EDINBURGH BUSINESSWOMEN'S CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - MINUTES

WEDNESDAY 23 APRIL 2025 AT 6.30PM

THE BONHAM HOTEL, 35 DRUMSHEUGH GARDENS, EDINBURGH, EH3 7RN

Attendees: Kate Bell, Heather Warner, Janis Bovaird Martinez, Simone Hilliard, Laura Sterian, Nikki Kirkland, Lorraine Weselby, Dana Drzikova, Leanne Shaw, Amy Reilly, Sallie Bail, Karen Swanston, Eteri McKenzie, Sue Kerr, Orla Crummey, Laura Wyness, Isabel McNicoll (ASB)

1. President's Welcome

A warm welcome was extended to all attending members including new members to our club

2. Apologies for absence – Fi Torrance, Lorraine West, Toni Boyle, Mary Fairbairn – our President passed on the Club's warm regards to Mary

3. Introduction of Committee

This year has seen a number of changes to the Committee.

Simon Hilliard (Social Media Editor) and Laura Sterian (Treasurer) settled into their new roles this year and Joleen Perriam was thanked for her support during her time as Membership Secretary. The responsibility for this role is now being undertaken by Nikki Kirkland. During this transition we were supported by previous Membership Secretary, Gail Ricketts. We thank Nikki for stepping into this role, and Gail for support during this time. Leanne Shaw has also joined the Committee to support with adhoc projects.

After many years of supporting the club, Diane Roe, stepped down from the Committee during the last year. