

EDINBURGH AREA OF RCCC
MINUTE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held in Edinburgh Curling Club Clubrooms
At 8.15 pm on 11 April 2018

D R A F T

In the Chair: L Calder Benzies, Senior RCCC Area Representative

Present: Trevor Dodds, Area Representative; John Good, Secretary and 39 persons representing 28 Clubs.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted.

In Memoriam: The Meeting acknowledged, with regret, the passing of Douglas Baxter (Corstorphine), Jim Beveridge (Corstorphine), Jim Forsyth (Hon Pres. of Peebles CC), Jock Grierson (Eddleston), Wilson Heatlie (Boswall), Jim Howe (Corstorphine), Jim McCrone (Corstorphine), Lauchlan MacLean (Chartered Surveyors and Watsonian), Polly Ridge (Edinburgh Ladies), Jimmy Traquair (Dalkeith) and stood in silence for reflection and appreciation of their contribution to curling.

Minute of 2017 AGM: This minute, draft copies of which had been distributed to our Provinces and had been made available at the meeting, was approved and accepted on the motion of Trevor Dodds and David Munro.

Election of Area Representative 2018 - 22: There being a vacancy due to the resignation of Morgan Nicoll, and there being only one nomination for a representative, which was valid, Trevor Dodds of Oxenfoord Curling Club was elected to serve as a Representative of Edinburgh Area on the Areas Standing Committee of The Royal Caledonian Curling Club with immediate effect and until June 2021.

Business of RCCC Areas Standing Committee and other RCCC Committees: It was noted that the structure of the RCCC and its Committees was published on www.rccc.org [later to be www.scottishcurling.org]. Reports of the business of the Board and Committees are also published on that website, and members are encouraged to make use of this.

Edinburgh Area Bonspiel December 2017: This was held at Murrayfield on 1 December 2017. There was a full turnout from our three Provinces and from the RCCC, each having two teams. John Shedden took a 5 in one end which helped the East Lothian pair of teams, fellow skip Morgan Nicoll, to finish on +4. Trevor Dodds and Lindsay Scotland skipped for Midlothian and included ends of a 5 and a 4 to come off the ice also with a +4 margin. Peeblesshire skips Benny Masterton and Robert Robertson together won ten of their twelve ends but despite taking 3s late on, finished off the top. The RCCC teams organised by Area Chairman Calder Benzies and John Good together won 13 ends and finished +13 with just enough energy left to put the halter on the Black Bull Trophy and take it home till next year.

A hot shot challenge was introduced and proved popular. All 32 players had to throw one stone to the button. Points gained were determined by the finishing position of each stone, ranging from 5 for covering the screw hole to 1 if simply 'in the house'. Only one of the 32 stones achieved a score of 5, and almost a quarter failed to make the house – hardly good enough as drawing is the most basic shot in curling! East Lothian Province was congratulated on winning this competition comfortably with an aggregate of 23 points and received prizes of whisky miniatures.

Successes of Murrayfield Teams and Players 2017-18:

The principal performances of our players across the year, at home and overseas, were noted and applauded.

Strathcona Cup Tour 2018: Edinburgh Area Organising Committee:- A team of representatives of our Provinces and former Tourists had prepared and presented an excellent curling event over 30 and 31 January and 1 February 2018, in which 80 of our players curled against a total of 40 Canadians. The 'first stone' was thrown by the The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Frank Ross, himself a keen curler. The Provost of East Lothian presented a special saltire to the Canadians at lunch on the Thursday. The support of Province office bearers, ice staff, bar staff and the caterer at Murrayfield had been first class. The overall programme, including the well-attended and excellent dinner at Watsonian Rugby Club's Myreside Pavilion gave a great account of curling and curlers in Scotland's capital city.

Reports by Province Presidents of Activities and Membership:

(a) Midlothian : President Trevor Dodds was pleased to report that sponsors had been secured for two Midlothian Province competitions. The Province had sponsored the league for the first time, and the winner of that competition had been decided by the last stone of the last end. As usual, the Province League and King George IV competitions had been well contested by a number of clubs. On 30 and 31 January and 1 February 2018 The Canadian Men's Team had been welcomed by Edinburgh Area to Murrayfield for ten Strathcona Cup games, and Midlothian Province had charge of running the activities on the Wednesday. The visit had taken a lot of work by members of the Organising Committee which included representatives of the Midlothian, Peeblesshire and East Lothian Provinces.

(b) East Lothian: President David Munro's summary was that its clubs had had a good year internally. Most clubs had a good range of inter-club and friendly games with other Provinces. East Lothian players had enjoyed the Strathcona Cup event both on the ice and especially the Area Dinner.

East Lothian Province Committee was aiming to carry out a recruitment drive. For this to be successful, current curlers would have to step up and do plenty of work if all the existing clubs were to prosper – or even survive – a further 5 – 10 years.

