

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting  
of Bassingbourn Snowsports Club  
13<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**Attending**

Anne Allanson, David Allanson, Malcolm Allanson, Sarah Allen, Jane Bird, Graham Bunnett, Juliet Cook, Reece Cook, Michael Cooper, David Cumming, Douglas Gray-Stephens, Donna Lewis, Euan Lucie-Smith, Alison Jones, Anne Matthews, Martin Middleton, Keri Nash, Sharon Nash, Chris Nash, Sarah Nash, Paul Newman, William Newman, Stewart Payne, Roy Reeves, Shona Sarchett, Mike Smith, Laraine Upton, Hilary Whipp

**Apologies for Absence**

Chris Bow, Ed Jones, Simon Plant

**Chairman's Welcome**

David Allanson opened the meeting by thanking everyone for the good turn out.

The AGM Minutes from 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008 were distributed and reviewed. The Minutes were offered for acceptance - Proposed by Hilary Whipp & Seconded by Paul Newman. The 2008 AGM Minutes were signed off by the Chairman

There were no matters arising.

**Annual Reports**

These were distributed for reading and summaries read out by each contributor.

**Chairman's Report**

David thanked everyone involved in the 18-week project to refit the slope and thanked Laraine, Andrew & Sarah Upton for constructing the new tots area. The instructor training course for this season has resulted in three new instructors from outside the Club & two from previous JC members. David thanked Keri for helping to achieve a 100% pass rate at Snowsport England qualifications. The current Instructor training program is continuing with Kirk and there has been an increase in the qualifications of many instructors up to BASI 1. Many customers are making repeat bookings. Since Sharon has become the full time bookings Secretary, the feedback has been amazing. Thanks also to Sharon's office boy, Keri. The membership numbers are up from 104 last season, to 138 this season so far. Starting in September the ski maintenance team has been repairing the ski equipment to increase its useful life. From next September, we will be introducing new carving skis throughout most of the range of sizes. Thanks to Melvin for grass cutting and gardening help. Thanks were offered to the Management Committee for running the big slope events and the fantastic open day. Sharon & Donna organised a very successful half term session in February and will run a free session at Easter as a thank you to the Camp & Waterbeach staff & families. The new clubhouse building has been purchased. This next year the focus and the plans are to be discussed later in the evening. The Club faces a challenging 12 months ahead.

**Vice Chairman's Report**

Douglas Gray Stephens reviewed the past twelve successful months and offered thanks to a list of many people, present and absent. The slope has been re matted and widened this season and the lift has been "behaving itself" well through the year. He reminded the meeting that the refit of the new clubhouse and racing are on the agenda for discussion later during the evening.

**Staffing Report**

Keri Nash offered thanks to Sarah & Tim Fox for their long service to the Club and acknowledged the benefit the Club has received from their knowledge & experience. Five instructors have passed the instructor course this season, leading to four new instructors. Congratulations to them & to Sarah Upton who is now a BASI Level 2 instructor. Most instructors are now BASI Level 1 and instructor training & racing sessions continue with Kirk.

Euan has successfully restarted JC race training on Saturdays. The supervisors were thanked for being "brilliant!", especially for helping out at short notice. The Club's instructor course has been recommended by Alan Ashford, an SSE tutor based in the Alps. Our reputation is spreading.

### **Junior Club Report**

Donna Lewis thanked the instructors, JC Committee and parents for supporting Junior Club. There has been a positive response to the move of JC to Saturday mornings and the more flexible booking of sessions. The JC Committee is looking to become more active next season. Various fundraisers are proposed, including the raffling of a Crofters Cottage (made so beautifully by Malcolm), a clothing collection, Tesco vouchers & recycling of ink cartridges & mobile phones. The half term fun day was very successful & a JC only event is planned for Easter. The new building was transformed into Santa's Grotto at Christmas & JC has a new teddy bear, who likes to travel on ski holidays with JC members. Travel reports are to be encouraged.

