Minutes Of Annual General Meeting of Scottish Hill Runners

Symington Village Hall, Symington

Saturday 14 November 2015

Agenda :

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

2. Adoption of Minutes of 2014 AGM

3. Convenor's Report

4. Secretary's Report

5. Treasurer's Report, Adoption of accounts and appointment of auditor.

6. Subscriptions for 2016

7. Election of Officers and Committee

8. Motions

9. Any Other Business

Members Present :

Andy Spenceley, Hilary Spenceley, Graham Arthur, Iain Gilmore, David Duncan, Hugh McPherson, Richard Gatehouse, Les Turnbull, Jocelyn Scott, Hilary Ritchie, David Cowan, Keith Burns, Ian Hawkins, David Scott, , Gordon Pryde & Neil Gilmore

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Upson, Brian Brennan, Tony Stapley, Angela Mudge, Ronnie Gallagher & Manny Gorman

2. Adoption Of Minutes of 2014 AGM

Prior to the discussion and adoption of the 2014 Minutes, Gordon Pryde read out an email from Manny Gorman. Given that Manny's comments were regarding the 2014 minutes, Gordon asked the meeting to consider firstly whether the minutes

as circulated, accurately reflected what was agreed last year. Gordon also asked if any other discussion regarding the content of Manny's email could wait until AOB on the agenda. That was agreed.

Those attending took time to read the minutes as circulated. Following this, the AGM approved them un-amended as an accurate reflection of what was agreed last year. Proposer : Hilary Spenceley; Seconder : Keith Burns

3. Convenor's Report

Gordon Pryde presented his report (see Appendix 1)

4. Secretary's Report

Neil Gilmore presented his report (see Appendix 2)

The report included reference to the work that Graham Arthur had done on the website structure etc. and as Graham was present at the meeting, he delivered a short presentation (see Appendix 2.1) and answered a couple of questions that were raised.

5. Treasurer's Report, Adoption Of Accounts and Appointment of Auditor

Brian Brennan was unable to attend the AGM so in his place, Gordon Pryde presented his report (see Appendix 3)

The accounts for 2014 were adopted as published and the meeting approved the audited accounts.

6. Subscriptions for 2016

The meeting endorsed the committee's proposal that the subscription for 2016 remain unchanged at £8 (£2 junior / student, £4 additional members sharing the same address as a full member).

7. Election of Officers and Committee

Brian Brennan is standing down as Treasurer, and a replacement has been found in Ian Hawkins.

No replacement for Gordon Pryde, as Convenor, was found so Neil Gilmore proposed that he remain for a further year as Convenor and that new Committee members to fill the Convenor and Secretary roles would be appointed next year. The meeting agreed this.

There were no other changes to the committee.

Gordon Pryde	Convener
Neil Gilmore	Secretary
Ian Hawkins	Treasurer
David Scott	Committee Member
Ronnie Gallagher	Committee Member
Angela Mudge	Committee Member
Chris Upson	Committee Member

Co-Opted Positions

Tony Stapeley	(Membership)
Andy Spenceley	(Statistician)
Graham Arthur	(Web Support)

The Meeting endorsed these positions.

8. Motions

There were no motions raised.

9. Any Other Business

- SHR Championship Age Categories

As agreed at Gordon Pryde's opening remarks, there was a further discussion about the proposed changes to the SHR Championship Age Categories that Manny Gorman had raised at last year's AGM.

The following is a brief synopsis of what was discussed and accepted at the meeting.

Following the 2014 AGM there was representation made to members of the Committee about what any potential changes to the Championship format could be. With these comments in mind the Committee at their following meeting decided to initiate a survey to try and gauge opinion from the wider membership.

There were about 270 responses to the survey so as an attempt to engage the membership the committee consider it to have been a successful initiative. The committee accept that there were failings with the survey. However in relation to the two questions that asked as to the format of the Championship, the results failed to show a clear mandate for any change.

Given this the Committee decided that the format of calculating the Championship would remain as it was. It was agreed however that we should try and achieve a more equitable distribution of prizes.

Gordon Pryde accepted that he should have contacted Manny after the committee's decision to survey the SHR membership given that Manny had initiated the discussion on the championship. He confirmed that he will apologise to Manny for this by email and will speak to him in person when they meet up again.

Neil Gilmore stated that he should have placed the 2014 AGM minutes on the website so that they were available for all to see. He will do this with the 2015 minutes for information and comment.

- SHR Safety Rules & Guidelines

Keith Burns raised a point about feedback on the SHR Safety Rules & Guidelines. The committee had decided to seek feedback from Race Organisers to find out from them how they have found the adoption of the new rules in the last year. To this end, Neil Gilmore will email the RO's to ask for feedback. This will be done along with a request for details on dates etc. for the 2016 races.

