** which was seconded by Roger Baird. Jamie Maclean was duly elected.

Barclay Low recommended that **Iain Wright** continue as **Treasurer** which was seconded by Roger Baird and endorsed by the meeting unanimously. Iain Wright was duly elected.

Roger Baird, Peter Rutherford and **Andrew Desson** were all elected to serve on the Club committee as Committee members. They would not hold any district/area responsibilities.

7. SIXTH FORM HOUSE APPEAL

Charles Abram reported that good progress was being made with the Sixth Form House project and with the Appeal. Planning permission had been granted and building work was about to start. A lead donation of £1million had been pledged by Irvine Laidlaw with presentation being made to the School on Prizegiving Day. Good funds had been raised from Merchistonians and Former Parents and an approach to Current Parents was about to begin.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

On behalf of the Committee, SPA thanked WBL for his hard work over the last two years. He had raised the profile, structure and direction of the Club. On behalf of the Governors, HCA thanked WBL for all his efforts as President of the Club and also thanked him for the Club donation to the Sixth Form House Appeal.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Annual General Meeting is **Saturday 24 May 2008**.

Distribution: SP Abram, C J Gray, J G B MacLean, WB Low, IA Wright, Area Secretaries, Sporting Secretaries, Overseas Representatives, KL Hogg, S Allison
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