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PENTLAND CANOE CLUB

Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting held on 23 November 2024 at the Pentland Firth Yacht Club, Scrabster, Thurso KW14 7UJ.

Present:

Ken Nicol	Gary Youngson	Nancy Speirs
John Speirs	Emma Summers	Chris Parkinson
Ishbel Ford	Leanne Deighan	David Lord
Anne Chard	Dave Anderson	Marjory Lord
David Shand	Bruce Manson	Brian Arrowsmith
Tracy Mackay	Yvonne Pollard	Ian Borland
Patricia Sutherland	Iain Baikie	Eilidh Stronach
Ben MacGregor	Luke Brown	Emily Kearl

The Chair (G Youngson) opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees to the meeting. He noted that this was the first Annual Members Meeting for the Club as a Scottish Charity Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Gary Stronach; Isobel Stronach; Mike Grain; Anne Grain; Richard Hunt; Sally Long; Matthew Long; Louise Litchfield; Silvia Bonati, Tom Whelan; Ruth Mantle; Martin Lord; Lorna Stanger; Charley Carroll; Gerald Urquhart; Zoe Wallace; Emily Wallace; Neil Foubister; Ava Deighan; Caz Cundall; Cassandra Abousamak; Macella Thompson

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2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM and 2024 EGM

2023 AGM

The Secretary stated that the draft minutes had previously circulated on 28 November 2023 to the 2023 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:

- D Shand highlighted a minor spelling correction on Page 15. This was noted and should read
“Nancy Speirs and Emma Summers are now part of the SCA....”

- *Resolution 1: To Approve Minutes of the 2023 AGM*

With these minor corrections the minutes were proposed David Shand and seconded by David Anderson. The minutes were **APPROVED**.

2024 EGM

The Secretary stated the draft minutes of an EGM held 24 February 2024 had previously been circulated to the attendees for comment. The draft minutes had also been sent out to the membership prior to the meeting. No comments were noted

- *Resolution 2: To Approve Minutes of the 2024 2024 EGM (24 February 2024)*

The minutes were proposed Emily Kearl and seconded by David Shand.

The minutes were **APPROVED**.

3. Chairperson's Report

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

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During the report, the Chair commented that with respect to the Multi Agency Exercise, those Club members participating had reviewed the exercise for lessons learnt.

The Chair invited comments / questions on his report.

- John Speirs commented that thanks should also be recorded to Emma Summers for her support in assisting to organise beach cleans.

There were further comments or questions.

- *Resolution 3: To Accept the Chair's Report*

Those presented **ACCEPTED** the Chair's Report

4. Treasurers Report

The Treasurer was not present. Ken Nicol gave an overview of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2024. A copy is attached in Appendix 2.

In presenting the accounts, the following comments were made

- The accounts were for the Club when it was an unincorporated association.
- As of 31 March 2024, the Club had £23891.19 in the funds.
- This represented a surplus of £4832.15, this mainly being due to grant payments to the Club for the new storage containers.

Following a question on the current banking arrangements, Ken Nicol explained that:

- Online banking was available with the current banking account. However, he explained that the Club was now required, as being a SCIO, to open a new bank account and apply for online banking.
- With the new banking arrangements, the Club should be able to access a savings account. Marjory Lord suggested looking to the Hampshire Trust Bank.

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In response to a question, Ken Nicol gave an explanation of the arrangements, with Scrabster Harbour Trust, for the containers.

- *Resolution 4: To Accept the 2023/24 Accounts*

The 2023/2024 Financial Accounts were **ACCEPTED** by those present.

Ken Nicol gave an overview of the accounts for the year period 1 – 22 April 2024.

In presenting the accounts, the following comments were made

- This was the last accounts for the Club as an unincorporated association
- The Balance on 23 April 2024 was £23473.52. This was the final day of the Club being an unincorporated association. These funds were donated to the new entity (the Charity)
- In becoming a Charity, all the assets from the unincorporated organisation had been transferred to the Charity. This being recorded in the Committee/Board minutes of 21 May 2024

The 2023/2024 Financial Accounts were **NOTED** by those present.

The meeting **NOTED** that the first set of Accounts for the Charity would cover about an eleven month period (23 April 2024 to 31 March 2025). These were required to be submitted to OSCR by 31 December 2025.

5. Constitution & Operating Procedure (Governance & Management)

The Secretary stated that because of the introduction of the Paddle Scotland Standards for Deployment and a Paddle Scotland's requirement to remove Disciplinary Policy/ Process from Clubs' constitution several changes to documents were required. This included a standalone Disciplinary Policy/Process.