- English Hill Runners

Keith Burns brought to the attention of the meeting the formation of English Hill Runners, a body set up in similar style to SHR and asked that SHR support English Hill Runners.

Appendix 1

<u>Convenor's Report 2015 – Gordon Pryde</u>

This is my third and what should be my final year in the role of Convenor of SHR. I wish to record my thanks to not only the members who have served on the committee over the past year but also those who have served throughout this three year period. This year particularly I would like to thank Brian for having completed three years as Treasurer.

At the AGM last year there was good discussion as to whether there should be a change in approach as to how the SHR Championship should be structured around age categories. It was suggested that to try and ensure a more even and wider distribution of category prizes an alternative could be that as well as having a separate Senior and Open categories that vet categories be restricted to particular age groups. The outcome from the AGM was that the committee would investigate alternatives and potentially review the championship for 2015. Initially the committee were minded to trial an alternative for 2015, however on reflection it was felt that as this would result in a significant change to the Championship it would be better if the views were canvassed from as wide a base of the membership as was practicable. An online survey was commissioned to try and get as wide as possible view from across the hill running community. Around 270 responses were received through the survey and as expected there was a diverse range of comments. Crucially though the two alternative responses to defining age category winners were evenly split. In view of this, with no clear resolution and no overwhelming mandate for change the committee agreed to keep the existing system of defining age category winners in place. The responses to the suggestion of having a more equitable distribution of prizes were overwhelming.

Concerns were raised at the 2014 AGM at the low numbers that were attending the traditional end of season "Do." This function usually involved the prize giving followed by a meal and ceilidh. As an alternative this year it was decided to try the format of having a lunch along with the prize giving following the Dumyat race. As part of the afternoon Olly Stephenson gave us an inspirational talk about his recent epic trip along the John Muir Trail (JMT). Recalling my own ascent of Mount Whitney and Half Dome in Yosemite from years back I knew that the Sierra Nevada Mountains are fabulous. Olly did an unsupported and self sufficient trip through the wildest parts of the Sierra Nevada Mountains which involved roughly 220 miles and 50,000 feet of ascent. To do this in 5.5 days was clearly a truly epic trip. During his talk Olly said that some of his approach to this trip was taken from the writings of the American ultra light backpacker Ray Jardine. For anyone thinking of a big lightweight trip this would seem to be extremely worthwhile reading. Special thanks have to go to Olly for his inspirational talk and to Dave and Angela for organising the successful event.

The past year has been the first year where the revised safety code which was developed in 2014 has been in place. This code for races insured through SHR consists of generic safety rules and safety guidelines for both race organisers (ROs) and competitors. Much thought and effort went into the development of

these Rules and Guidelines and Scottish Athletics have now used them as the template for races permitted through SA. As these Rules and Guidelines have only been in place for around a year the committee would still wish to contact ROs to canvass their views on their operation and if they consider that there could be any tweaks or improvements that could be made to the current arrangements. We will therefore be shortly contacting all ROs seeking any contributions they wish to make to these Rules and Guidelines. Likewise if any competitor feels they have something they would wish the committee to consider please contact the secretary.

The SHR Championship, had a total of 93 runners who completed the series and are entitled to a highly sought after Championship mug, this is up on last year's total of 86. Both the winners of the Senior Women Championship (Jasmin Paris) and the Senior Men Championship (Tom Owens) won their respective trophies with maximum points. New champions this year are Shona Robertson who won her Over 40s championship and Gibson Fleming who won the Over 70s. For the redoubtable Stewart Whitlie, it was the 6th time he has won the Over 40s (after a gap of 6 years from the last time) and the 4th time he has won the Over 50s. Winners in the Championship were also winners in the Long Classics with Stewart winning for the first time and Jasmin repeating her success of last year. Thanks are due to Andy for continuing to update the stats for the championship and to Chris for co-ordinating the Long Classics and Bog and Burn.

A navigation course was again provided for any member who wishes to improve their skills that are necessary for sound hill craft. Thanks again must go to Steve Fallon for running and to Dave who assisted at another very successful navigation course in the spring. I am sure that it will again be the intention to run further courses.

It will still be the intention to produce an Annual Journal so now would be a good time to write an article for the forthcoming publication. Any articles should be forwarded to Ronnie, who will hopefully edit the publication of a journal.

Membership numbers and finances continue to be in good shape. Membership numbers continue to exceed 500 and the audited annual statements are available for your approval today. Feedback received from the organiser of the championship race at Slioch suggested that it may be worthwhile for the SHR to purchase a timing mechanism that ROs could use in Championship races. The intention is now to use some of our reserves to purchase such a device.

I thank again all members of the Committee who have given much effort during my tenure as Convenor during the past three years. It is also essential that new people join the committee and it is great that Ian Hawkins from Fife AC has agreed to take over the position of Treasurer.

Appendix 2

<u>Secretary's Report 2015 – Neil Gilmore</u>

This has been my second year as SHR secretary and whereas the first one was largely taken up with getting to grips with what the role entailed, this year has allowed me more time to work on some of the issues that have been with us over a period of time.

Gordon has already spoken about the online survey we conducted early in the new year to determine the best way to organise the SHR Championship. The only thing I would add to that, is the method we used to conduct the survey (Survey Monkey) was very easy to use and is a mechanism that we may well use again if there is an issue where we think the SHR membership should be canvassed.

Many thanks to Stewart Whitlie who gave his assistance in getting the bespoke Survey Monkey site set up for us.

One of the major issues that has been affecting the SHR recently has been the dependability of the website and getting it updated in a timely fashion so that it is a useful reference point for people interested in Scottish Hill Running whether they are a member or not.

It was an issue of concern to the committee that there was a huge backlog in results that needed to be updated. Also, the online race calendar in 2014 was incomplete. Feedback from runners was that the site wasn't fit for purpose – information on it was out of date and incomplete.

The committee felt that there was a real need to do some work to bring the site up to date.

I felt that there were a lot of aspects that were good about the site – I didn't want to change it for the sake of it as if used and updated properly it did provide all the important information that people were wanting it for – race calendar information, results presented quickly after the races and timely news items. I thought there was a degree of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". All that was needed was proper admin behind the website.

Just before the turn of the year, I spent some time collating the 2015 race dates onto the calendar. This was work that I did alongside Chris Upson who was compiling the information for the printed calendar. I was keen that once the 1st January came and the SHR calendar page automatically updated from 2014 to 2015 all the races for 2015 would be there.

It didn't quite work out like that as not all races were confirmed at that point, but we did get into a position where the vast majority of them appeared in the online calendar. Over the duration of the year I have made additions and amendments to this so it has been kept up to date. Something that we obviously can't do to the same degree with the printed calendar.

It's planned that I'll do the same for the 2016 races in time for the coming new year and to this end I'll start emailing the Race Organisers to get confirmation of dates and details for their respective races.

Also, I was keen to keep on top of updating the race results database on the website. It can be a bit tricky to get the results in the right format for upload and it helps enormously if the RO's can provide their results on the standard SHR results template. However, in reality we get results coming in in many different formats and with a bit of time and data manipulation I've managed to get all these formats onto the database.

I've tried to get these set up as soon as we get notification of the results – either by email through the SHR Yahoo Results address or direct to me. On the whole we've been able to do this – there's been the odd glitch here and there but I think the results service has become a lot quicker.

I've also made a point of highlighting the results in a short news item on the SHR page where I can link the results from. It always helps if we get a proper race report from the Race Organiser, or a participant as this usually gives a bit of context to the race with information about the conditions etc. I'll continue to post these up when we get them.

I'd like to encourage all SHR members to email me with anything that they want posted up as a news item- whether it's information about a race or anything that may be of interest to the SHR community.

Now that I've got a process in place for updating the website it is relatively quick and easy to update. I generally check the email addresses daily and post up anything that evening or the following morning.

One further aspect of the SHR website is that news items posted get picked up automatically by a feed that places the news item on the SHR Facebook page. This is good in that the FB page allows the information to be spread further but I was concerned about the way that this feed just drew a random photograph from the SHR page and places that with the news story – usually nothing to do with the actual news item.

We felt it was important to use the Facebook page to more effect and so I found out that it was Malcolm Patterson who had originally set the site up. I managed to get Malcolm to set me up as an Administrator for the FB page and so I have started in the last few months to post more up there – usually general SHR stuff with links to forthcoming races but I have also been able to share other posts

from running clubs such as Lochaber and Highland Hill Runners. It has been a good means to link photographs from races too.

Again, I would encourage anyone who wants something included on the facebook page to contact me. Now that the FB page has been running all right for a couple of months, I will put a notice on the website to this effect.

It is all the customer facing aspects that I have been dealing with and I confess that I have little knowledge about the structure behind the website in relation to the SHR domain name, the servers it runs on etc. All the tricky, complicated stuff!

Because of this, it has been a great benefit to the SHR that Graham Arthur joined the committee last year in a "Web Master" role.

