



The 2021-22 Annual General Meeting of the Arsenal Scotland Supporters Club (ASSC) took place by Zoom Webinar on: Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 3.00pm

## Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

### Attendees:

	Bob Wilson (Honorary President)	
Dave Harrold (Chair – outgoing)	Chris Alexander (Chair – elect)	Alan Speed (Treasurer)
Richard Lloyd (Zoom host)	Peter Burnhill (Zoom roadie)	Martin O’Donnell (Secretary)
Andy Smith	Stevie Clark	Steven Lynn
Linda Collie	Carole McCaldin	Jason Cross
Ruth Moir	Derek Moir	Jamie Gillespie
Chris Pullinger	Matt Rowlands	Ryan Paterson
Danny Broughton	Unen Tsogtbaatar	Tich Wighton
Ben Coburn	Christopher Kenmore	Jason McDonald
Neil Massie	Derek Black	Brian Slater
Ally Richardson	CazMoir	Liam Finn
Eric Mutasa	Raymond Paterson	

### Apologies received:

Mike Buchanan (Membership)	Julie Buchanan	Kyle Buchanan
Charles Brooker	Linsey Henderson	Angie Kidd
Ally Hutchinson	Billy Mitchell	Mark Brindle (Arsenal)
Stewart McLean	Ant Maley	Jon Humphreys
Paul Harcourt		

### 1. Welcome and Introductions by Dave Harrold

Dave Harrold (Chairman) introduced our special guest, Honorary President and Arsenal '71 Double Legend Bob Wilson.



Bob expressed that he is still always be happy and proud to be part of Arsenal Scotland Supporters Club, knowing that his Mum and Dad would be looking down on him with pride as we listen to his strange Derbyshire accent, recalling the voice of his Mum saying *“Och Dearie . it will all turn out for the best”*, whenever Bob let in a goal or played poorly.



Bob and Megs



'71 Double Legend

Bob spoke about Aaron Ramsdale who has made such a huge positive impact at Arsenal with great saves, good communication and ball distribution. The one piece of advice that Bob will offer to the young keeper, having coached the goalies at Arsenal for 20 years, is to be less zealous in his criticism on the defenders in front of him when they make a mistake. Bob recalled meeting Aaron's Mum who asked Bob to *“calm Aaron down”* and save the criticism for the dressing room. That was the old school way when Bob would be told by his captain in the '71 Double Squad, Frank McLintock to play better and Bob would do the same back to Frank. Other than that Bob is very much a fan of Aaron Ramsdale.

Bob said this AGM was very much an opportunity to thank all of us at Arsenal Scotland, for all we do individually and collectively for our great football club adding *“Arsenal Scotland is massively important to Arsenal”*. Bob said as we look forward optimistically to further improvements on and off the field at Arsenal in search of more glory.

At this moment Bob would say to everybody *“Just remember historically that only Liverpool and Man United have won more trophies in England than the Gunners!”*

Bob ended by saying that with the return of European football, albeit not being the one we wanted but we have done okay and if we can keep the young talented players in the squad, we will get to more honours.

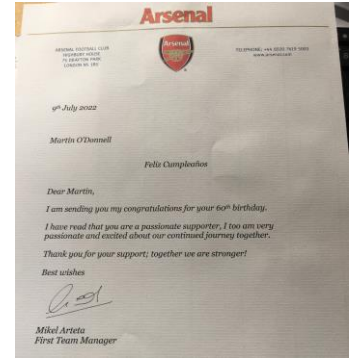
*“Thank you again, all of you, for the honour you have bestowed on me, thank you so much for that. And to everyone, welcome to the Arsenal Scotland Annual General Meeting, thank you.”*

Dave Harrold thanked Bob for his words and added that he was a Star.

Dave carried out a virtual presentation to Martin O'Donnell to mark his 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday this Summer and explained that Bob Wilson wanted to add some words.

