

PENTLAND CANOE CLUB

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25 November 2023 at the Pentland Firth Yacht Club.

Present:

Ken Nicol (phone)	Ben MacGregor	Nancy Speirs
John Speirs	Sam Robinson	Neil Parkin
Ishbel Ford	Leanne Deighan	Emma Summers
Anne Chard	Dave Anderson	Christine Deighan
David Shand	Mike Grain	Brian Arrowsmith
Silvia Bonati	Anne Grain	Emily Way
Tracy Mackay	Gary Youngson	Martin Lord

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Gary Stronach; Eilidh Stronach; Tom Whelan; James Wyllie; Ava Deighan; Shaun Forbes; Lorna Stanger; Trisha Sutherland; Ian Borland; Iain Baikie; Neil Foubister; Chris Parkinson; Cassandra Abousamak; Emily Kearn; Andy Ford; Louise Litchfield; Yvonne Pollard; Caz Cundall.

2. Minutes of the 2022 AGM and 2023 EGM

2022 AGM

The draft minutes had previously circulated on 15 November 2022 to the 2022 AGM attendees for comment. No comments had been received. The draft minutes had also been sent out to the membership prior to the meeting.

The following corrections were noted in the DRAFT minutes:

- Item 4 (Treasurers Report): the second Bullet point should read:
“There was an increase in membership income compared to 2020/2.”

This was due to COVID when members were given a 12 month extension to their membership.”

- Item 5 (Constitution): the final sentence should read “*The meeting noted that with the proposed revisions being accepted, the current version of the Constitution would be Issue 13 dated November 2022.*”
- Item 7 (Membership and Equipment Fees: Under Membership fees, the sentence should read “*Following a discussion, those present agreed the 2023 Membership Fees would be unchanged.*”
- Item 9 (AOCB) The bullet point should read “” Gary Youngson advised those present that there was a plan to again offer training towards kayak awards on evenings next year.
- Mike Grain identified some typos. These would be sent to the Secretary.

With these minor corrections the minutes were proposed Gary Youngson and seconded by David Shand.

2023 EGM

The draft minutes of an EGM held in April 2023 had previously circulated to the attendees for comment. No comments had been received. The draft minutes had also been sent out to the membership prior to the meeting.

The minutes were proposed David Shand and seconded by Ben McGregor.

3. Chairperson’s Report

The Chair (G Youngson) presented his report. A copy is given in Appendix 1. The Chair invited comments and questions.

- Anne Grain commented that a First Aid course was also held in January 2023 with 9 attendees from the Club.
- Neil Parkin thanked the members for stepping in and taking over the lead for the containers project when he was not able to continue leading it.

There were no further comments or questions.

4. Treasurers Report

The Treasurer was not present. Gary Youngson gave an overview of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022. A copy is attached in Appendix 2. As of 31 March 2023, the Club had £19,154.10 in the funds.

In presenting the accounts, the following comments

- Actual Bank Balance on 31st March was £19,350.09 - difference was due to 2 cheques (No 659 - £100; No 671 - £95.99) issued in the year 2022/23 year but not presented until after 31 March 2023
- There was a loss in the year of £3,390. This was primarily due to the costs incurred for the Storage Project which had expenditure of £4380 more than income. Removing this extraordinary project gives a surplus on normal operating costs of £990.
- Income for the Storage Project also includes a £300 compensation payment from the Royal Bank of Scotland in response to the Secretary's complaint about their refusal of the initial cheque payment for the purchase of the new containers.

The 2022/2023 Financial Accounts were **accepted** by those present.

Additionally, the meeting was informed:

- that since the 1 April 2023, the Club had significant expenditure to acquire new kayaks (approximately £3300).
- It was noted that as the Treasurer was not present, the balance of the accounts could not be given. The Secretary agreed to provide this following the AGM.

[Secretary's Note: At 16 November 2023, the PCC Account Balance was £20,635.25]

- that the costs incurred for storage facilities project was across 2 financial years. The meeting noted that the cost of purchasing the new storage facilities and cladding 2 containers was approximately £21723.95

(excluding in kind costs) or about £24470 (including in kind costs from voluntary work). A total of approximately £20000 had been received in grant aid from the Caithness & North Sutherland Fund (£9552.78); the Baillie Wind Farm Community Fund (£9552.78); the Caithness Sports Council (£500); an anonymous donor (£100) and £300 compensation payment from the Royal Bank of Scotland. Therefore the total Club contribution (cash and in kind) to the project was about 18% of the total cost.

- It was noted that as more members are paying via bank transfer this is causing some difficulties in reconciling payments intra-month as the Club current bank does not have an online portal but only a monthly paper statement. Options are being reviewed with the bank, but it may require additional operational and/or transaction costs. No concerns were raised by the members present at the meeting.

At the request of Treasurer, the meeting recorded a debt of gratitude to the Secretary for him paying for the containers following the initial failure to honour our cheque by the bank & thereby saving the Club the new price quoted by the supplier if payment was not completed.

5. Constitution Revision

The Secretary stated that there no proposals to amend the Club Constitution.

The meeting **noted** that, with no revisions, the current version of the Constitution is Issue 13 dated November 2022.

The Secretary informed the meeting that Silvia Bonati was leading a project to revise the Constitution to all the Club to become a Charity (SCIO). Once finalised, this document would need to be presented to the membership for Approval.

6. Election of 2024 Committee

A number of nominations had been received by the Secretary prior to the meeting. These were: Gary Youngson (Chair); Gary Stronach (Treasurer); Emma Summers (WPO), Silvia Bonati, Luke Brown, John Speirs, Nancy Speirs; Iain Baikie; K Nicol (Secretary); Eilidh Stronach; David Shand; Chris Parkinson; Emily Kearl, Brian Arrowsmith and Yvonne Pollard (pending acceptance). All agreed to serve on the Committee.

[Secretary Note: On 27 November 2023, Yvonne Pollard accepted the nomination to serve on the Committee.]

The meeting **agreed** that all should serve on the Committee by co-opting 5 additional nominees onto the Committee from 1 January 2024. The Secretary explained that this would assist with the transition to a Charity where the Club could have up to 14 Trustees and assist with succession planning.

The Committee from 1 January 2024 being:

Post	Name
Chair	Gary Youngson
Secretary	Ken Nicol
Treasurer	Gary Stronach
Wellbeing & Protection Officer	Emma Summers
Post	Name
Non – Executive	Luke Brown
Non – Executive	John Speirs
Non – Executive	Nancy Speirs
Non – Executive	Silvia Bonati
Non – Executive	Iain Baikie
Co-opted	Chris Parkinson
	Emily Kearl
	David Shand

Independent Accounts
Examiner

Eilidh Stronach
Brian Arrowsmith
Yvonne Pollard

To be agreed by the Treasurer /
Committee

APPROVED - 23 Nov 2024

7. Membership Fees, Equipment and Other Fees

Membership Fees

The Membership was reminded that the membership fees were used primarily to pay the Club's overhead costs (insurance, membership, store maintenance).

The Chair explained there were 2 options:

- Maintain the fees at the 2023 rate. Or
- Raise the fees to reflect the current inflation.

Those present **agreed** an increase in the fees of 5% (rounded to the nearest pound), and to offer the current year prices if 2024 membership fees were paid before the end of the calendar year.

The 2024 Fees being:

Membership Categories	2024 Membership Fees	
	Non SCA Member	SCA Member
Full (Person aged over 18)	£58	£52
Concession	£42	£37
Family (2 adults and 2 youths under 18)	£90	£78
Young Person (Person aged 14-17)	£31	£26
Junior (under 14)	£16	£16
Affiliate (Individuals living outside of the KW1 - 8; KW11 - KW14 postcode areas):	50% of the relevant membership category	

Equipment Fees

The Membership was informed that this income was used purchase and maintain the Club's fleet of kayaks/canoes and other paddling equipment. Those present **agreed** to the maintain the equipment fees at the current rates.

The 2024 Fees being:

Membership	Event	2024 Equipment Fees
Members	Summer Evening Sessions	£5.00
	Day Trip	£10.00 (adults) £5.00 (Concession/ Young Person)
	Other activities	£15/day
Non Members	Member of an SCA Affiliated Club	As per Club Member
	Attending Club Come & Try Activity	As per Club members
	Evening Sessions and day trip	Double the Club member rate
	Other Activities	£40 (1 day); £90 (3 days); £140 (7 days)

Pool Fees

The meeting was reminded that the income from the pool sessions was used to assist with the costs to replace pool equipment or subsidise pool sessions (should the Club need to hire the pool in the future).

The meeting was informed that at a recent Committee meeting, it had been suggested that the pool fees should be reviewed / increased. The current fees had been frozen at £1 (members) for many years.

