

CLAN MACLEAN ASSOCIATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held at the Caledonian Club, Halkin Street, London SW1, on Friday 2nd November 2012

Those present: Nicolas Maclean of Pennycross – President
Nigel Alington – Vice-President and Hon. Treasurer (acting)
Helen Bailey – Hon. Secretary
Chris Bailey
Donald H MacLean
David Maclean-Watt
Gillian Miller
Alison Tottenham
Alasdair White
Fiona White
Jenny Wilton

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Lorna and Bill Denham, George Gillon, Simon and Amanda Maclean, Alan McLean and Mary Wilson.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 7th October 2011 were approved as a complete and true record of that meeting.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Menu cards

The Vice-President undertook to ascertain the cost of menu cards from the Caledonian Club.

4. President's Report

The President said that he aimed to implement a long-term strategy of increasing membership. The need to recruit more members is however critical and needed also to be addressed by specific actions in the short term. Our proven track record of excellent speakers at our dinners, highly entertaining Burns Night suppers and interesting trips abroad should be used to attract new members.

As regards trips abroad, following the success of the visit to Waterloo last year, the President was keen to establish such trips as regular events. Although there had been no overseas trip this year, because of the International Gathering on Mull, a visit to Sweden, taking members to Svaneholm Castle in the south and then various places of interest in Stockholm, had now been fixed for the weekend of 28th July 2013.

The President was keen to continue our practice of booking speakers a long way ahead. Lord Blencathra (the former Chief Whip and Home Office Minister David Maclean MP) had already been booked as the main speaker for our autumn dinner in 2013, with Jim Naughtie having accepted to be our principal guest at the autumn dinner in 2014.

The President undertook to seek out some well-known thespian clan members, including those who do not bear the name Maclean but whose mothers were Macleans, such as Rupert Everett and Hugh Grant. Sept members could also be invited, such as Matthew Macfadyen of Little Dorrit fame. Others for consideration are Ms Dynamite (aka Niomi Arleen McLean-Daley) and Shirley MacLaine (whose mother was a MacLean [sic] from Coll).

Lord Guthrie has been booked to propose the Toast to the Immortal Memory at our Burns Night supper in 2013. Jamie Stewart has also agreed to propose the Toast to the Lassies.

5. Secretary's report

5.1. Membership

The Secretary reported that in the past year 7 members had joined, being Alison Tottenham, David and Pixie Maclean, Douglas and Barbie Johnson, Finn MacLean (grandson of Donald H MacLean) and Sir Murdo Maclean. All were due to attend the dinner following this meeting.

Several members are not paid up-to-date. An encouraging number had however paid recently, with their payment for the dinner.

15 members had died or terminated their membership during the year.

We have a current membership of 62. We encourage members to pay by Standing Order and at this time 24 out of the 62 pay by this method.

We also have a total of 72 non-members, whom we list as 'Others'. These include those taken from MacleanNet and any other sources. We lose contact with these from time to time. They are automatically invited to events.

Friends of Macleans (mainly the President's guests) are also invited to dinners.

5.2. DPA/PECR consents

The DPA/PECR consents of new members are procured through the current application form that all new members are required to complete.

Such consents have not, however, been obtained from all members who completed earlier versions of the application form or who did not complete an application form at all.

The Secretary undertook to obtain all the outstanding consents by the time of the next AGM.

5.3. Resignation

The Secretary announced that she wished to relinquish her role next October. She explained that in the first instance she had been touched by the plea of the previous Secretary for someone else to take on the role; she had been pleased to step in and take over. The time required to undertake this role had however proved to be excessive.

The Secretary was thanked for undertaking this role and all her efforts. Thanks were also extended to her husband.

6. Treasurer's report

The Vice President as acting Treasurer presented for approval the draft accounts for the year ended 31st July 2012.

A small loss had been made on last year's autumn dinner, outweighed by a larger surplus on this year's Burns Supper. This followed the pattern of previous years.

A flag had been purchased for carrying on the march at Duart during the International Gathering on Mull in June. This was now in the possession of the President.

A cost of £60 had been incurred for renting a table in the clan tent at the Ashbourne Highland Gathering. Following the cancellation of that Gathering, this cost had been recovered in full after the end of the financial year.

The Association had supplemented its usual donation to the Heritage Trust with a donation to the Duart Castle Gates Appeal. The surplus from the Gates Appeal was due to be passed to the Heritage Trust, so to that extent the Association had donated twice to the Heritage Trust. Accordingly it was agreed not to make a further donation to the Heritage Trust this year.

As the result of the double donation, the Association had made a loss for the year. This was agreed to be an appropriate use of reserves. The balance in the reserves remained healthy.

Alasdair White asked if the accounts had been audited. The Vice President advised that they had not.

Alasdair White proposed that the accounts should be approved. This was seconded by Jenny Wilton and approved unanimously.

7. Election of officers

The President, Vice-President and Secretary all confirmed that they were willing to continue in these roles for a further 12 months. The Vice-President also confirmed that he was willing to continue as Acting Treasurer. The continuation of these appointments was proposed by Alasdair White, seconded by Fiona White and approved unanimously.

8. Future events

8.1. Burns Supper 2013

The next Burns Supper will be held on Friday, 1st February 2013. Lord Guthrie will give the Toast to the Immortal Memory. Jamie Stewart will propose the Toast to the Lassies.