Graham has been doing a lot of useful work on backing up the site and is currently in the process of transferring the site to a new server provider.

As Graham is here today, I have asked him to say a few words about the work he has been involved in in connection to this:-

- Re-programmeing and augmenting many aspects of the current web site program over the year - feedback and requests always welcome – there is much more planned.
- Occasional issues with the internet service provider over the last year have several times caused temporary loss of service, and they have been particularly bad over the last two or three weeks.
- In the process of transferring to another, probably much more reliable and better managed ISP, with better facilities for backing up and support.]

(Before I hand over to Graham) I would just like to close off by giving a big personal thanks to all the committee members who have contributed much of their time and skills to helping the SHR this year. In particular Gordon and Brian who are standing down from their roles as Convenor and Treasurer respectively.

Appendix 2.1

Website Details – Graham Arthur

Behind the screens there are quite a large computer program and database, and these are what I inherited a year ago. They are what power the screens everyone can see, and all the admin screens which the likes of Harry and others rely on to manage the news items, results and many other things. At that time, quite a number of items either did not work anymore, or did not work properly.

Time permitting, over the year I have added to and rewritten parts of the program to address these problems, and am always very keen that users should let me know of anything which does not work, or enhancements they would like to see.

The overall structure of the program and database are good, and well-designed (talking about the engine here, not necessarily the outward appearance of the screens), but if time ever permits, I would like to rewrite the whole program.

The most irritating problem, which has been dreadful over the last few weeks, has been the unreliability and poor standard of the web hosts. Recently they changed all their servers, and our site scarcely worked at all for days on end. After a considerable battle of correspondence, they transferred us again and changed something else, and it seems to be working again.

I am just finishing tests of a trial transfer of the whole program, resource files and database to servers at a new ISP in the UK which I have used for many years. Transfers and tests cannot be unduly hurried, but I hope to have the new host up and running in the very near future.

Several improvements to the screens, and general functionality are also in the pipeline.

Thanks to everyone for their forbearance, and remember – feedback and suggestions are always welcome.

Appendix 3

Treasurer's Report 2015 – Brian Brennan

You should have sight of the signed-off Financial Statement for 2014, and an unaudited summary of the accounts to the end of October 2015.

If we look at the Financial Statement for 2014 you will see that we again made a profit of income over expenditure. This year's figure of £739.63 is greater than that of the previous year. This was due to our Expenditure staying more or less unchanged while our Income went up by almost £800 due to an increase in paying members and several hundred pounds in donations from clubs and individual race organisers. Although overall expenditure was also up by just over £200 this was primarily due to an increase in expenditure on Prizes and Trophies which increased considerably due to the loss of our previous sponsorship deal and our contribution of £150 towards British Athletics Fell Championship vets medals. Additionally the subsidy to the SHR Prize giving and social, shown as £340, is understated as a bill of around £150 for the hall costs did not actually appear until a couple of months ago. Income costs were overstated as we gathered the payments for one of the navigation courses in 2014 while the costs for the course did not actually occur until 2015, this makes it look as if we ran the courses at a profit, rest assured that we didn't. I would like to thank Patricia Smith, who again audited our accounts and managed to decipher my workings.

Turning to the summary accounts for the year to the end of October 2015. Our subscription income has decreased by around £200 while our advertising income is about the same as in 2014 . Our insurance and printing costs are both down. The expenditure Prizes and Trophies appears to have reduced considerably but this is an illusion caused by the timing of the interim accounts, the total for the full year will actually be slightly higher than last year. Included in the expenditure is a sum of £342 for SHR car window stickers. As mentioned above the timing of the navigation course at the beginning of the year meant that much of the income was in the 2014 accounts while all of the costs, which have increased by around £200, are in 2015. Due to the timing of the SHR Social and Prize Giving, it looks as if we made a profit on the event, however when all the bills and income are through it will actually have required a subsidy of several hundred pounds. Probably similar in size to last year although this was a much more successful event and was attended by almost 70 people.

We are likely to finish the year with Expenditure exceeding Income by over a thousand pounds. As discussed earlier, this was due to the combination of navigation course timing (almost £600 of deficit in 2015) , the window stickers (a one-off £342) and the delayed hall bill from 2014's SHR social (£145).

The underlying accounts are fundamentally healthy and we still see no need to increase the £8 subscription fee. At some point we may well have to increase it but that would only happen if our normal expenditure/income account continued to run a deficit, or if we developed concrete plans to spend the additional funds raised for the benefit of the membership.

Apologies for my absence and hope the above report is sufficiently clear. If you have any questions which can't be resolved at the AGM please email me at brian.brennan@rocketmail.com .