*“I would like to take some time to wish an early 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday to your hard working Secretary Martin O’Donnell and to celebrate his birthday I would like to present Martin a birthday present from me and Megs. It’s a limited edition print of Highbury signed by Arsene Wenger. I hope you like it Martin, keep up the good work, best wishes, Bob Wilson OBE”.*

The print was expertly framed by member Charles Brooker.



Arsenal Scotland had also commissioned a unique watercolour painting of Highbury House by the local Islington artist Ruth Beck for Martin’s 60<sup>th</sup>. As Mike Buchanan had later pointed out that Martin ‘never stops banging on’ about having done some of the design work for that building when it was constructed next to the Emirates stadium in 2006. As Dave pointed out Martin spends so much time dealing with the ticketing office in there, they console him on the colour scheme. Mike Buchanan had kept this painting a secret for two years as it was first intended as a gift when Martin was standing down as Ticket Manager. But Covid got in the way so now is the best time.

And yet another surprise came in the form of a letter signed by Mikel Arteta who added ‘Feliz Cumpleanos’ (Happy Birthday). This letter shows just how much Arsenal Scotland are held in high esteem at Arsenal and all the work that Martin does for the Supporters Club.

In reply Martin O’Donnell said in spite of all the secret scheming and plotting, it was indeed a very pleasant surprise to receive these treasures “Thank you all very much”.

### **Dave then led us into the formalities of the AGM 2021-22.**

To get things started as an icebreaker and to test our online connections Dave called for a vote of all attending online to place a vote for Arsenal Scotland Player of the Season 2021-22.

Members Richard Lloyd and Peter Burnhill were introduced as our background ‘Techies’ helping us to place our votes:

### **Arsenal Player of the Season 2021-22**

Votes were cast ‘Live’

The winning player was **BUKAYO SAKA** with 9 votes, head of Martin Odegaard (6) and Aaron Ramsdale (5) among a close group of votes.

## 2. Minutes of the previous scheduled AGM's.

Last years AGM minutes were posted on the website. Dave called for attendees to vote on the approval of the minutes.

Approved:

## 3. Matters arising.

There were no matters arising

## 4. Chair's Report - Dave Harrold

It's been an eventful year on and off the pitch. Like a lot of clubs ASSC was blown off course by COVID.

I am glad to say that, thanks to a lot of hard work by a lot of people Arsenal Scotland is back! Special thanks go to Martin O'Donnell, Peter Burnhill, Alan Speed, Mike Buchanan, Chris Alexander and the team of Regional Representatives.

Off the pitch the three main highlights of the year for me were the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 70/71 Double. It was my great privilege to host the Bob Wilson 'n Pat Rice show - 2 real legends - superb!

Another highlight was being at the stadium with Colin Shanks and surprising Bob Wilson with a presentation, to celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

On behalf of ASSC we presented Bob and Megs with a bottle of Aberfeldy malt whisky and a bouquet of red and white (interspersed with willow) flowers - a true gent and a lovely lady. Bob pointed out that his family had a connection with Aberfeldy which came as a pleasant surprise to Dave.

Finally, off the pitch, the brilliant effort by all concerned in arranging the trip taking 183 Scottish Gooners to Newcastle – I watched it on TV, you were in great voice.

On the pitch, after 3 games I thought avoiding relegation would be a challenge, at the end of the season I am disappointed at not being in the Champions League – that's the joy of being a Gooner?

For the future I am quietly optimistic (but then I always think we are going to win 4-0!) and I think with a few careful additions to our playing squad, we have a great future with our current batch of young talent.

In my role as AISA Committee member and UK & Ireland Supporters Clubs representative on the Arsenal Fans Forum I want to raise the voice of 'ordinary' supporters on our clubs issues.

The three issues I want to pursue on behalf of supporters clubs are

- Safe Standing
- The replacement of the Away Ticket Scheme
- Notification of changes to the fixture dates

I aim to have our voice heard on these topics so I will be looking for your views on these matters.

It has been a privilege being Chair of Arsenal Scotland Supporters club, I am standing down at this AGM and handing over to the newly elected Chris Alexander from today.

I am very happy to continue in working for ASSC and support the incoming Chair.