### **Bookings Secretary's Report**

The Secretary has had a busy but not quite full year. With the main slope refitted in the summer, the training slope was busy with bob & donut parties and after opening the main slope in September, bookings have been non-stop. Two open evenings have been held for school leaders & three new schools have made bookings this season. Sharon also attended various school ski trip evenings. Thanks were expressed to all instructors for bookings taken and for their quick response to requests to instruct, even if the answer was no. Sharon thanked everyone for their support over the season. No cancellations were made due to instructor unavailability; the only cancellation was, ironically, due to snow!

### **Treasurer's Report**

Martin Middleton reviewed the accounts to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008. Income was substantially up; the year that Martin was Treasurer for the first time (around 1995) the annual income was around £20,000. The profit in the accounts was amazingly high but these reserves will be needed for future investment back into Club facilities. The substantial increase in Plant & Machinery cost is due to the purchase of the new matting & refit of the slope which will be depreciated over the next 4 years, suppressing profits over that time. The Bank balance stood at £50,000 at the year end, currently £70,000. Approximately £20,000 of these cash reserves has been earmarked to cover known commitments. The Club has worked hard over many years to accumulate these funds and will need to continue to do so to continue with the future planned projects. It is hoped that the improved facilities will lead to increased income in the future. Many years' of prudence are now paying off.

Renewal of lease: The Club's lease agreement is renewable every 5 years with the Defence Estates department; the current lease runs to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. Hilary Whipp has been re negotiating the new lease. The rental per annum has been £4,700 but is set to rise significantly. The latest rent proposal is £9,000 pa for two years rising to £12,000 for a further three years. Having requested a copy of our accounts the Defence Estates feel that a rent more in line with business rental levels is appropriate. Martin & Hilary have requested they consider that we are not comparable to a business as we are at the mercy of the Army with regard to access. The negotiations have improved other aspects of the lease.

Questions regarding the accounts:

Graham Bunnett: Do we have an approximate costing of the planned refit of the new clubhouse?

Martin: The plans are yet to be confirmed so costings have yet to be prepared / finalised.

Douglas: We need to complete the review of requirements, and then set up the costings. Discussion of the project is on the Agenda for later in the evening.

Martin: Part of the cost will be contained by the new ski maintenance scheme, to extend the life of the existing equipment, and by the fact that we already have a large stock of new equipment waiting to be unpacked and put into the new kitting up racking when the refit is complete.

Roy Reeves: If the increased profit in the accounts has led to the Defence Estates increasing the rent, would it have been better to have paid the instructors a higher rate over the past year to have reduced the profit, thereby distributing the funds to the instructors rather than the Government? This may have also led to an increase in instructor availability.

Martin: Although it is difficult to quantify the rates paid by other clubs (some give free skiing time in exchange for teaching time), we are perceived to offer the "going rate".

Roy: Proposed the Management Committee should look at the rate of remuneration for instructors.

David: The Management Committee would discuss the matter at the next meeting

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Euan, seconded by Paul and signed by the Chairman.

### **Election of Officers**

Retiring by rotation this year are Douglas Gray Stephens (present Vice Chairman) & Martin Middleton (Treasurer). Also retiring is Hilary Whipp (Club Secretary). All are prepared to stand for positions on the Management Committee again.

Nominations by the Management Committee for retiring members are:

Douglas Gray Stephens for the position of Vice Chairman#

Hilary Whipp for the position of Treasurer

Martin Middleton for the position of Club Secretary

Position 5 is vacant on the Management Committee and Stewart Payne has been nominated by the Committee. Michael Cooper was nominated on the evening.

David Cumming proposed that the nomination should be voted on en bloc. This was seconded by Keri Nash. Voting was conducted and all nominations were agreed

The formal business of the meeting was concluded.

