



**Downhill Ski Club Special General Meeting  
Held at Literacy Waitakere,  
Level 1, 3055 Great North Road, New Lynn,  
On June 26 2016**

The meeting was chaired by Jane Gilmour and opened at 5.05 p.m.

**Present:** Adrian Dorrington, Catherine Crooks, John Hallwright, Natalie Calder (minute taker), Hazel Phillips, Mandy Rothe, Grant Barrow, Lisa Arthur, Adam Crocker, David Meek, Corinna Meek, Heather Frost, Kevin Frost, Jane Gilmour, Edith Chaney, Kevin Frost, Steve Chaney, Helen Simpson, Dave Simpson, Adrienne Simpson, Bernie Prendergast, Mike Fitzmaurice, Christine Fitzmaurice (and two daughters), Rodney Foley, Paul Brown, Gabrielle Brown, Jill James (for Judith Mollot), Tom Donald, Ed Claridge, Stuart Slade

Members on Skype: Brian Cruse and Dion Cruse , Patrick Caudle, Jo Caudle, Prue Fry, Craig Ross (it should be noted that those attending via Skype had limited ability to hear discussion from the floor)

Ross Sutherland dialled in via phone

**Apologies** were received from: Markus Dipper, Kylie Dipper, Ken Bush, Sean Hanlon  
Ross Boswell and Chris Bremner failed to connect to the meeting by Skype.

#### Description

Attendees were asked to Introduce themselves and a give a brief overview of what outcomes they wanted from the meeting

- The overwhelming theme was the members want to understand the situation and not rush into a decision.
- Many would like to understand what is happening
- A number of people have stated that they would like to keep the top club up and running
- Hazel Philips stated she is in favour of the cost-effective accommodation that is available currently (in particular National Park) and wants to protect that.

Committee introductions

Agenda was read out as a number of people had not received this via email prior

Dion had prepared documents and they were tabled, illustrating the occupancy figures and income/expenditure comparisons between the two lodges. The occupancy figures of 95% / 5% were queried. This was confirmed as being 95% of the total accommodation nights being at National Park, rather than 95% occupancy.

Adrian Dorrington made the point that the occupancy at the Ruapehu Lodge was likely to be affected by not having a custodian and it would be good to understand data from the last few years.

It was confirmed that annual fixed charges for each lodge are approximately the same, \$15,000 per annum.

Adrian Dorrington made a further point that the agenda states that the last AGM resolved that the committee attempt to dispose of the top club. This was not the understanding of those that attended the meeting. The AGM resolution stated that 'options would be explored'.

Kevin Frost stated that the requirement to remove the hut at some point in time is not new. It was known and part of the consent at the time of building and forms part of our licence.

Adam Crocker questioned whether the discussion around splitting the clubs was feasible. This point was not addressed.

A concern was raised that DOC will continue to ask for more and more expensive projects.

A question was asked as to how the diesel tanks would come out and at what cost? Mike Fitzmaurice mentioned that the tanks were originally dragged in behind a snow groomer. Last AGM minutes detail what is required. Resource Management Act prevents things being done as they were years ago.

Ross Sutherland explained that DOC has been very supportive through the tank removal process and wants us to carry on. It is the council that has been enforcing a resource consent and use of consultants for the removal of the diesel tanks. Ross further states that if we don't come up with the money to cover the diesel tank costs, that we are at risk of being shut down and the action taken is likely that the National Park hut would be seized to cover costs. Ross further questioned how the club has gone from such a good financial position to a position where we aren't able to cover our expenses.

The Chair confirmed action to date with regards to approaching suitable parties who may be interested in the top lodge. Parties approached and feedback received include:

Ruapehu Mountain Clubs, Federated Mountain Clubs (NZ-wide), Ngati Tuwharetoa, Auckland University, Victoria University, Massey University, Hilary Outdoor Pursuits Centre, St Peters School. No positive response so far.

- A couple of Ruapehu clubs have said they would be keen to amalgamate. Clubs would be unwilling to amalgamate knowing the liability that the mountain club poses should it be closed and require removal.

Ross stated that it would be unlikely that under the conditions of our licence, that we would be able to gift the hut. DOC has indicated they would assign the lease to a new owner.

Prue Fry questioned why we put the new toilets in if we knew we were close to the end? Prue agreed with Adrian's point around Ruapehu occupancy being directly affected by the lack of a custodian.

It was questioned whether we have advertised to attract groups seeking accommodation. Hazel Phillips stated yes; a flyer was made and sent to a number of schools in 2015 with no interest. All the clubs vie to attract school groups.

Hazel stated that currently the Ruapehu lodge was a bad business proposition and if treated as such, should be cut loose. Proposed to separate clubs to effectively ring-fence the National Park lodge, but could top up cash as required.

Adrian said that Hazel's logic was good in theory, but the reality may be different. Conceptually, if there were 20 people that were keen to pay \$1000 each for an annual membership, that the club could cover its costs.