*(Addendum: edit MO'D - I forgot to confirm here that the Club had sent Dave a gift of a tour for 4 people to the Glenturret Whisky Experience as a mark of gratitude for Dave's work as Chair over the previous 13 months since the last AGM).*

The Chair's Report was Approved by an online vote.

## **5. Treasurer's Report by Alan Speed**

It has been quite a difficult couple of years due to Covid and lockdown. We had a quite substantial reserves in the bank account at the beginning of the financial year. Ticket transactions, the restoration of the David Danskin plaque and donations to charity (see the Secretary's report), coach hire to Newcastle and so on resulted in these reserves being reduced over the course of the year.

We currently (June 12<sup>th</sup>) have £900 in the account and have recently paid out £3,500 to pay for season tickets, which we will get back on ticket sales to members.

Renewals are due in around three weeks and that process normally take around a couple of months, so we should have a good reserve once again.

I would suggest at this time that we don't commit to any type of seriously expensive ventures because we don't have the funds, but we will recover this in a few months in all probability.

Martin asked Alan if that was his way of telling him that he couldn't spend any money?  
Correct.



Dave reminded all members that the quiet work that Alan Speed does, just getting on with it and looking after our funds, does our accounts, pays our bills and supports the Ticket Team by paying for tickets quickly and efficiently, are all much appreciated. Thanks were given to Alan.

Member Raymond Paterson asked if getting subs in earlier might help with the cashflow?

Martin advised that following this AGM all members will be emailed to encourage them to renew as early as possible. Based on previous years the subs amount to around £7,000. There is no ticket business at this time and tickets for the Emirates Cup are expected to be in small numbers.

Alan added that if anyone wants to pay earlier, they can do but overall there are no cashflow worries.

The Treasurer's Report was Approved by an online vote.

## **6. Secretary's Report by Martin O'Donnell**

It was noted that from the Treasurers Report that the Club had a very small bank balance as of 12<sup>th</sup> June and that is the result of the decisions made during COVID to set the renewal fees in 2020- 21 season to 50% the normal rate and then for all renewals to roll over into the 2021-22 season. This meant that potentially £15,000 was not taken into the club funds over two seasons.

Normally every season we have held a major event, have made donations, etc, resulting in expenditure. But last season we kept things to a low key.

### **DONATIONS AND EVENTS**

Our main expenditure was £800 worth of funds made available for cash donations and Christmas selection boxes, etc, covering many local areas in Scotland.

1. Befriend a Child - Aberdeen – Linda – Selection boxes
2. Edinburgh Sick Kids Hospital – Chris – Selection boxes.
3. Glasgow based 'Trussell Trust' – Eric – Cash donation
4. Childrens Ward Fracture Clinic at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee – Billy and Jason – Selection boxes.
5. Crosshouse Hospital Out of hours emergency staff – Ayrshire – Ally – Gift chocolates and biscuits.
6. Victoria Hospital – Kirkcaldy – Tich – Selection boxes.
7. Dumfries & Galloway Hospital – Mikey – Selection boxes.

Mike Buchanan arranged for four deliveries (with added £40 donation by Mikes friend)

8. Fife Young Carers – Selection boxes.
9. the 'Harmony Education Trust' in Edinburgh – Selection boxes.
10. The 'Cottage for vulnerable families in Kirkcaldy – Selection boxes.
11. 'Circle' – disadvantaged Children in Pilton, Edinburgh – Selection boxes.

We did also spend a further £800 to have the David Danskin blue plaque in Burntisland, cleaned and professionally repainted. This plaque was first unveiled in July 2007 by our very own Honorary President Bob Wilson.

## OTHER CHARITY DONATIONS

As soon as the bank funds permit later this next season it is proposed that we again look to make sizeable donations to charities on behalf of Arsenal Scotland.

In the past we have made donations or have held fundraisers for the Willow Foundation, CLAASP, Age Concern, Glasgow Sick Kids Hospital, SIMBA, SAMH, etc. This trend all started in 2004 with the Thailand Tsunami appeal when we held an indoor 5 a side tournament in Edinburgh. In 18 seasons since the formation of Arsenal Scotland we have raised and donated over £91,000.

