

St Andrews Burns Club.
Annual General Meeting.
Sunday 3rd December 2023.
4pm St Andrews Bowling Club.

Present. President Kyff Roberts, Secretary George McIntosh, Treasurer Graham Watson, Marilyn Rowan Rhind, Colin McAllister, Frank Quinault, David Joy, Gordon Howe, Mike Joy and Keith McCartney.

1. President Kyff welcomed those present to the AGM for 2023. He especially welcomed member Gordon Howe onto the committee. Gordon had been a member of the Burns Club committee many years previously.
2. Apologies were received from Alison Chalmers, Austin Dunn, Dorothy and Scott Williamson, Neil McNair and Jim McArthur.
3. Minutes of the AGM 2022 are on the Club website and taken as read.
4. Matters arising.

Frank mentioned that in item 8 the word “reviled” should be replaced by “revealed”.

Also item 3, the matter of the complaint from Mr Lavery of Southgait Hall, blaming the Burns Club Memorial plaque for the vandalism to his window being satisfactorily resolved. Mr Laver had intimated to Frank that he was withdrawing his permission for the plaque and was going to remove it for a set time. Frank informed him that legally he could not do this. Kyff then informed Fife planning dept. about the situation and established that our Club had followed all procedures properly and that Mr Lavery had no right to remove the plaque. We now believe that this is the end of the matter.

Treasurer Graham brought up the item from the AGM 2022 minutes of increasing the Club subscriptions to £6 from £5. Considering the fiscal effort required to do this, he suggested that the subscription should remain at £5 for the foreseeable future. It was agreed at this point, that the Standing Order form on our web site, should show £6 as the subscription for new members.

The possibility of increasing the Supper price by £1 to achieve the extra funds was mentioned.

5. President’s report.

The St Andrews Burns Club has faced significant challenges in recent years due to the Covid Pandemic that resulted in the cancellation of two Burns suppers. The St Andrews Burns Club survived these difficult times thanks to the efforts of office bearers and committee members. At this time last year, I was thanking George McIntosh for his dedication to the club’s business and organisation of events over the past 17 years. I also welcomed John Mitchell to the position of Secretary. Unfortunately John felt he could not continue in that roll, so once again we must thank George for taking on the duties of Secretary.

The St Andrews Burns Club’s activities were restricted, with the loss of the school’s competitions and delays in the presenting of awards as well as the cancellation of the Suppers. It is good to see these activities up and running again and we offer our

thanks to Marilyn Rhind for the help given to George in getting the school competitions back on track.

Holding a Burns Supper to celebrate the life and works of Robert Burns is one of the main objectives of St Andrews Burns Club. I am pleased to say that the 2023 supper went well and preparations for the 2024 supper are well underway.

The Club's objective, is to increase efforts to attract new members and to confirm membership of the main committee, together with creating subcommittees as previously discussed.

I am extremely proud to have held the position of President over the last 2 years. I look forward to welcoming the next President and committee members during the course of the AGM. I am sure they will uphold the traditions and objectives of the Club in the future. Kyffin Roberts. President.

6. Secretary's report.

Due to the unfortunate resignation of Secretary John Mitchell, the administration duties of the club fell to former Secretary, George McIntosh, President Kyff Roberts and Treasurer Graham Watson. The committee meeting in September, the AGM in December and the Burns Supper itself in January 2024 were very much in hand. Kyff and Graham are to be thanked at this point.

Former Secretary, John Mitchell is to be thanked for the work that he did in modernising the Burns Club's constitution and his preparations for our Burns Supper in January 2023.

The position of Secretary (and other office bearers) will be discussed and decided at the AGM.

7. School's report.

Having taken on responsibility for organising the Primary section of the Club's schools Burns competition Marilyn intimated that the dates had already been arranged for visits to each of our five primary schools in January 2024 from teams of 3 or 4 judges. Marilyn has also enlisted help from the wider membership of the Burns Club to encourage a greater involvement in this important part of our Burns Club's activities.

