

EDINBURGH AREA OF RCCC
DRAFT MINUTE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held in Edinburgh Curling Club Clubrooms
at 8 pm on 13 April 2017

In the Chair: Neil Calvert, Senior RCCC Area Representative
Present Calder Benzies, Area Representative, John Good, Secretary and 27 persons representing 21 Clubs.

Apologies for absence were accepted.

In Memoriam: The meeting acknowledged, with regret, the passing of Alistair Brown, Oxenfoord; George Chisholm, Aberlady; Ray Murray, Eddleston; Fred Prain, Corstorphine; and Cathie Russell, Edinburgh Ladies and stood in silence for reflection and as a mark of appreciation.

MINUTE OF 2016 AGM

This minute, draft copies of which had previously been distributed and, in addition, had been made available at the meeting, was approved and carried on the motion by L MacLean.

ELECTION OF AREA REPRESENTATIVE 2017-21

Neil Calvert would complete his four-year term of office in June 2017 and had not sought re-election.

Notice of the election had been duly given, and one valid nomination had been received. The election of Morgan Nicoll, Seton Hill Farmhouse, Longniddry to this office, as presented by Aberlady Curling Club, was carried. The Chair congratulated Mr Nicoll whose experience in office at Club, Province levels and on the 2013 Strathcona Cup Tour would be most useful to the Royal Club's Areas Standing Committee and to the Edinburgh Area Committee.

The Chair noted that Edinburgh Area, which comprises the Provinces of Midlothian, East Lothian and Peeblesshire, would continue to have two representatives on the Areas Standing Committee until the total number of its RCCC members had reached and sustained a membership of 1500 (see RCCC Bye-Laws for more information). Given that Midlothian Province had many more clubs and members than either of the other Provinces, it would be reasonable that one of the Area Representatives should be from Midlothian and the other should, subject to the established election procedure and the decision at the AGM, be from Peeblesshire and East Lothian in turn. Notwithstanding any 'home' Province affiliation, each Representative was responsible for assessing and reflecting the interests of Edinburgh Area as a whole.

REPORTS BY AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Work of RCCC Areas Standing Committee

Neil Calvert reported on two presentations made during the year by members of RCCC Staff to the Areas Standing Committee. Each of these showed the professionalism and modern methods being used within the Royal Club. Area Representatives, through the ASC and Committees of the Royal Club Board, considered and advised on many matters such as the revision of competition rules which would be put to the RCCC Annual General Meeting on 17 June 2017.

There was concern that the running of the National Province Championship had been compromised by the late withdrawal of teams. An effort was being made to find out why so many teams had withdrawn in recent years, and to try to find a basis on which this competition could regain support and be run successfully. *(It was subsequently learned that, subject to final ratification by the RCCC Board, the Province Championship would be restricted to the first 24 entrants; to avoid unnecessary re-draws, and acknowledging that this is the number of Provinces which have taken part in the past two years.)*

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Area Honours – Season 2016-17

Calder Benzies reported the successes achieved in national and international curling events by Murrayfield curlers. There was a great deal of satisfaction that so many Edinburgh curlers had done so well, and also that many were younger players who it was expected would continue to represent Edinburgh and Scottish curling in the years ahead.

A copy of the report is available from the Area Secretary.

Edinburgh Area Bonspiel 2016

This was held at Murrayfield on 2 December 2016. Thanks to the Province and Club office bearers, and our Area Reps, there was full turnout. The Royal Club teams skipped by Neil Calvert and Calder Benzies won a total of fourteen of the twenty ends they played. However, it was shots that counted and the winner of the Black Bull Trophy was East Lothian, having ended the day on plus 14 thanks to John Shedden with plus 11 and Morgan Nicoll with plus 3. The ice, company, meal and refreshments combined to make this an enjoyable day.

2017 Scottish Men's Tour of USA

Of the four Murrayfield players selected to play in the twenty-man team, one – Frank Ross regrettably had to withdraw so John Good, Callum Harvey and Jim Ramsay carried the flag for this Area. The Tour flew 7900 miles by air, 3000-plus miles by coach and car – close on 11,000 miles in all and covering ten States in 21 days. They played 30 eight-end games, some at clubs with two sheets and others with eight in huge arenas. At times the Scots felt almost overwhelmed by the extent and generosity of the welcome given by the United States Curling Association, and by the clubs and players from north Mid-West Fargo through Chicago and Detroit, to Cape Cod and Boston in the east. Some US players had travelled 400 miles to play one game against the Scots. Royal Club President Clive Thomson was our Tour Captain and although the Scots didn't bring the Herries Maxwell Trophy back from the US, the experience was, as promised, the experience of a lifetime and can be highly recommended to others next time round.

ELECTION TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF RCCC

It was noted that Trevor Dodds and Susan Kesley were to stand for election to the Board of the Royal Club. See www.royalcaledoniancurlingclub.org for more information.

PROVINCE REPORTS

East Lothian: David Munro, President, said the variety of competitions reflected the range of interest among East Lothian curlers. One additional format had been trialled and might be included in 2017-18. East Lothian has fewer clubs than some other Provinces, but this may contribute to the good atmosphere at Province events and also in Inter-Province competitions. Members and Clubs took part in external competitions, including the Waldie-Griffith Inter-Province, and did well on the ice and socially. The Province is grateful to, among others, David Affleck for researching and publishing articles on the history of curling, Graeme Maguire as webmaster and to its Secretary Roy Black whose knowledge and efficiency are invaluable.

Midlothian: Trevor Dodds, President, was glad to report that Midlothian had had a busy and successful year. In particular the Province League, played mostly at 9.30 pm had been well fought throughout by 25 teams. A new sponsor had been found for the historic King George IV Cup competition for less-experienced curlers. Midlothian had played in the Waldie-Griffith competition and in inter-Province friendlies. He thanked the office-bearers of the Midlothian Clubs and of Province for their work.