Following a discussion, the meeting **agreed** revise pool session fees as follows:

	Adult	Junior / Youth
Members	£2	£1
Non Members (Come & Try – 2 sessions)	£2	£1

The new fees will be effective from 1st January 2024.

8. Awards

a) Broken Paddle

The Clubs first award and dates back to 1984. This is given to the most interesting mishap which has occurred whilst canoeing.

Nominations:

The Chair informed the meeting that there had been 6 nominations:

Nomination 1

Apparently, a whole group managed to capsize on a paddle. Appears to have happen when. landing and launching from the beach at Neave. 2 capsized whilst landing on Neave, one when leaving and one taken out rescuing. Apparently, Luke had 2 arms and a leg in the air before he was taken out by a wave. Plenty of sandy faces but no apparent photos.

The nominee: **Luke Brown**

Nomination 2

"Mount Ararat Noah Ark" impression after a wave pushed him high up on a rock on a paddle to Brough.

The nominee: **John Speirs**

Nomination 3

On a paddle from Freswick to Auckengill at the Freswick Castle event. On the return paddle, while paddling along the surf line a larger wave picked up and dumped the individual's kayak onto the rocks. Another wave then swamped her, and she was unceremoniously dumped into the waves and a rescue had to be executed.

The nominee: **Marcella Thompson**

Nomination 4

For capsizing at Dunbeath whilst trying to adjust / start is video camera. He had just launched his boat after landing on the beach.

The nominee: **Brian Arrowsmith**

Nomination 5

Early sea paddle of the year or thereabouts, paddling north from Lybster. The individual was looking at a largeish group of rocks to paddle/surf through. There was a straight through route, however there was a cross flow part of the way through and an overflow that could not be seen. Gerald went in close for a look,

he was picked up by a wave and pushed into the through route. Unfortunately, a cross wave pushed him into the rock face, and he capsized. He rolled up but was caught in the cross flows, capsizing a further 3 or 4 times, rolling up each time, before being spat out backwards. Costing him his Shetland beanie.

The nominee: **Gerald Urquhart**

Nomination 6

The details are a bit vague of the event. On a paddling trip at Dornie, near Skye. A late night search team went to find two members of the group believed to be in a local bar. When found, they kept them company until the small hours to make sure they got home safely.

On the way back to camp one of the search team fell in a ditch. In the morning they were finding difficulty walking and had to get their ankle bandaged and missed the trip through Kylerhea.

The nominee: **Emma Summers**

Following a vote, those present **agreed** that the Award should go to **Gerald Urquhart** (Nomination 5).

b) **Improver**

The award was first presented in 1991 and is given to an individual who is considered to have improved their paddlesport skills during the year. The recipient was selected by the Club Coaches.

The recipient for the award was **Chris Parkinson**.

c) **Sea Voyage Trophy**

The trophy was donated by Terry Jones (one of the Founder members of the Club). This is awarded annually to the person, who in the opinion of the Committee was responsible for the best sea kayaking expedition / trip of the year.

In considering the recipient, the Committee considers the number of people who took part and the “enjoyment” due to weather, exploring, scenery and distance.

This was awarded to **Iain Baikie** for his evening paddle between Freswick Bay and Duncansby Stacks. The highlight of the

evening was the Orca “attack” on the group in Freswick Bay. Photos of the encounter were taken by individuals from the shore and reached the media.

9. AOCB

- Gary Youngson raised the popularity of the pool sessions this year. There was a discussion on the possibility to schedule 4 sessions instead of 3 to allow more people to attend. The members present were in **agreement** to this suggestion.
- Silvia Bonati gave an update on the work to move to a Charitable Body. She highlighted that a draft version of the constitution is close to be finalised once Gary Stronach completes some amendments to the accounts and audit clauses.
Gary Youngson stated that an EGM will be organised at the start of 2024 to discuss and approve the new constitution once this is finalised.
- Ken Nicol informed those present that The SCA Club Volunteer Conference should in late April 2024 and encouraged coaches, committee members and helpers to attend.
- Nancy Speirs reminded those present that 2024 was the 40th Anniversary of the Club.
 - An event was being planned on the 29 March 2024. The meeting **agreed** the £350 costs for the music for the evening.
 - Discussions were on-going to have a 40 year anniversary logo and have a banner made to display at the start to the season.

