

STOKESLEY PROBUS CLUB

Minutes of AGM 2022

Minutes of the AGM on Tuesday 19th April 2022 held in Stokesley Town Hall

Note: The minutes are “Draft” until approved at the next AGM in April 2023

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Speaker

The speaker was Colin Hatton who gave a talk on *The Field of Dreams: Sport and Sportsmen of the Great War*

Colin has always been a keen supporter of cricket and football which led to a particular interest in local sportsmen around the time of WW1. In the early 1900's footballers were the stars of the day providing mass entertainment for the working class to whom they were heroes. Many were conscripted or signed up and suffered the same dangers and deprivations as their working-class admirers.

Such was the following for football, Colin retold the account of Captain Wilfred “Billy” Neville who, as a morale booster, provided two footballs which his men kicked ahead of them as they advanced across no-man's land. Despite 446 of their number being killed, wounded or captured the operation was a success. The two balls are now displayed in Dover Museum.

Again, at Christmas 1914, during a truce for festivities, the opposing forces exchanged greetings and gifts and followed this with a game of football. However, this was never officially sanctioned or recognised. When photographs of the game were leaked to the press the military were livid. Needless to say, there was no re-occurrence.

The sports papers reported on the wartime exploits of the sportsmen in service but many remained at home and continued to play football. This clearly proved controversial causing figures such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who lost 11 of his near family including a son, to ask the footballers to sign up. In their defence the footballers and their clubs argued that they were providing vital entertainment to keep up the spirit and resolve of the public as attendances were high. As more pressure built, and leading figures like Lord Derby urged the players to volunteer for service, more and more teams abandoned their fixtures and closed down due to the players signing up. After the war many of the clubs did not reform.

Numerous players served with distinction. Don Simpson Bell was the only footballer to be awarded a Victoria Cross. He was from a good background and was given a

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commission in the Green Howards. On 1st July 1916, under heavy fire, Don led two of his Platoon and attacked successfully an enemy gun position in a successful mission at Bella Redoubt and was killed in action. Football continued in the lives of the troops and games were played behind the lines between regimental teams.

Not only was the focus on footballers; a similar story unfolded with cricket, with leading figures such as W G Grace urging players to enlist. Many volunteered early in the war with 210 signing up from a total of 278 professional players. By 1918 one in six had been killed. Some of the famous cricketers of the day who served were: A E J Collins (killed in action), Jack Hobbs (although reluctant initially), Edward Arthur Sainsbury (wounded but survived), Victor Fuller Eberle and Andrew White, a New Zealand international player who survived but suffered shell shock. Interestingly, he took his own horse to war. In an attempt to encourage enlistment a famous recruitment poster circulated promoting pals battalions whereby these were formed with groups of men from the same town or village. These proved disastrous to local communities many of which suffered an almost complete loss of all their fighting age men.

A similar initiative was followed in the world of sport with footballer battalions and in many cases with the same devastating results. The 4th Northampton Footballers Battalion comprising some of the most remarkable footballers of the day – the most notable being Walter Tull (Spurs and Northampton Town) who was the first black footballer to play for a top professional team and who became a 2nd Lieutenant despite a rank ceiling for black people.

In 2016 Colin attended a memorial service to local footballing hero, William Henry Short VC, who after being wounded fought on but was killed in 1916 at the age of 29. Gone but not forgotten.

Colin was thanked for delivering this fascinating talk enjoyed by all. Members showed their appreciation in the customary manner with an enthusiastic round of applause.

AGENDA

1. Apologies.

There were 17 members present with 15 apologies. (Meeting quorate for decision-making).

2. Minutes of AGM held Tuesday 17th August 2021 (following pandemic).

Minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings.

3. Matters arising.

None

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4. Chairman's AGM Report.

The Chairman delivered his Report. Uploaded to website.

Thanks to Committee Members.

Review of Membership and Meetings.

Review of activities through the year

Looking forward to coming year of Club activity.

5. Treasurer and Membership Secretary's AGM Report - Chris Lee

Chris presented his Report summarising expenditure over the past year and through the pandemic period. Copied to all Members.

Uploaded to website. Chris projected costs for the coming year with a recommendation of £25.00 per member for the annual subscription. It was stressed that it was important to keep Membership numbers up to keep subscription levels down. Approved by Members.

6. Approval of Income and Expenditure Report for year ending 31.3.2022

Maj Chuan – Auditor found the Accounts straightforward and correct taking in the Pandemic period.

Report approved by Members and a Vote of thanks for Chris and Maj agreed by Members.

7. Speaker Finder's AGM Report - Keith Burton:

Keith is standing down as SF but will continue collaboration through a transition year.

New Programme Cards were distributed.

A vote of thanks was held for the Speaker Finder for his continued success in finding interesting and entertaining speakers and his financial prudence in achieving budget targets.

The Chairman thanked Keith for the excellence of his Club Service as SF.

8. Website Manager's AGM Report – David Chalk.

David reported that the Club Website was up-to-date and included a diverse record of Probus Club life.

Members can now access a Calendar of Events, Details of Trips,

Minutes of Meetings, the Constitution and various Reports.

There had been an encouraging number of visits to the site and any suggestions and comments are welcome.

9. Secretary's AGM Report – John Edwards

All routine Matters relating to Minutes, Meetings and the Constitution were addressed and reported. There were no outstanding concerns.

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10. Constitution.

There were no suggestions for any changes.

Current Constitution approved by the membership and uploaded to website.

11. Committee Elections.

There were no additional Nominations for Committee membership.

Speaker Finder: Bob Scott elected.

General Members: Derek Whiting, Graham Howard and Kevin Clifford all re-elected.

Keith Burton elected as a General Member in a change of role from SF

Auditor: Maj Chuan offered to stand again and was re-elected.

Chairman: Keith Waller offered to stand again and was re-elected.

12. The Membership List

The list is distributed annually to Members at the AGM

Members agreed to circulation in May to allow for any turnover at the change of Probus year.

13. There were no additional issues raised by Committee Members.

There were no additional questions or comments from Members.

14. Any Other Matters.

Clarifications given on future trips and lunches.

Fun Draw: 24 Sporting Greats DVD

Lucky winners: Derek Whiting and David Chalk.

15. Next AGM

To be held on Tuesday 18th April 2023