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Peeblesshire: Robert Robertson, President, noted that the six Clubs in the Province were all very active both on the ice and in trying to find ways to bring more people into curling. The regular Province programme met the need for variety of competition format. Several clubs had annual fixtures to play clubs outwith Peeblesshire, and this was seen as an important part of the curling year.

The Chairman thanked each for leading their Province in the past year and giving their reports.

EDINBURGH CURLING SCHOOL REPORT

Kenny Findlay, President of ECS, had prepared a comprehensive report which, in his absence, was presented on his behalf. In summary: the activities were:-

Junior Coaching – 20 Sunday morning sessions each with 55 kids on average

Try Curling – More sessions run

Courses (Beginners and Improvers) - two Beginners run. Improvers Course deferred till next season

Corporate sessions – over 90 sessions run which required 180 coaches

Club Coaching – three sessions

Under-17 Pairs – successful but not fully subscribed

Thursday Drop-in – numbers low: need for more publicity in 2017-18 and beyond

New Stones – numbers attending increased following the Come Try sessions.

At the conclusion of his report, Kenny had written:

“We are lucky to have a number of committed coaches and I am very grateful for the time they have committed over the season. However I believe the biggest threat we have is the lack of a wider group of volunteers who are able to share the workload. With the next season seeing the Winter Olympics and the likely influx of people looking to try curling, we are desperately in need of volunteers to come forward to join us. In the past this has proved to be an excellent opportunity for clubs to recruit new members with several hundred people crossing our doorstep.

“ We have been in contact with the RCCC who have agreed to run a Level 1 coaches training course at Murrayfield at the start of next season and we would be grateful if the word could be spread about this and anyone interested get in touch.

“I have had several meetings with Evie Chamberlain, the new Development Officer, and although it is early days, I am sure we will be able to work well together and help to progress things for the development of curling in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Peeblesshire. This will be made a lot easier if we are able to recruit new coaches.”

INTERNATIONAL CURLING EVENTS IN SCOTLAND 2018 -2020

The Chairman again drew attention to the World Junior Championships at Aberdeen in 2018; the World Wheelchair Curling Championship in 2019 and the World Men’s in 2020. Practical support as volunteers and/or buying tickets for these events would contribute to their success and help illustrate Scotland’s place in world curling. Responding to P Edington, the Chairman said the Royal Club Board was very conscious that low income from ticket sales for the 2016 European Championships in Glasgow had resulted in a deficit, and that all aspects of the staging and financing – including prices of tickets - of future events had to be re-assessed to prevent this recurring.

RENOVATION AND REFURBISHMENT OF MURRAYFIELD

Michael Wood, a Director of Murrayfield Curling Ltd, and a member of both Currie & Balerno and Aberlady Curling Clubs, reported the current situations as regards the condition of the curling floor and the imminent need for it to be replaced; other measures to reduce running costs such as improved insulation and lighting; and the proposed extension of the balcony to provide 'new' clubroom facilities. The known sources of grants and loans were reported. Crucial to securing the future of curling at Murrayfield was the support of members by making donations, preferably within the gift aid scheme. The amount already received and the cumulative amount expected after the expiry of direct debits already held was heartening, but a lot more was still required to get funding for the floor and related works.

Questions were taken and answered, including:- making an enquiry into the terms under which a grant or loan might be available from the Landfill Fund; the practicalities and possible benefits which might come from extending the curling season; the reductions in running costs likely to be achieved after the installation of the new floor, insulation etc; and the timing of the announcement that the basic subscription to Edinburgh Curling Club Ltd would rise from £10 to £20, and the related suggestion that the same increase in income might more equitably be secured by another arrangement based on 'user pays'.

Up-to-date information is available on www.edinburghcurling.co.uk

The Chairman thanked Mr Wood for his readiness to respond to questions from the floor, and assured him that curlers welcomed his presentation and that they would follow news of progress with great interest.

SPORTS MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Evie Chamberlaine had been appointed by MCL to this position. She is based at Murrayfield and her role is to develop curling.

INCOMING STRATHCONA CUP TOUR 2018

Edinburgh Area is responsible for hosting the Canadian Men in 2018 from Tuesday 30th January until Thursday 1st February. In addition the RCCC will hold the final day's curling and a luncheon at Murrayfield, and the closing banquet of the Tour on Friday 2nd February in the tour hotel.

The National Organising Committee has asked Edinburgh Area to play 16 matches against the North Tour and 4 matches versus the South Tourists. It is likely that all twenty matches will be counted in the shots tally for the Strathcona Cup. This is quite a commitment for the Area and the Provinces. We are asking East Lothian to field 5 teams, Peeblesshire 5 teams and Midlothian 10 teams. We are stressing that we should endeavour to provide stiff opposition for all of these games to be competitive. So perhaps Club teams might be the best solution but that decision will be in the hands of each Province.

We have an organising committee with representatives from the rink, and the Provinces. As well as the catering at Murrayfield we plan to host an Area dinner at Myreside on Wednesday 31 January 2018. In addition we are seeking a civic reception for the Tourists in the evening of Thursday 1st February.

As the Area events are spread over 3 days the organising committee see this as a considerable financial and practical commitment, so we would welcome good leads to obtain a sponsor, and also offers of voluntary assistance here on the days.

The business having been completed, the Chairman thanked all for representing their Club by their attendance, and thanked Calder Benzie and John Good for their support in the preparations for the meeting.

Members responded to the proposal by Lauchlan MacLean that they thank the Chair and speakers.