Gary Youngson closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and to the Pentland Firth Yacht Club for the use of their facilities.

Appendix 1: Chairman's Report (2022 to 2023)

Chair's Report (2022 to 2023)

We have had a busy year with sea and pool activities with lots of new faces attending. We also settling in and adjusted to our new abode here at Scrabster.

Membership

2023 has been a good year for Club membership with 60 paid members. This is believed to be the largest membership in the Club's 39 year history. This bodes well for our future. Of the membership, we have 53% are female.

Transition to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

At the 2022 AGM, a question was raised concerning liability to the membership. Following this, work was undertaken, and the conclusion was that the Club should move to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). This was agreed to, and an EGM held in April. Since then, work has been on going to draft a revised constitution to meet the legal requirements of a SCIO. My thanks go especially to Silvia Bonati who volunteered for this one and Ken Nicol for their work to date on this.

In the near future there will be an EGM of the membership to discuss the revised Constitution and the next stage.

Club Stores

The Club now has 4 stores (3 containers at Scrabster, a container at Thurso Leisure Centre, the internal store in the Leisure Centre for the pool kayaks and the box trailer at Halkirk.

During the year, 2 containers were clad and roofed to extend the life expectancy of these. We could not have completed these tasks without the support of our members who volunteered and give up their time and provided their DIY expertise to design, paint, drill, weld, construct the cladding and the roof of these containers to extend their life expectancy but also to transform their appearance.

Neil Parkin was the original project engineer at the start of the project and the name *HILL BILLY ENGINEERING* was born. Thank you, Neil.

We proceeded on to the next container with many learns. I believe we are now a fully-fledged Roofing and Cladding Team ready for new projects.

The old Club store on the Thurso Esplanade was finally demolished by Highland Council in July 2023. This store served as a base for the Club for over 30 years and the building was part of the Thurso beach landscape for a long time. So it will be missed by everyone.

Our thank are recorded to the Scrabster Harbour Trust for the use of use of the ground for 3 containers.

Equipment

During the year 4 new kayaks were purchased. These were 2 Sit on Tops and 2 double kayaks. These were purchased to allow to the sport to be more accessible to all. This represented an investment of around £3300.

Funding

The Club is very grateful for to the Caithness Sports Council for providing financial support of £200 for the purchase of the 2 Sit on Tops.

Wellbeing and Protection

Emma Summers, our Wellbeing and Protection Officer.

This involves a lot of work ensuring as a club we keep everything up to date. Getting this right is absolutely essential. Thank you, Emma.

Events

Our new season started on the 11th May F2 and 12' C. We had 32 boats out that night, a possible club record. We completed the season a week early due to weather with 25 boats out and F3 AND 20°C.

The sessions were well attended, and much experience and enjoyment gained from our new and existing members.

Our success and our ability to run these Thursday night outdoor activities and pool sessions are only possible with our coaches, leaders, and helpers. Thank you.

The share and use of the yacht club facilities has certainly provided a different dynamic to our club activity. Thank you to PFYC.

Thank you to Emily Kearl who wrote an article for the local paper about the successful summer evening sessions.

Various trips took place during the year:

- Trip to the West Coast based at Dornie. Although the first day was a bit wet and windy, the group got a perfect day to paddle through Kyclerhea. A first for the majority of the group
- An overnight trip from Nigg to Portmahomock. During the trip, the group was accompanied by a large group of dolphins who put on a fine display.
- A group also paddled from Meikle Ferry to Bonar Bridge, this was the first time the Club had undertaken this trip.
- A group paddled down the Spey a first for many too.
- A group paddled around Stroma circumnavigating the Island from John O Groats in favourable conditions again a first for many.

- the “annual” outing to Freswick Castle. Thank you to Ben MacGregor for organising this event again this year and Murray Watts for the use of the Castle and grounds.

Other events included:

- First Watersports Day in nearly 10 years in a roasting June ran by PFYC with various water sports clubs in attendance. Our session never stopped, and we were steady all day with over 30 having a go. A great success. Thank you to all who helped organize and run the event.
- In the Summer, the Club was asked to provide assistance to the Caithness Agriculture Show. Unfortunately, due to the late notice the Club was unable to assist.

Courses and Training

A number of Club members attended the SCA Club Volunteer Conference at Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore. By all accounts they had a good time gaining new skills and knowledge.