The proposed Constitution amendments had been circulated to the Board for comment prior to presentation at the Meeting.

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- *Resolution 5: To Approve the Proposed amendments to the Constitution*

The proposed amendments had been circulated in advance to the members. K Nicol explained the key revision was to the Section “Grievance, discipline and appeals”. The clause now just requires the Club to have a Policy/procedure. The process details on disciplinary matters being removed and would be included in a separate document, which was being discussed later on the agenda. There was also a minor revision to Clause 126. He stated that all changes were highlighted.

The proposed Constitution was proposed by David Shand and seconded by Chris Parkinson. Those presented **APPROVED** the proposed Constitution.

The meeting noted that, the current version of the Constitution was now Issue 15 dated November 2024.

- *Resolution 6: To Approve the amendments to the Operating Procedure (Governance & Management)*

The proposed amendments had been circulated in advance to the members. K Nicol explained the key revisions where to align with the requirements of the Paddle Scotland New Standard for Deployment (eg the requirement to have a safety officer); a new Section on wellbeing & safeguarding added with the revision of the Appendix 1. The Section on Incidents and accidents and Appendix 2 had been updated; and a New Section on Grievance, discipline and appeals added. He stated that all changes were highlighted.

Following a question, Ken Nicol gave his understanding on why Paddle Scotland had introduced the new Standard for Deployment.

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The proposed Constitution was proposed by David Lord and seconded by Emily Kearl. Those present **APPROVED** the proposed Operating Procedure.

The meeting noted that, the current version of the Operating Procedure was now Issue 2 dated November 2024.

- *Resolution 7: To Approve the proposed Disciplinary Policy*
Ken Nicol explained that this was a new standalone document as required by Paddle Scotland. This replaces the disciplinary process detailed in Issue 14 of the Club's Constitution. Within the documents, Appendix 1 is based upon the recommended Paddle Scotland Template.

The proposed amendments had been circulated in advance to the members. He noted that technically the approval of the Board was only required, however, to meet the timescales of Paddle Scotland, the Policy had been brought to the members meeting for Approval.

The proposed Policy was proposed by Emily Kearl and seconded by David Lord. Those present, which included 10 Board Members, **APPROVED** the Policy.

The Secretary informed those present that the revised documents would now be submitted to Paddle Scotland.

6. Election of Board Members

The Secretary explained that in establishing the Charitable Body of the Club the Initial Board members were the Committee members who signed the Charity Trustee declaration forms. Not all Committee members had signed/returned forms. With exception of the first year, Board Members are appointed for a period of 3 years (Clause 71). Technically all the initial Trustees

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were required to retire (Clause 73). Therefore to establish a 3 year rota, as required by Clause 75 the Board had discussed and approved a retiral schedule at the Board meeting on 21 May 2024.

- *Resolution 8: To Approve Proposed Board Members & Retiral Dates*

Ken Nicol explained that Board was looking to reappoint all the Board Members with a defined retiral year. The schedule for rotation had been Agreed at the Board meeting held on 21 May 2024

Those present, **AGREED** to appointments and retiral schedule.

Board Member Retiral		
2024	2025	2026
Ken Nicol (Secretary)	Gary Stronach (Treasurer)	Gary Youngson (Chair)
Emma Summers	Iain Baikie	Chris Parkinson
Nancy Speirs	Silvia Bonati	David Shand
John Speirs	Eilidh Stronach	Emily Kearl
		Yvonne Pollard

Based on this Agreed Board retiral schedule, K Nicol (Secretary); E Summers (WPO); N Speirs and John Speirs were now required to retire but were eligible for re-election. Additionally C Parkinson had indicated, prior to the meeting, that he wished to retire for personal reasons.

- *Resolution 9: The Appointment of a Secretary*

The Chair stated that Ken Nicol was required to retire as Secretary but under Clause 71 was eligible for re-election.

K Nicol had been nominated and agreed that that he was willing to stand for election. However this was on the understanding that support was given to him on certain areas on running the Club.

There were no other nominations.

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The meeting **AGREED** to the appointment of Ken Nicol as Secretary to 2027 Annual Members Meeting

- *Resolution 10: Appointment of up to 6 Board Members*

The Secretary stated that based on the retiral schedule and the retiral on C Parkinson, the appointment of up to 6 Board members was sought. E Summers; J Speirs; N Speirs had been nominated and agreed that that they were willing to stand for re-election.

The Secretary informed the meeting L Deighan, T Mackay and D Anderson had been nominated and agreed that that they were willing to stand for election.

There were no other nominations.