While Arsenal Scotland do donate to the official annual nominated Arsenal Charity, we prefer to focus charity donations to Scottish based charity organisations. Members should note that they propose any worthy donation recipients, and these should be sent to the Club Secretary (Martin) with a brief explanation of the work that charity does. All proposals will be met with a positive view.

## TEAM Lukas

One of our local reps for Edinburgh – Jamie Lynch created a raffle for TEAM LUKAS. Lucas Thomson is the son of our member Martin Thomson from Kelso. In 2017 Lukas aged 4 became seriously ill with a virus that attacked his heart. He suffered a cardiac arrest followed by a stroke. Over the past 5 years Lukas has had very specialist rehabilitation and therapy.

The raffle fundraiser last December was for two tickets, train and hotel costs to the Everton game last month and which raised £1080 , This was donated to the Team Lukas Justgiving fund. That money helped pay for three weeks intensive physiotherapy in California. After 5 years Lukas is now in the early stages of being able to walk again.

## CHARLIE

There is one event which we have been quietly working on.

We will hold a Zoom Q&A event sometime next season with former Arsenal and Scotland star player CHARLIE NICHOLAS who has agreed to do this free of cost. We will of course propose a modest donation to a charitable cause. We will place details as soon as we can and it will be a free event to members and invited guests.

## PETER

Martin gave thanks to Peter Burnhill who has not only spent many months of his personal time self-teaching, repairing and restructuring our website but has also more recently conducted our first ever online election for the new Chair.

However our quest to find willing members to operate the website and also to edit its content has proved to still be a challenge. We again call out to our membership for anyone interested in assisting and eventually taking over these website tasks from Peter.

My hope for next season is to have a really good away trip in big numbers, possibly in Europe.

The Secretary's Report was Approved by an online vote.



## 7. Membership Report - Mike Buchanan

(As Mike is working today his report is delivered by Martin O'Donnell)

The Membership was sitting at 512 members for season 2021-22 due to the covid rollover with a further 36 having applied to join since start of May. I think this is to do with our late winning run. So, at the moment it's 548 signed up members before we open up renewals for season 2022-23.

As usual we will see a few members drop off and pick up some more so if the team continue to improve.

We may have to look at setting a cap on membership numbers due to tickets getting harder to come by.

I'm hoping Arsenal will allow us to sell to members guests again as the covid restrictions are all but gone but this will depend on how many we receive as if a game goes to ballot it's members names only.

Renewals will start on 30 June 2022 but please remember I need a text and screenshot of payment to help me process the cards otherwise it won't be done until Alan or I can go through all the bank statements which as you can guess with 550 odd members will take some time so all I ask is help me to help you.

Thanks  
Mike.

Member Carole McCaldin noted it was sometimes difficult to get a screenshot. Martin explained that in the main this request is for members who we have no personal knowledge of, and it helps us to be sure that payments are being made. So a screenshot on your laptop or using your phone to capture the image on your laptop or PC monitor will do. Even if we have the date and time of the payment then we can go and look at the account, but that takes longer. The quickest way to convince us that you have paid means we can agree to get the ticket to you.

## 8. Ticketing Report – Martin O'Donnell

### **Ticket Sales      2021-22 Season**

We sourced and sold **230** Home tickets over 24 games - averaging 9.6 tickets available for every Home game. This was a 19% drop as compared to the 2018-19 season. Most of these related to the early months of the season with a slow uptake of demand from members as the relaxation of the COVID guidelines became more comfortable for some members. There was also a lower allocation of tickets from Arsenal to the more popular games.

Some midweek games and League Cup ties also had reduced sales.



We sourced **462** Away tickets over 24 away games averaging about 19.25 tickets available for every Away game which is a significant drop of around 40% compared to season 2018-19. We had 1 unsold spare ticket.