Gary Youngson & Ian Baikie, supported by John Speirs ran multi club training over the summer to help people gain experience and work towards the Sea Kayak Leader award. This was very well attended and was a big success. Congratulations to Luke Brown who gained the award.

David Shand working towards sea kayak leader award. We hope that these Club members will continue to gain further awards in the sport.

The Club can always benefit from more qualified coaches and leaders. If you are interested in finding out what is involved, please ask. Eilidh Stroncah is keen to go for coach award. Hopefully the likes of Chris Parkinson, Emily Kearl and Silvia Bonati and others may consider.

The Winter pool sessions have just commenced, I am delighted by interest shown in the Come & Try Sessions. We are working on full capacity of 3 x 10 sessions and are finding having a waiting list we may have to implement 4 sessions to accommodate. As ever we are grateful to the Thurso Leisure Centre staff for their support and assistance in running the pool sessions.

Staff had there come and try session which went really well over 8 staff attended which allowed them to experience the session in the water.

Youth Organisation sessions: 2 Scout sessions and 1 Guide session were organised at the Thurso Leisure Centre.

Again these sessions can only go ahead with volunteers from our coaching community and helpers. Thank you.

Repair shop class. Sam Robinson kindly ran a class on Skeg replacement / repair for our sea kayaks. For all it was a first and quite an involved process which we all enjoyed. Thank you, Sam.,

As part of the Big Paddle Clean Up (a National campaign) were organized by Nancy and John Speirs. 3 in Caithness and one at Dornie. Over 1.5te of Plastic was removed. The Club worked closely with the Caithness Beach Cleans team. The Clubs efforts received media interest partly helped by David Shand's Message in a Bottle – that is another Story.

Ken Nicol ran the following British canoeing Awarding Body Courses

- Foundation Module (Swimming Pools and Paddlesport) (14 attendees and 4 refreshing)
- Coastal Navigational and Tidal Planning (10 attendees)
- 2 Paddlesport Safety & Rescue Courses (16 attendees)
- Paddlesafer Module (9 people gained the award)
- Start Award (7 gained the award)

A special mention to Ken who provided the training and assessment which takes up a lot of his time preparing and delivering. We are so lucky to have him within our club and on our doorstep. Thank you, Ken.

Other Points of Interest

There are some other points worth noting.

- After a selection process 2 of our junior members (Maree Ford and Ava Deighan) are part of an 11 strong SCA programme – Fit for Girls. The aim of the programme is for participants to encourage more young girls to take up the sport. I look forward to the Club supporting them with this work.
- Nancy Speirs and Emma Summers are now part of the SCA Environmental Committee. It is great to see Club members being involved with the SCA and this area of work.
- Ken Nicol was asked to join the British Canoeing National Honours and Awards Panel.
- Ken Nicol is now a trainer for the new Sea Kayak Safety & Rescue course.
- A representative from Scottish ClubSport visited Caithness in the early Summer and was shown how the Club had recovered from the loss of the Club Store in 2022. Following this, Ken Nicol was invited to their Annual Conference in Stirling to give a short presentation on the Club and how we work with Stakeholders. This was a fantastic stage to promote the Club with the Chief executives from the Scottish Sports Council and the Scottish Canoe Association being in the audience. He has certainly put our club on the map.

The committee and coaches have put in a lot of work keeping the club active as possible. Ken (Nicol) The Club Secretary does a massive amount of work to keep the club running so smooth. Also to Gary Stronach, who manages to

find the time to look after the Club's finances. (Thank you for your continued efforts).

Gary Youngson

APPROVED - 23 Nov 2024

Appendix 2: 2022/2023 Accounts



Statement of Accounts for the Year ending 31st March 2023

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Balance c/f	22,544.41	CSC	20.00
Subscriptions	2,018.00	SCA	120.00
Pool	336.16	PFYC	500.00
		Refund	180.00
Equipment	598.35	Equipment	645.53
Store Project	16,463.78	Store Project	20,844.34
		Insurance	204.80
Course Fees	1,080.00	Course Fees	1,080.00
Donations	25.00	Donations	100
		Website	120.40
		Gifts	100.00
Easy Fundraising	34.92	AGM Trophys	31.45
		Cash	
		Bank	19,154.10
	43,100.62		43,100.62

G Stronach

G Stronach
Treasurer

K Nicol
Secretary

Heather Thomson

H Thomson
Independent Examiner

22/11/23

APPROVED - 23 Nov 2024