She is also encouraging the younger age groups in Primary, P1/2/3 to participate in our competition so that the wonderful works of Robert Burns are celebrated at all levels. A whole range of Robert Burns books has been resourced by Marilyn as prizes and along with book tokens as awards, the Primary section of our schools Burns competition looks to be well organised and eagerly anticipated.

Secondary competition. Members of the schools subcommittee, George McIntosh, Marilyn Rowan Rhind and David Joy attended Madras College on Tuesday 28th November 2023 at the invitation of Lynne Miller, Head of Music and Vicki Birmingham, English dept. to listen to and judge the young Burnsians singing and

reciting the words of Robert Burns. Morning saw 19 pupils from S1 to S5 singing. The standard was good, with some excellent performances and only a few referring to notes. Unfortunately the setting was in a smaller English dept. room, rather than in a larger music room or the assembly hall so the piano accompaniment tended to be too loud for the young performers.

Afternoon saw the Recitation part of the Madras competition. Unfortunately Marilyn had to leave at lunchtime due to a prior engagement. Vicki had arranged for a total of 11 pupils from S1 to S5 to recite for us. This year, the quality was much better than last, in that only a few referred to notes. The recitation of three S5 boys, especially was very good with one performance in particular, Jan Tero, reciting several verses from Tam O Shanter with a powerful performance. In fact, one boy, Andrei Morrison recited a Burns poem that we had not heard before, "To Ruin"

Vicki and Lynne were congratulated for continuing to support our Madras Burns competition, year after year and we offered any help that could do to promote future work of Robert Burns in the school. After some consultation with them, we also decided the allocation of each of the Burns Club's eight trophies to their respective winners. The overall best performance trophy, the Doc Malcolm Memorial Trophy was awarded to Jan Tero. These trophies will be awarded at the Madras Burns supper in January 2024.

8. Treasurer's report.

Graham produced the financial accounts for both the General Fund and the Grubb Trust for the years 22/23. The General account showed an expenditure £3928 with an income of £4352 showing a surplus of £424. the income showed 131 subscriptions at £5 (£655) and 75 members and 28 guests at the 2023 Supper. Our Current account at RBS stands at £4153 with £138 in Paypal to be used for paying bills.

The Grubb Trust, also at RBS, stands at £ 6891.

Graham thanked Patricia Roberts, President Kyff's wife, for examining the accounts and certifying and vouching for them.

Other points were noted in that the income from the raffle was down due to lack of numbers and possible less people using cash. It was noted that our card reader could possibly be used during the sale of raffle tickets at the Supper.

The website is now costing more and Graham intimated that he would like someone else to run the website. Also Mailchimp is costing extra for another user, but is essential for contacting members and sending invitations to the Burns Supper.

Graham also indicated that he possibly has a replacement for Treasurer, Gavin Galloway which is excellent news.

9. Membership.

This stood as 141 paid up members. Discussion took place among the committee as to possibly attracting a greater number of young members., with possibly the University being approached. However one of the best ways is by fellow Burns Club members approaching others outside the Club and inviting them to our Supper as a guest and then joining as a member.

A discussion took place of the role of Honorary Members. It was stressed that they would be from outwith our present membership, as opposed to Life Members who were already existing members, that were awarded this privilege because of efforts made for St Andrews Burns Club and the works of Robert Burns. University Principal, Sally Mapstone was mentioned, but it was agreed that the person really should have some connection to Robert Burns and his works.

It was agreed that our Club now had a lack of farmers attending. This was mainly due to there not being a “ Speed the Plough “ toast as there were in past Burns Supper celebrations. Considering the history of St Andrews Burns Club and the connection to our farming friends, it was decided, to discuss this at a future meeting of reinstating this important toast.