David Maclean-Watt congratulated the President on a very successful Burns Night this year, encompassing members of the Stewart Society and the President's personal guests, the "Friends of the Macleans". He commented however that the Maclean members needed to know who all these guests were. He suggested that a list should be circulated beforehand to all those Macleans attending. This was agreed.

The Secretary reminded those present that at the International Gathering on Mull Dougie Maclean had offered to come to the CMA E&W one day. She suggested that he might be invited to provide music on Burns Night. Others thought he needed a major slot on his own on a separate occasion, rather than a few minutes as part of a Burns Night medley.

8.2. Ashbourne Highland Gathering 2013

Following the cancellation of this year's Ashbourne Highland Gathering, as the result of the ground having been water-logged, the Association hopes to attend the 2013 Gathering. This is due to take place on 21st July 2013.

8.3. Sweden

The Association proposes to visit Sweden over the weekend of 27th/28th July 2013. This was strongly recommended by the President. The planning is being co-ordinated with two people from Sweden, Yvonne Öhrbom and Ronnie Romgard, who had attended this year's International Gathering on Mull. It is hoped to meet other Swedish Macleans during the trip.

The trip will include a visit to Svaneholm Castle in southern Sweden, the home of Baron Rutger Maclean; the House of Nobility in Stockholm, which contains two Maclean coats of arms and one Maclean portrait; and other museums containing items of historical interest to Macleans. The oldest known portraits of Macleans are in Sweden.

David Maclean-Watt mentioned that the Royal Guard in Sweden had a pipe band.

It is likely that the trip will be organised in a modular form, so that people can undertake all or part of the trip.

Details will be published in due course.

9. Duart Castle - an update

The Vice President reported on the current position as regards the establishment of a fund to pay for repairs and maintenance at Duart Castle, following the speech given by the Chief at the Clan Congress at the International Gathering, when he gave notice that financial assistance from the Clan was likely to be required in this respect in the future. Two options are being considered.

One is the creation of a simple fund, to which donations can be made. This has the merit of relative simplicity but would not provide tax-deductibility to most donors and would not be eligible at all for donations from trusts that are required to donate only to charities.

The second involves the establishment of a charitable trust (or the use of the Heritage Trust), to which the Castle would be leased. This would allow Gift Aid to be claimed within the UK. In addition, however, sister charities would need to be set up in each of the major donor countries, because overseas donors would not generally get tax-deductibility by donating directly to a Scottish charity. This would be more complex, as well as being more expensive and time-consuming to operate.

The key issue therefore was whether or not setting up the charities would generate enough additional revenue, above what a simple fund would generate, to make the additional cost and administration worthwhile. This will require market research to establish.

The position currently is that the Chief is consulting with his son Malcolm as regards which option the family would prefer.

10. Clan Maclean Magazine - an update

The Vice President reported on the position regarding the proposed changes to the magazines produced by the Clan.

In recent years the Clan Maclean International Association (CMIA) had issued an annual magazine called the BattleAxe. This was produced only in electronic form. Until this year, the Clan Maclean Association (CMA) in Scotland had also produced an annual, glossy hard copy magazine which was supplied free of charge to its members. The England and Wales Association had also supplied a copy free of charge to those of its paid-up members who were not members of CMA and did not therefore receive a copy otherwise. This magazine fulfilled the function of a newsletter for Scotland. It also reproduced part or all of the International BattleAxe.

It had been agreed in principle that in future these two magazines would be combined into one annual, good quality, hard copy magazine that would be sent to all paid-up members of all Associations world-wide. A working party had been established under the chairmanship of Ian MacLean, Past President of CMIA that was now working out the details of how this would be implemented. The Vice President was a member of this working party. It was planned that the first issue of the new magazine would be produced in the Spring of 2013.

Meanwhile, CMA had produced the Souvenir Magazine for the International Gathering and had not therefore produced its usual glossy annual magazine this year. Instead it had recently produced a six-page newsletter, largely reporting on the Gathering. A copy would be sent to all paid-up members of the England and Wales Association who had not already received one.

The Vice President also reported on his efforts to scan and post on the maclean.org website copies of all previous Clan Maclean magazines. He had not been able to trace several issues. Alasdair White suggested that he (the Vice President) should publicise which copies he was missing. He (Alasdair White) for example had a supply of back copies and might be able to fill one or two of the gaps. The Vice President agreed to do this.

11. Membership eligibility - a proposal to relax the three-generation rule

Alison Tottenham, a new member who had attended the International Gathering on Mull, had been struck by the lack of people joining Associations. In order to expand membership, she proposed that the three-generation rule should be relaxed in order to allow anyone who could demonstrate that they had a Maclean ancestor, or an ancestor from one of the septs, to be accepted as full members of Associations. A paper that she had prepared in this connection had been circulated in advance of this meeting to those who had indicated their intention to attend.

Her rationale for this proposal was based on: the genetics of inheritance - genes follow their own paths and not that of surnames; the benefits to youngsters of an identity within the Clan; and the probability that this might at least prevent some haemorrhaging of membership, as generations and distance separated individual families.

Although persons who do not qualify under the three-generation rule can be accepted as Associate Members of Associations, she felt that this would be viewed as second-class membership, especially as Associate Members were not allowed to vote at meetings of Associations.

It was agreed that this should be debated further. The Vice President considered that this Association could not change its membership criteria unilaterally. The same criteria should apply across all Associations. Any change of rule would also need to be approved by the Chief. He undertook to discuss this idea with the President of the Clan Maclean Association in Scotland in the first instance.

12. Any other business

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.00 pm.