

Scottish Canoe Association
General Meeting – Perth – 15th August 2015
Duncan's Resignation Statement

I am deeply honoured to hold the position of Honorary President of the Historic Canoe and Kayak Association, am a Vice-President of the British Canoe Union and received the OBE for services to canoeing. But let there be no doubt that the greatest honour for me was to be elected Honorary President of the Scottish Canoe Association, my own governing body, by the members at the AGM in Stirling, thirty four years ago.

Two days ago, I was reminded by a long time member, who was deeply involved in the Coaching Scheme since its inception, in the Touring Committee and in sea paddling, that when he joined about fifty years ago, the SCA was an association of members who could meet at the AGM, discuss and decide how the association was to be run. This was no longer the case and he was about to resign.

Times have changed!

When, I witnessed the unhappiness displayed by some members at last year's AGM.

When, seven Board members, past and present, have advised me that they were unhappy with the way the Board was being run in recent years. Some maintained that they had been denied access to vital information, preventing them from fulfilling their elected function. Another based their comment on comparison with other bodies they served on. One even phoned me, as they felt they had to personally apologise for the way a communication from me to the Association had been handled by the Board.

When, there have been several occasions in recent years where the Articles have been ignored.

When, it appears to me that some minutes are not up to what I would expect, critical items appearing to be played down or missed out.

When, some Board action appeared to be in breach of the Association's objects as contained in the Memorandum of Association, which disappeared somewhere along the line and failed to get incorporated into the Articles.

When, communications from myself have not even had the courtesy of an acknowledgement of receipt, even when specifically asked for.

When, the proposed new Articles of Association, to be put to this meeting, are in my opinion among the most undemocratic I have read, appear to put all the power in the hands of the Board, restrict severely the power of the members, in some cases disenfranchise them and throw out aspects of the Association's justifiably proud history, in favour of some apparently almost off the peg product.

Considering these "Whens" and more, it is clear to me that something is seriously wrong.

The Association has become an institution I can no longer respect. In the circumstances I no longer see it appropriate to remain Honorary President and resign from that post with immediate effect.

This I do with considerable regret, considering I have been an office bearer of this Association, in various capacities, for fifty four years.

I apologise to the many members who have consulted me for advice and supported me in recent years and who have asked me to continue in post in the mistaken belief that I can change things for the better.

Duncan R. Winning OBE