### **Racing & ERSA Race at Bassingbourn**

Before introducing the item, Doug thanked everyone in advance for their contributions to this issue and the next item on the Agenda (Club House refit). Racing within the Club has been declining for some time. After Barend Ter Haar (previous race trainer) moved away, the feed of new racers from JC has slowed. Many of the racers from previous years have stopped attending, some having started university. Elitism amongst the Monday racing group has led to new people being put off from joining. Problems have been exacerbated by there being nobody prepared to take on the role of Race Team Co-ordinator. This makes it harder for racers needs to be brought before the Management Committee.

The last ERSA Race held at the Club was successful but at present, there does not seem to be sufficient racers to make a team. We need to discuss what could be done to encourage racing. Euan Lucie Smith's racing sessions on Saturdays have encouraged some JC members and their parents into racing. To continue building on this interest, racing would benefit if a Race Team Co-ordinator or even a Race member of the Management Committee could be found. The Management Committee did not take the decision to not hold an ERSA race this season lightly. If we can continue to build a race team and a group of people to support the running of an ERSA Race, then an ERSA Race could be run in the future. The event involves a huge commitment on the day; traditionally much of the organisation has been undertaken by the Management Committee members, with little help and support coming from the racers or their parents. The Management Committee felt that they could commit their efforts to other more beneficial activities.

Euan Lucie Smith: why would the Management Committee prefer to run a day event for say the Guides, rather than hold an ERSA Race day?

David: An event such as a Guide bob session for the day would be staffed by a rota with a number of instructors being on duty for only a part of the day. An ERSA Race day has traditionally involved Committee members working a lengthy day.

The option of ERSA providing staff to run a Race day was discussed; this would leave the Club to just cover the North gate (needing 2 people) first aid & lift maintenance. Perhaps only three Club staff would be needed. The North gate has been opened only for short period at the beginning and end of day in past. After discussion, the need was thought to be more like five people, with other roles needed such as staffing kitchen. The aspiration benefit to the new potential racers was acknowledged. Sarah Allen & Alison Jones (both parents of JC club

members) expressed their willingness to assist on a Race day, with some guidance, and felt other JC parents may also be available.

The financial aspects of the Race day were discussed. A Race day brings in a guaranteed income on the day, from the Club's proportion of the fee levied on each racer, whereas a day of ski lesson or bob/donut parties would lead to an undefined income based on the bookings interest for that day. The decision to not hold an ERSA Race this season was not based on finance.

In the past, there has been no representation of the racers on the Management Committee and very little help coming forward to organise a Race Day, or other aspects of racing such as mending poles. Junior and adult racing were run separately and they were merged due to the decline in adult racers. The decline in the number of adult racers at Kirk's Race Training sessions, for example in the racers from Cambridge University, was not thought to be due to switching to Monday evenings. Sarah suggested it would not affect the enthusiasm of new young JC members towards racing and suggested that we consider a Junior Race Manager. The Club need to look at two issues, the holding of race days and the long term development of racing in the Club. An ERSA Race day takes the Club into a wider racing community.

Laraine felt that the decision to not hold an ERSA Race this season was made without seeking and airing the views of the racers and with the interest now shown this should be reconsidered. The idea of a Sub Committee for Racing was suggested. Stewart Payne (JC parent) felt that holding an ERSA Race would encourage a representative to come forward and Sarah felt that a JC Race Committee could be formed from JC parents.

The number of racers needed for a Club Race Team was discussed. Five being needed for a Dual Slalom but racers can enter as individuals. Reece Cook raised the point that the young racers would feel more comfortable experiencing their first "big" race at their home Club, although the Club Race day is coming up at the end of the JC season (25<sup>th</sup> April).

The possibility of holding a Race this season if helpers could be found was discussed and Euan was asked to gather names of possible helpers. The possible dates open on the ERSA calendar are 28 June and 13 September. If a date can be selected with ERSA then it is not too late to hold an event and if eight helpers can be found, the Management Committee will discuss the matter at their next meeting (27<sup>th</sup> March). Stewart is happy to voice the views of JC racing at the Committee meetings.