Ross stated that the Ruapehu Lodge was owned prior to the National Park hut, so very unlikely that DOC would ignore that asset when recouping costs. In a recent discussion with Dave Mazey, it was commented that some of the unused clubs might be incinerated.

The Chair stated that the committee needs to be completely transparent as if there are any actions that are deemed fraudulent, the committee may be held personally liable.

Steve Chaney made the comment that under the constitution, 21 days notice was required given that it (any action around the sale of the top lodge / splitting of the club) was a major decision.

David Meek proposed that he could come up and run the Top Lodge at no cost to the club this season. The club would need to advertise heavily for non-members as well to generate enough revenue to keep everything running.

It was questioned by Paul Brown whether or not the real issue is membership. Current member numbers are too low for the club to be sustainable.

Dion Cruse stated it is not good enough that people are not helping at committee level. People with ideas need to front up and help by being part of the committee.

Bernie Prendergast said that from what he has seen through his volunteer work as a ski host, that all clubs are struggling for members; that it is not just a DSC issue.

It was stated that whilst a split may be difficult, that the club could legally\* sell it to a new club at market value. \*Note: no formal legal advice has been sought at this time

Hazel Phillips wanted it minuted that there is a fundamental difference in opinion

Adrian Dorrington queried that if there is a difference in opinion, maybe the committee needs to poll the membership to gather statistics on what the membership wants. Is it NP / both / top lodge only.

Corinna Meek asked whether there was a definite date for RAL's proposed new lift infrastructure, as it has been suggested that once the new lifts are in, that this may put the top lodge in a different light.

The Chair proposed that we do a survey as Adrian suggested.

Survey from the people in attendance:

Who in the membership does not want to use the top lodge and wants to get rid of it?

Who has joined the club with the intention of only using National Park?

Who thinks splitting the lodge would be a good idea? No one was prepared to answer the question without a better understanding. Kevin Frost suggested that perhaps committee members shouldn't be a part of the survey.

Mike Fitzmaurice asked if we were to heavily advertise the National Park hut, who would be happy to go up the mountain? Perhaps we could hold 5 rooms for members that didn't want to go up the top. David Meek stated that when he was the Booking Officer, casual bookings were taken with less than a week to go. This meant that members needed to book a little bit earlier, but filled up all available space.

Catherine Crooks asked who of those at the meeting had stayed up at the top lodge last year. The majority said yes they had.

A member noted that financially, the top lodge would require 8 weeks of 75% occupancy all week to break even and questioned whether this is viable?

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**A motion was put** "That we solicit offers for the top club lodge. Before a final decision is made, it must go to another special meeting for final decision to accept an offer".

Moved by: Mike Fitzmaurice    Seconded by: John Hallwright

Carried 23 votes for    1 against

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It was envisaged that advertising would be done via TradeMe, with a Tender type arrangement / expressions of interest as opposed to an auction or fixed price offer. Hazel may be able to solicit media coverage.

It was questioned what if some existing members were to buy it for \$1? This concept wasn't explored in depth, but it was implied that is this seen to be a conflict of interest, or would the club be satisfied to have disposed of the club without any further financial burden, given the current estimated cost for hut removal is c.\$650,000 (DOC's figure).

Adrian Dorrington put a motion forward that the question needs to be put to the whole membership. The Chair reiterated that this a special general meeting, which has the power to make a decision on behalf of the whole membership.

Natalie Calder questioned whether if we were to pay the \$1000, would there be any incentive with free nights? After some debate, it was said that it was unlikely that free nights would be provided as a sweetener. It was suggested that a Family Membership would pay \$2000 (if a single was \$1000 and assuming this type of option was offered). Details of any arrangement would have to be settled at a later date.

Six people were interested in paying \$1000 as a top club sub. Hazel Phillips suggested that the membership be canvassed as to whether they would consider a pre-paid season pass type accommodation arrangement.

The committee has stated that it is not acceptable to split the clubs and then walk away from the top lodge. We need to find a solution.

Ed Claridge asked what is happening with the diesel tanks. The Chair responded that the club will be seeking funding (via a Grant) to cover this.

Hazel Phillips proposed a motion around splitting the clubs. Steve Chaney stated that we are not in a position to vote until we understand the legal ramifications of any proposal. Steve has offered to seek legal advice.

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**A motion** was put forward that the Downhill Ski Club explore splitting into two clubs with one lodge each. All members to have reciprocal rights to both lodges.

Moved by Hazel Phillips    Seconded by Bernie Prendergast

Motion carried - 22 for    4 against    one abstained.

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Kevin Frost has asked if everyone voting is a paid up financial member. It was found that two were not. Chair to amend numbers on previous votes

It was confirmed that the agenda was only sent to paid up financial members. Adam Crocker queried whether it should have been sent to all members, as people are members until they resign. Some paid up members noted that they didn't receive the email, despite qualifying as paid up members.

The meeting was closed at 7.00p.m. by the chair and refreshments followed.

DRAFT