The meeting **Agreed** to the appointment of E Summers; N Speirs; J Speirs; L Deighan; T Mackay and D Anderson as Board Members to 2027 Annual Members Meeting.

The meeting noted that the 2025 Board from 1 January 2025 being:

Post	Name	Retiral
Chair	Gary Youngson	2026
Secretary	Ken Nicol	2027
Treasurer	Gary Stronach	2025
Wellbeing & Protection Officer	Emma Summers	2027
Safety Officer	Emily Kearl	2026
Member	Iain Baikie	2025
Member	Silvia Bonati	2025
Member	Eilidh Stronach	2025
Member	David Shand	2026
Member	Yvonne Pollard	2026

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Member	John Speirs	2027
Member	Nancy Speirs	2027
Member	Leanne Deighan	2027
Member	Tracy Mackay	2027
Member	David Anderson	2027

7. Appointment of Independent Accounts Examiner

- *Resolution 11: The Appointment of an Independent Accounts Examiner*
Those present **AGREED** to leave this appointment for the Treasurer and Board

8. Membership Fees, Equipment and Other Fees

- *Resolution 12: To Agree the 2025 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 stated that the Treasurer had recommended not increasing for 2025 and to review for 2026.

Those present **AGREED** to the 2025 membership fees being:

Membership Categories	2025 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

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Affiliate (Individuals living outside of the KW1 - 8; KW11 - KW14 postcode areas):	50% of the relevant membership category
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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.

The recommendation of the Treasurer was not to increase the equipment fees for 2025 and review for 2026

Those present **AGREED** to the 2025 equipment rates being:

Membership	Event	2025 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).

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Those present **AGREED** to maintaining the pool fees at the current rates:

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

All new fees will be effective from 1st January 2025.

9. Honorary Membership

The Chair introduced this agenda item by stating that the Board was recommending an Honorary Membership to Mike Lambert.

The Chair explained that Mike Lambert is a Former Under 23 GB Sprint paddler. In 2024, in a journey marked by resilience, dedication and an unwavering spirit, Mike Lambert concluded his solo kayak circumnavigation attempt of mainland UK. While he did not surpass Dougal Glaisher's world record, Mike's time of 58 days makes him the second-fastest person to achieve this remarkable feat. During Mike's paddle, he became storm bound in Thurso for 7 days, which was a major impact on his record attempt. During his time in Thurso, he became a friend of the Club's and supported some events. During the remainder of his paddle, and since, he has promoted the Club and welcome he received in Caithness. In September he returned to Caithness to say thank you.

- *Resolution 13: To Approve Mike Lambert as an Honorary Member*

Those present **AGREED** to Mike Lambert being an Honorary member of the Club.

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10. AOCB

Digital Online Banking

On behalf of the Treasurer, Ken Nicol explained that as a Charity, the Club had been required to new bank account. The old account had an online facility. In order to open a new online banking facility for the new account, this had to be formally agreed to.

- *Resolution 14: To Agree to the Club applying for an Online Banking facility*

The Meeting **AGREED** to the resolution.

Annual Members Meetings

Ken Nicol reported that the Treasurer was recommending holding future Annual Members Meetings in early October in order to meet reporting timescales to OSCR. There was a suggestion that the meetings should be held on a weekday.

Views of the membership were sought and there was general agreement.

Reduced Membership Fees for Other Paddlesport Club members

The Caithness Kayak Club had asked if we would be interested in having a reduced membership for members from Caithness Kayak Club (CKC) and East Sutherland Canoe Club (ESCC). The meeting noted that reduced memberships were already available to ESCC via Associate Membership (available to those outside the KW1 - 8; KW11 - KW14 postcode areas).

K Nicol explained this could be based upon residential postcode

The meeting **AGREED** that the Board can investigate and set an appropriate discount as appropriate

11. Awards

- **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 5 nominations:

Nomination 1

This individual, capsized in a cave again, at Noss Head on an evening paddle on 15 August paddle, keeping his yearly habit. The nominee: **Iain Baikie**

Nomination 2

A group were exploring the west side of Armadale Bay. A couple of the group heard a whistle and went to find out what was wrong. There was the nominee out of their kayak at the end of a narrow inlet / cave. They were pulled out and rescued.

During the year this individual has had a number of inadvertent capsizes!

The Nominee: **Brian Arrowsmith.**

Nomination 3

This individual, capsized on the river whilst learning to play. Not the warmest time of year to go swimming. They forgot to hold onto their Kayak. Fortunately David was on hand to retrieve the kayak before it disappeared down the river.