On behalf of his Province, Mr Munro had written to Edinburgh Curling Club regarding session times for the season ahead, and had sought assurance that decisions on these would take account of work-day schedules and the time needed to travel to the rink from rural areas. It was to be hoped changes would be made to the schedule to reflect these curlers' needs.

David concluded by thanking his committee, including his Vice President Ian Donald, archivist David Affleck, website manager Graeme Maguire and Province Secretary Elinor Logan who had done a wonderful job in her first year in that capacity.

(c) Peeblesshire: Ian Rose, President, reported " All six clubs in our Province have an active curling programme with 2 mixed bonspiels, a mixed knock-out competition, Pairs and round-robin competition for the Paterson Rosebowl. As well as participating in the Area Bonspiel, the Province was honoured to play against the Canadian Tourists and, while the results might have been better, the experience, friendship, spirit and camaraderie was a pleasure. Many thanks to the Area Organising Committee for organising this event.

"Peeblesshire Province has also had discussions regarding the increasing difficulty in getting teams on the ice at the existing scheduled times, especially for 5.30 pm games."

All three Presidents were thanked for presenting their reports which served to keep Provinces and their office bearers aware of each other's programmes, successes and concerns.

Edinburgh Curling School Activities: Paul Davis reported on behalf of Kenny Findlay who was, at short notice, unable to attend. Mr Davis described the purpose and work of Edinburgh Curling School. In summary, it existed to provide 'basic' come try and corporate curling sessions for complete novices, and a structured programme for development up to club curling standard, by providing coaches with the necessary qualifications and with regulatory compliance. The 2017-18 season had seen an attendance of 330 at these sessions, an increase of 250% on the year. Corporate curling sessions, including those before 5.30 pm were increasingly in demand.

Coach recruitment and training was an important part of the activities of ECS: there was always the need for more people to become coaches. It was intended to run a 'helpers' course during the next season. Graham Young, Abigail Rennie and Graeme Maguire had given, and continued to give, a great deal of their time to coaching and this was much appreciated.

Facilities for wheelchair curlers are not good enough at present for development of this part of the market, and it was earnestly hoped the deficit would be made good by the introduction of a larger-capacity lift and toilets at clubroom level.

Mr Benzie was happy to report that Corstorphine CC had recently got new members who had been graduated from the New Stones Virtual Club.

Renovation and Improvement of Murrayfield Curling Rink: Paul Stevenson, a Director of Murrayfield Curling Ltd, welcomed the invitation to report that leading up to and during the past nine months the MCL Board had been increasingly busy making the arrangements necessary for the work of re-laying the floor to start on 3 April 2018. Work had started, and there was no reason to think the floor would not be ready for the 2018-19 season to start on schedule. The new floor was confidently expected to provide consistently better ice for curling and at less cost than had been the case. In parallel with that work, Edinburgh Curling Club had been successful in raising the funds necessary for the project to qualify for grants, and to invest in the new equipment, etc. To date, members and curling organisations had raised £402,000 to which income from Gift Aid was expected to add £75,000.

It was the intention to raise funding for the installation of new cladding for the walls of the rink, a measure which would bring big reductions in the annual cost of cooling and ventilation. Income generation and operating costs would continue to be under close scrutiny by MCL, as would any opportunity to acquire funds by gift or other advantageous means. Mr Stevenson agreed that more ways to raise interest in curling and income would be most welcome: members should be encouraged to present constructive ideas for this whether through surveys, consultation within 'special interest' group discussion or members of the board of Edinburgh Curling Club Ltd

Promotion of Curling Nationwide: Roger Scott was disappointed that curling was scarcely, if at all, covered in main stream tv and radio news broadcasts. The Chairman agreed, and undertook to report this to the next meeting of the Areas Standing Committee, and to seek assurances that the necessary efforts would be made to get our sport recognised for the national and international achievements of our top curlers as well as the social and health benefits it provides for players across the generations.

World Men's Curling Championship: Ruth Addinall reported concern that having the girls who carried the prizes to be presented clad in bikinis was inappropriate: it was noted that the Ladies Centre also took that view. After discussion it was accepted that the dress code for that event was the responsibility of the World Curling Federation, and agreed that RCCC should be aware that it was expected to observe best practice dress code in similar circumstances.

Scottish Seniors Championship : Paul Davis and Trevor Dodds raised concerns regarding (a) the last date for entries; (b) eligibility of teams/players and (c) number of times a team can be required to play on any day. Calder Benzie undertook to consult with Paul and Trevor to get further detail, and to raise the matter at the next meeting of the ASC.

Strathcona Cup Games at Murrayfield – Ice : Ian Keron considered the ice on sheet 1 allocated for this event was “dreadful”, and said other players had had the same experience. Paul Stevenson stated the organising committee should have refused to accept the allocation of that sheet for play in its event. It was to be hoped that the installation of the new floor would mean that, barring exceptional causes, there would be no need for adjustment of ice allocation for any event.

The business having been completed, the Chair closed the meeting. Andrew Hepburn gave a vote of thanks to the Chair