The demand increased for some more popular fixtures resulting in ballots for several away games at Leicester, Man United, Leeds and at Tottenham, while the absence of European football meant that many Gooners in London were desperate to see Arsenal play and as a result finding tickets became difficult for every game.

Of course, Newcastle was our biggest turnout as usual with 183 members and guests attending and this was achievable due to the help of the Arsenal ticketing Team.

	Home Tickets	Home Games	Average	Away Tickets	Away Games	Average	Total tickets	Total Games	Average
2012/13	381	25	15.24	972	27	36.00	1353	52	26.00
2013/14	416	27	15.40	1108	23	48.17	1524	50	30.48
2014/15	225	23	9.78	901	27	33.37	1126	50	22.52
2015/16	302	27	11.18	878	24	36.58	1180	51	23.14
2016/17	336	26	12.92	857	29	29.55	1193	55	21.69
2017/18	232	29	8.00	876	29	30.20	1108	58	19.10
2018/19	284	30	9.46	865	29	29.80	1149	59	19.47
2019/20*	220	21	10.47	613	20	30.80	833	41	20.31
2020/21**	3	1	3.00	0	0	0	3	3	3.00
2021/22***	230	24	9.6	462	24	19.25	692	48	14.41

\* Up to COVID Lockdown March 2020.

\*\* Full season lockdown

\*\*\* Gradual relaxation of COVID restrictions

NEXT SEASON – European football will again be available, and we would encourage our members to think about the group stage games as generally these are very low cost tickets and ticket availability is very good. As COVID has less of an effect it is expected that overall sales may get closer to pre-COVID levels.

#### TICKETS AND MEMBERSHIP CARDS

All members attending games **MUST** carry their Arsenal Scotland membership card with them and present the card when requested. As there is the possibility that you may be refused entry if the Stewards think that you are not Club members.

#### TICKET OFFICERS 2022-23

Ticket requests must be made as follows:

Home games requests – contact MIKE BUCHANAN **by text only**

Away games requests – contact CHRIS ALEXANDER **by text only**

## **WHEN TO APPLY**

Ticket requests must be made no earlier than FOUR weeks and no later than THREE weeks prior to the fixture date. So, you have a one week window to sort out your time off work, holiday plans, birthday parties and weddings.

*(Addendum – Edit MO'D – We are considering changing this to allow requests from Six weeks prior to fixture dates and deadlines at FOUR weeks prior. This will be discussed within Management committee for announcement during the World Cup break).*

For cup ties you have only three days after the cup draw. That means if the draw is on a Friday for example you can check with your boss on the Monday.

## **LATE CANCELLATIONS POLICY**

Depending on circumstances we will always try to refund late cancellations if we can resell tickets to another member or return them to Arsenal FC. However as this often gives us an administrative headache with days to go to a fixture, we may charge a £10 levy for each ticket cancelled with less than 7 days to the fixture date.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Name & Squad Number - All Arsenal Scotland members are provided with information on how to place ticket requests when allocated their membership card(s).

You must give the name and squad number for each person for whom tickets are requested.

We may need to declare the names of our members and so all ticket holders must carry both their ASSC membership card and their own form of ID to the game.

Our ticket operation is designed for ASSC Members who must also check that their membership is up to date before a request is placed.

- Guests are only by special arrangement and only when attending with a member.

## **PAYMENT**

ALL tickets MUST be paid no later than one week prior to the fixture date and all payments MUST be confirmed by a screenshot text.

## **TICKET MANAGER – ANNOUNCEMENT**

Due to COVID the intended plan to have the new Ticket Manager, Tich Wighton ready to take over the full task of buying tickets from June 2022 has not been possible. Tich will gradually take over the Buying duties during the season 2022-23.

Once again, I have been very well supported by Mike Buchanan and Chris Alexander over the past season. I thank them for their continued support and extremely hard work, often under incredible pressure to get everyone in through the turnstiles.

Member Brian Slater added that some members source their own tickets and as such would not show up in the numbers illustrated but there are additional members who can and do attend games.

Committee Member Jason McDonald noted that due to the Europa League it would be likely that we will have more Sunday games this season.