10. Annual Subscription.

As was mentioned previously at the advice of Treasurer Graham , the annual sub should stay at £5 for the foreseeable future. With the Standing Order form the website showing £6 for new members. President Kyff suggested that as the subscription would be going up some point in the near future, it would make sense to do it now. The decision was taken to leave the sub. at £5.

11. Authority to operate the Club’s bank accounts.

Treasurer Graham intimated that due to the resignation of Secretary John Mitchell and Vice President Alan McDonald, St Andrews Burns Club required a new set of signatories for the Club’s bank accounts. Incoming President Jim McArthur, Secretary George McIntosh, Treasurer Graham Watson and Treasurer Designate Gavin Galloway are the suggested group. The committee agreed with this suggestion.

12. Election of office bearers.

a. Incoming President Jim McArthur. Vice President T o be left until the next meeting with Jim McArthur, Secretary George McIntosh, Treasurer Graham Watson (with Treasurer Designate Gavin Galloway)

b. Election of committee members. All present indicated their willingness to continue.

Note. Neil McNair had joined the AGM at this point, having attended an important church service and RBWF meeting in Edinburgh as World President of RBWF.

c. Election of Sub Committees is to be left to a future meeting.

13. Preparation for St Andrews Club Burns supper. Saturday 27th 2024.

Speakers

confirmed as Croupier and Immortal Memory President Jim McArthur.

Address to the Haggis Marilyn Rowan Rhind.

Toast to St Andrews David Strachan.

Toast to the Lasses Gordon Howe.

Reply from the Lasses Dorothea Morrison.

Community singing Charlie Braid Fiddling Gordon Howe.

St Andrews Day piper of the Year Rory Turnbull.

Possible performance by Doc Malcolm Memorial trophy winner Jan Tero.

Recitation by Simon Lamb (Scriever) Resident poet at Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway.

Past President Frank is to be congratulated at this point, for contacting Simon and in fact hosting him for our Supper. Simon, being a St Andrews graduate, performed during the National Schools Burns festivals and is an excellent choice for our Supper. The Club will offer Simon expenses. He will recite a Burns poem and one of his own. Marilyn had kindly offered to recite a poem at the Supper on a previous occasion. This was a parody of Tam O Shanter, called Kate O Shanter. After some discussion this seemed a good idea, possibly after our possible guest from Madras recited his Tam O Shanter.

Finally it was decided that retiring President Kyff would say the Vote of Thanks. At this point a suggestion for Citizen of the Year (usually decided by the President) could be Pipe Major Roddy Barron of Madras College pipe band. This was met with great approval from the committee. This will be confirmed with incoming President Jim McArthur asap.

Also noted, as a suggestion from Gordon Howe, to save time at the Supper, the raffle should be drawn and prizes picked up at the end of proceedings.

There was also a lengthy discussion on the structure of the meal and the amount of time taken to serve all of the courses. During his discussions with David Barnett, Kyff made a suggestion that the haggis, neeps and tatties course could be integrated into the beef course. This would remove the extra separate haggis course. A previous alternative suggestion from Jim McArthur, was for us to simply offer the traditional Burns supper menu of soup, haggis tatties and neeps, then cheese. Concern was expressed by a few on the committee, that historically, St Andrews Burns Club's menu was a dinner, with a separate meat course! After a committee vote, the majority decided to go for the simpler menu of a main course of haggis ,tatties and neeps. Marilyn has kindly offered to do the seating plan for the evening. Graham offered to send last year's sitting plan to her for reference.

14. A.O.C.B. Presidet Kyff introduced the letter from F.A.B.C. requesting financial assistance with the cost of organising the Fife Schools Burns Festival on March 9th 2024. After a brief discussion the committee agreed to donate £100.

Frank intimated his contact with Bill Sachs, Edinburgh. A huge Burns enthusiast, who would be very willing to deliver the Immortal Memory at our Supper in the future.

15. The meeting finished with President Kyff thanking those present for their attendance and wishing them all well for the festive season.

Next meeting Sunday 3rd March 2024. 4pm St Andrews Bowling club