The plans for future race training were discussed and the Saturday sessions with Euan will be moving to early evening. The increased interest in racing by young JC members was a great credit to Euan. Older children can join the Monday Race Training with Kirk and he will be asked if a session starting earlier can be run for new racers, many of whom are younger.

## **New clubhouse refit plan**

Copies of the proposed plans were distributed for discussion and ideas. A brief overview of the plans was explained by Doug. The existing kitchen would be extended into the gent's toilet, leaving the ladies toilet as a storage cupboard. The existing seating area would remain as a seating area. The present kitting up area would become a party room. A new section will be constructed next to the existing kitting up area for toilets and a changing room. The new building will be positioned next to this forming the new kitting up area. This will have more bench seats, a longer counter and eventually a networked computer, to check whether customers have paid. A PDQ machine will be installed to allow payments by credit card. A wall which can be folded back may be used to separate the party from the main seating area, allowing the space to become one large area if needed. The development work to be phased over time starting with the new kitting up area and toilets. Samples of the exterior cladding for the new extension were available for viewing.

Douglas has visited the Building Regulation Officer. As we are building on Military ground, there is no Building Regulations requirement; we only need Army approval. Discussions are planned with the Fire Officer to incorporate their fire safety suggestions. The Army & Bassingbourn Parish Council have been approached.

Graham: Do we require a dedicated Club Fire Officer?

Douglas: Fire extinguishers are inspected and maintained according to the legal requirements and the Army carryout regular inspections.

Graham: Suggested that new main doors were a long way from kitting up area and that a more welcoming entrance than we have now would be advantageous.

Chris Nash: Better signage to guide customers around the Clubhouse would be helpful.

Douglas: Plans are being discussed for a lobby area. Also raised this evening was the idea of a back door from the kitting up area so that customers could exit along the back of the clubhouse to reach the slope. Perhaps the new main doors could be moved to open onto the new kitting up area or even onto the new section of clubhouse being built between the two existing ones, leading to less work being needed.

Sarah: Suggested improved viewing area in corner of clubhouse facing the slope.

Douglas: The kitchen cannot be moved due to the location of the main electrical fuse box in the corner but the windows in the viewing corner will be enlarged.

### **Honorary membership**

David thanked Sarah & Tim Fox for their support of the Club in the past. In view of their moving away to Sussex, he proposed offering them Life Honorary memberships. This was agreed.

### **Retiring Members from the Committee**

During the year, Piet Van Kempen (Vice Chairman), Daphne Van Kempen (Welfare Officer) and Laraine Upton (On Slope Activities Committee Member) resigned. David thanked them for their support and Laraine expressed her willingness to continue to assist and support the Club.

### **Any other business**

Graham: Having received a recent e mail regarding the list of duties an instructor or supervisor needs to complete before closing up at the end of a day, he questioned how long this should take and suggested that it was too much to ask of an instructor who has already spent a considerable amount of time teaching. Communication should be clearer to indicate who is responsible for these tasks and the time taken should be paid.

Chris: As part of the instructor training program it is made clear to new instructors that these tasks are their responsibility.

David: The task list was a reminder to instructors and supervisors only and was based on the closing up duties laid out in the Instructors Procedures Manual (affectionately nicknamed War & Peace), dating back to the year 2000.

Keri: A re-induction course for existing instructors and supervisors may prove helpful.

Anne Matthews: How do instructors or supervisors know if customers have paid before arriving?

Various options were discussed, such as a fax being installed for Sharon to fax over weekend bookings that have yet to pay or Sharon e mailing the supervisors/instructors each weekend with such list. The potential of last minute bookings received after the communication would still cause problems.

The planned introduction of a networked computer in the refit project would resolve this problem. It was decided to wait until then.

David thanked everyone for coming, Jane for the nibbles and closed the meeting.

p.s A huge thank you is due to Jane and Doug from Martin for their detailed notes, without which these minutes could not have been produced.