

Scottish Society Abu Dhabi

Committee Meeting Minutes 26th January

1. Financial Update

- Following reconciliation of most invoices, the event currently shows an estimated profit of approximately AED 28,000, pending payment of the Spinneys invoice.
- The Club invoice also remains outstanding and requires payment.
- The photographer was not contracted through the Club and will therefore need to be paid separately.
- Ticket sales generated a strong return, with a rough estimated profit of approximately AED 26,000.
- Overall, the event raised more funds than the St Andrew's Ball.
- The current estimated balance is approximately AED 79,000–81,000, which will be confirmed and updated at the next meeting.
- An amount of AED 400 remains unaccounted for and must be traced before AGM.
- It was recommended that future financial reporting be presented as a Statement of Income and Expenditure rather than a spreadsheet to provide greater clarity and transparency.
- Full statement at the next meeting in March

2. Membership and Administration

- JP to update the Bottle Store access code. Amy will circulate the updated code to ensure non-members cannot access it.
- Work is ongoing to establish a fully accurate membership list as new members continue to join.
- Sean to order 100 additional membership cards, as the current supply has been exhausted.
- Electronic membership cards remain outstanding and require further follow-up.
- A message of thanks will be shared with the membership group and in the updates group, including a request for raffle prize donations, with flyers attached.
- McGregor Harwell to be acknowledged/included in communications for thanks.

3. Round Table Feedback from Committee

Burns Supper Event Feedback

- Overall, attendee feedback was extremely positive, with many messages indicating that guests thoroughly enjoyed the evening.
- Several attendees described it as “the best Burns Supper in Abu Dhabi.”
- This was noted as a particularly strong achievement given that the Society has only been operating for approximately 18 months.

Burns Supper Food and Service

- Food quality and service were highly praised, with service described as impeccable and delivered on time.
- The soup course was served hot and presented elegantly.

- Guests enjoyed the cloches used for the main course presentation, which added to the drama of the food experience.
- Minor feedback included comments regarding the tuille garnish, and that the ginger tablet was somewhat unusual.
- One small issue occurred where a plate was served without haggis; this was resolved immediately, and the guest received a complimentary whisky flight as an apology.

Burns Supper Atmosphere and Event Delivery

- Having the back gate open was helpful in managing event access and flow.
- Timings throughout the evening worked very well, and bar service was efficient, with no delays for drinks.
- The Whisky Sour cocktail and wine selection were particularly well received.
- Thanks were extended to all committee members for their work on the event.
- Special thanks were given to Sean for acting as MC, helping to centralise the event and engage the audience.
- The Address to the Haggis and the Piper were highlights of the evening.
- The piper performed well and is based in Abu Dhabi, making him a strong option for future events.
- At the end of the Burns Supper there was one unopened bottle and several half bottles remaining.

4. Burns Supper Licensing/ Raffle and Officialdom

- AED 1,360 was raised in the Majlis, although it was suggested that donations could be encouraged more actively in future.
- Some operational issues occurred during the first raffle (Grand Prize Draw) due to the official's late arrival and the search for the correct paperwork. Remember to take a photo of the winning ticket.
- The official remained at the Club for approximately 20 minutes longer than expected to resolve the matter.
- For future events, the raffle licence should be applied for well in advance.
- It was recommended that a major raffle prize be secured early to assist promotion

5. Burns Supper Ticketing and Organisation

- The committee aimed to move away from cash and traditional paper tickets, which worked well. The ticketing system proved efficient, with one ticket issued per group/table and shared among guests.
- Overall, the seating plan and event organisation worked well.
- Receipts must continue to be issued as proof of purchase in case of future audits.
- There may be an option to automatically send receipts electronically; Jane to speak with Brad to explore this.