The Nominee: **Emily Kearl.**

Nomination 4

On a river from Loch More to Loch Gaineimh, the group were paddling along. Then there was a member who decided to capsize. They learned the hard way to secure their glasses next time. As far as we know the gasses are still somewhere in the peaty mud. They might be found by archaeologists in the future.

The Nominee: **David Anderson**

Nomination 5

During a trip up the west side of Strathy Point. The individual paddled into a tapering Geo, with a pour over, before opening out behind the obstruction. On reaching the obstruction they managed to get wedged across the gap. A bow rescue was them supported until other waves came and they could be manoeuvred into a position where they could continue into the

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Geo behind the obstruction. They needed to be persuaded to let go of the rescue boat initially. They continued in, turned and came back out through the pour over.

The Nominee: **Emma Summers**

Following a vote, those present **AGREED** that the Award should go to **Brain Arrowsmith** (Nomination 2).

- **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 **Yvonne Pollard**.

Certificates were awarded to Leanne Deighan and Tom Whelan.

- **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.

Nomination 1

West sea kayak trip exploring Summer Isles. 8 paddlers kayaking and camping from Port a Baigh
Visited Tannara Mor, Meal nan Gabhar, Horse Island, Eilean Dubh and Achnahaird.
Organiser **Ken Nicol**

Nomination 2

Weekend paddling trip based at Tongue. A first trip for many. Explored Rabbit Isles and then out to Eilean nan Ron. Near perfect conditions. The second day was a slightly more challenging day and involved a smaller group going out from

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Portskerra for an explore.
16 Paddlers on the water for the first day.
Organiser: **John Speirs**

Following a vote, those present **AGREED** that the Award should go to **John Speirs** (Nomination 2).

Finally the Chair highlighted some people who forget things at Club events. These included.

- Eilidh Stronach: Forgetting her paddling trousers on a trip from Dunbeath. Brian Arrowsmith had a spare waterproof
- Yvonne Pollard: forgetting her helmet on a Thursday evening session. Luckily the Club had a spare helmet
- David Shand: forgetting his poles for the tent on a camping trip to the Summer Isles. Shona Comrie had a solution
- Brian Arrowsmith: forgetting his food/lunch for a 9 hour paddle around the summer isles

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

APPROVED 9 October 2025

Appendix 1: Chairman's Report (2024)

Chair's Report (2024)

The Club has had another busy year with well attended sessions despite the worst summer in a while!!

40th Anniversary

The Club had our 40th Anniversary and various events throughout the year.

- The dinner /dance Pentland well attended with past chairs and original members join for a great night. The evening raised over £1,500 (net). From this a donation of £375 was given to each of the RNLI Branches in Wick and Thurso. Our thanks go to our social committee lead by Nancy Speirs and her team for organising.
- Freswick Castle paddle / barbeque in July. This saw 3 groups on the water with members from the Caithness Kayak and East Sutherland Clubs attending. Our thanks go to Murray Watts for hosting and allowing the Club access to the castle and Ben Macgregor and Nancy Speirs for organizing.
- Articles also appeared in the local press and in the Scottish Paddler magazine kindly written up by Emily Kearn

Membership

The membership is healthy with around the 60 members with some new members joining in the year. The membership is evenly split between male and female members.

Beach Cleans

Beach Cleans were undertaken with Nancy and John Speirs leading volunteers from the club assisting the Caithness Beach Cleans. Beaches

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tackled this year included Helmsdale and Huna. Again, an article featured in the Scottish Paddler magazine. Thank you again to those organising this and those who have kindly volunteered a very worthwhile cause indeed.

Paddle Scotland (formally the Scottish Canoe Association)

Paddle Scotland has introduced new standards of deployment for our key volunteers involved with running our clubs. There is an implementation date by the end of this year.

No doubt most of you have been chased by Silvia Bonati to complete some key training.

The Club is represented on Access & Environmental Group by Emma Summers and Nancy Speirs. The Group is involved with promoting environmental awareness including stopping the spread of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS). They will be involved with the Group at the Paddle Scotland Club Volunteers Conference.

Training

The 2024 Club Volunteer Conference was well represented by the club and it's great to our club members giving up their time for that weekend. The the conference provides great access to other full-time coaches and venues to practice and learn new skills. I thoroughly recommended volunteers attending.

Iain Baikie and myself supported by Gerald Urquhart and John Speirs continued to run the multi club Wednesday training evening sessions. This is to support paddlers on their journey to sea kayak award and leadership Awards.

Iain Baikie was successful in his level 3 coach (sea) assessment, and we have two others looking at assessment at the end of this year with others working towards sea kayak leader award. Our club can always benefit from more qualified coaches and leaders. If you are interested, please ask.