## **9. Election of Executive Officers for 2022-23**

Dave noted his thanks to **Alan Reid, Linda Collie, Connor Shepherd and Chris Alexander** for all putting themselves forward as candidates for Chair. Often these posts need candidates to be persuaded and it was good to see so many ask to be included in the election.

Peter explained the current constitution and the process in summary in that there were four candidates to stand for Chair, but no proposals received for Secretary or Treasurer. Peter was asked by Dave and Martin to carry out the election process.

There were 150 members who took part in the online ballot. Much higher turnout than for any AGM. The process involved preference voting – where members choose their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The count taken on close of voting as June 4<sup>th</sup> was as follows:

Chris Alexander received twice as many 1<sup>st</sup> preference votes as the next candidate. Having 54% of the vote, Chris was the clear winner by a majority choice. So that is the recommendation that Peter formally asked is put to the AGM. That Chris Alexander is elected as our next Club Chair.

Dave confirmed that Chris Alexander is the new Chair.

Dave also confirmed that Alan Speed is returned as Treasurer and Martin O'Donnell returned as Secretary.

The Election of the Executive Committee was Approved by an online vote.

***[Members and new members will please note that Arsenal FC require each official Supporters Club to have a three member Executive Committee as above. It is not a title of superiority, priority or privilege over any other members. Other committee members and Reps are essential in the running of Arsenal Scotland, but the Executive are the only three in direct Contact with Arsenal FC and each executive member is a volunteer and must provide two letters of reference to be acknowledged by Arsenal FC].***

Retiring Chair Dave Harrold gave his congratulations to the new Executive and invited Chris Alexander to say a few words.

Chris Alexander said that he was deeply honoured to be voted as Chair by the membership and would like to carry the club forward and do as well as all the previous Chairmen have done and take the club to a new level. "It is a fantastic club". Chris gave thanks to Dave, Martin, Mike and Peter for all their work.

Dave offered thanks to Peter Burnhill on carrying out the election in a new online format that few could have mastered as well. Much of the task being from self-learning on Peters part.

## **10. Membership Fees for the season 2022 – 2023 – Dave Harrold**

It was proposed that the new member and renewing members fee remain as they are for a further year.

New members £20 adult , £14 Junior (Under 18), £40 family (two adults two juniors)  
Renewals £18 adult , £12 Junior (Under 18), £36 family (two adults two juniors)

From June 30<sup>th</sup> 2022 the club will once again accept renewal fees as noted in Mike Buchanan's report – item 7 above.

Chris Alexander asked about the membership pack. Martin explained that this year new members will receive their membership card in the post with a car sticker as a gift and a separate emailed letter. Renewals will also receive their membership card in the post with a car sticker as a gift.

Martin pointed out that Fees have been the same since 2010. Chris Alexander suggested that Fees be reviewed for the 2023-24 season and further discussions can debate that.

The 2022-23 Fees were Approved by an online vote.

## **11. Draw for Two tickets to a Category C Home game or any Away game**

Martin conducted a 'Live draw' in view of attendees present to draw out one name for two free match tickets: Attendee number 14 was Jamie Gillespie and he will get two free match tickets to a category C game of his choosing.

## **12. Any Other Relevant business**

Q – When are the fixtures out?

A – June 15<sup>th</sup> followed by Sky and BT changing all the dates

Q – Jason Cross asked is there a Twitter page

A – Yes its @arsenalscotland. There is also an Instagram account

Q – Stevie Clark asked if the AGM might return to a venue. Or a hybrid event.

A – The management committee can look into this. Since Covid, virtual meetings are better attended and cost nothing in terms of personal travel across Scotland.

A vote of thanks to the Chair and his committee from Raymond Paterson

Dave also expressed thanks to Martin, Mike, Alan and Chris and especially members Richard Lloyd and to Peter Burnhill 'the Roadie' for putting this Zoom Webinar together for us, including the training sessions over several weeks and smoothly guiding us through the whole process.

Dave Harrold thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.