6. Constitution Amendments (For AGM Approval)

The committee reviewed the current constitution and identified the following proposed amendments to be presented at the AGM:

1. Logo Update – Change to Scottish Society Abu Dhabi.
 - Nour Fatima to assist with design.
 - Sean has made contact to explore editing options.
2. **Clause 3.4** – The Society can no longer legally send funds to Scottish charities.
3. **Clause 4.4** – Membership renewals to commence from 1 November, aligning with the St Andrew's Ball.
4. **Membership Cards** – Current membership card format to remain unchanged.
5. **New Member Documentation** – The requirement to send the constitution to every new member may potentially be removed
6. **Clause 5.1 (Quorum)** – Proposed change to 2 office bearers and 5 committee members for quorum.
7. **Clause 5.3** – Co-opting committee members will allow greater flexibility as the Society grows.
8. **AGM Quorum** – Maintain 20% membership attendance requirement, currently around 15 members.
9. **Submission of Amendments** – Amendments must be submitted in writing.
10. **Clause 6.1** – Clarify that the 20% quorum may include committee members.
11. **Clause 7.2** – Remove references to Scottish charities.

7. Upcoming Events

Boat Party – 21 February (4:00–7:00 PM)

- Boat hire cost: AED 1,700 per hour x 3 hours.
- Deposit: AED 4,000 (cash on the day, no VAT).
- Estimated boat cost: approx. AED 5,200.

Catering

- Catering for 65 people at AED 35 per head (mini pizza, chicken goujons, and finger food).
- Estimated catering cost: AED 2,360.

Estimated Event Cost

- Total estimated cost: approx. AED 10,500.
- Approximate cost per person: AED 162, likely operating as a loss leader event.

Ticket Pricing

- Members: AED 200 (including food and drinks).
- Non-members: AED 250.
- Children: Full price.

Additional Arrangements

- Setup required 30 minutes prior to departure.
- DJ to be used instead of a live band.
- Music quote: AED 1,600 – confirmation required regarding licensing requirements for DJ or live music.
- Alcohol sponsorship likely for beer and whisky, with wine sponsorship to be confirmed.
- Food options under consideration include club catering or guests bringing their own snacks.

Membership Considerations

- Opportunity to encourage new memberships, as several members joined following the St Andrew's Ball.
- Consider whether the event should be members only (with guests permitted).

Actions

- Jane – Speak with Rochelle at the Club regarding event advertising support.
- Kelly – Finalise catering menu with Arun.
- JP – Confirm alcohol sponsorship with suppliers.
- JP – Confirm whether music licensing is required.

Chieftain's Ceilidh

Overview

- There is strong early interest in hosting a Chieftain's Ceilidh event.
- Richard Patterson to potentially host a whisky tasting at the event (to be confirmed).

Venue Options

- Crowne Plaza – Curfew at 12:00 AM.
- Vogo – No music curfew, potentially more suitable for a ceilidh.

Planning Considerations

- Room Dimensions – David to confirm
- Both venues available dates on 16th May
- Potential Schedule – Drinks reception 6-7 pm, Dinner from 7pm as it's Saturday we can begin earlier

Additional Event Planning

- Buffet service 7:00–9:00 PM, including catering for the band.
- Band may include a piper, removing the need for an additional piper booking.
- Possible dancers to be confirmed, depending on cost considerations.
- Flights for performers to arrive in Dubai Friday, staying at Southern Sun Hotel, returning Sunday evening.
- Sean to manage flight arrangements.

Venue Visits

- Vogo: available for visits during weekdays.
- Crowne Plaza: visits available before 4 PM.

Sponsorship

- Dulip, who supported the AV for another event, may be a potential sponsor.
- Adham (Irish Vickers) could sponsor AV equipment – JP to follow up.
- JP to circulate a sponsorship letter.

Additional Planning Notes

- Consider implementing a single drinks package to simplify logistics.
- Decisions can be finalised through group chat as they arise this week.

8. Other Upcoming Activities

- **Scotland vs England Game** – potential viewing event at **Victor's**.
- **AGM** – proposed dates **1 June or 8 June**.
- **Family Easter Egg Hunt** – potential event around **5 April**.
 - **Jane to speak with Trevor Buckley (Irish Society)** regarding their event format and potential collaboration.

Future Planning for the Society to consider

- In addition to the three main annual events, the Society may consider informal ceilidh gatherings throughout the year.
- Potential outdoor event in November, with Yas Links and Saadiyat suggested locations (noting outdoor sound limitations).
- A newly arrived event planner may be able to assist with several events at no cost