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There is a plan to run a Tuesday evening for ladies only of the club, who wish to further the development of their skills towards the sea kayak award or aspirations to become a coach / leader.

SCIO

The Club has successfully gone through the transition to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). This was approved on the 23 April this year. Our thanks go to Silvia Bonati who led work and assisted by Ken Nicol.

Summer Weekend Trips

Throughout the Summer, there were some weekend trips. These Gairloch, the Summer Isles and the Rabbit Islands. Great venues.

Club Stores

Maintenance continues with a painting team deployed late end of summer for final coats of preservative to the storage containers. Thank you to those who donned their boiler suits and helped.

Equipment

The most significant purchase this club or any club could make is an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). The Club purchased a portable one with support from the Caithness Sports Council. It is small and we will be able to carry on our trips. It is a fantastic piece of equipment which could well turn out to be a real-life saver.

Some members have recently bought their own sea kayaks well done that certainly shows commitment to the sport.

Next year we are looking to purchase some new boats to add to the fleet.

Watersports Day

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The weather wasn't as hot as the previous year, but this went well, and we look forward to next year. Big thank Silvia Bonati who led the event and her team of volunteers. I think it is great to offer "a come and try event for our community"

Winter Pool Training Session

These were well attended and a thank you to the Highlife Highland and the Thurso Leisure Centre for allowing us to use the pool facilities. This is an important part of the year which allows all our paddlers to maintain their skill levels in a lovely warm environment and our coaches to coach.

Major Incident Exercise

The Club took part in an exercise with the emergency services including RNLI, Coastguard, Scottish Ambulance Service and Police Scotland. The exercise involved a helicopter crash with multiple casualties including beach walkers' swimmers and kayakers. The kayakers were rescued by RNLI in their Y-boat (a small rib). The kayakers were taken to the lifeboat and hoisted on board where they checked over by the crew for injuries and hypothermia. Thankfully nobody went into cardiac arrest as we found out the Lifeboat does not carry a portable AED. Thank you to our volunteer casualties who thank fully all survived the incident.

A follow up exercise with the Club and RNLI to be programmed in for next season.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to record our thanks to our Secretary, Treasurer to volunteers, helpers, coaches, and leaders. Without their support we would be unable to run this successful club like we do.

Gary Youngson

Appendix 2: Financial Accounts

Financial Accounts: 2023/24



Statement of Accounts for the Year ending 31st March 2024

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Balance c/f	19,154.10	CSC	20.00
Subscriptions	2,210.50	SCA	125.00
Pool	610.00	Refund Subscription	
SCA Discount			
Equipment Resale		Equipment Maintenance	817.58
Hire	1,759.00	Purchase	3,425.26
Security	615.00	Security Refund	200.00
		Container	1,138.57
Club Clothing	2,179.00	Club Clothing	1,780.24
Grants		Repaid Grants	200.00
CSC	400.00	Insurance	204.80
Baillie	2334.24		
CNSF	1,707.54		
Courses	16.00	Courses	270.14
Donations	53.14	Donations	100.00
40th Celebrations			
Dinner	1,561.00		
Raffle	220.00		
Easy Fundraising	71.67	Website	95.40
		AGM	27.95
Interest		PFYC	500.00
		Cash	
		Bank	23,986.25
	32,891.19		32,891.19
G Stronach Treasurer		H Thompson Independent Reviewer	
K Nicol Secretary			
Bank Balance made up of funds as follows:		Open Balance	£ 19,154.10
Pool	£5,419.12	Income	£ 13,737.09
Equipment	£6,454.77	Expenditure	£ 8,904.94
General	£11,592.47	Surplus	£ 4,832.15
		Close Balance	£ 23,986.25

NB: Club only became SCIO (SC053300) from 23/4/24 so these are last year of old style accounts

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Financial Accounts: 1 - 22 April 2024



1st April 2024 - 22nd April 2024

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Balance c/f	23,986.25		
Subscriptions	142.00		
Pool	34.00	Refund Subscription	
Equipment Resale	246.00	Equipment Maintenance	88.69
Hire		Purchase	285.70
Security		Security Refund	80.00
		Container	252.95
Club Clothing	42.50	Club Clothing	
40th Celebrations		40th Celebrations	
Dinner	240.00	Dinner	1,646.90
Raffle	517.00	Raffle	132.99
Auction	1,215.00	Auction	
		Other	462.00
		Cash	
		Bank	23,473.52
	26,422.75		26,422.75

G Stronach
Treasurer

H Thompson
Independent Reviewer

K Nicol
Secretary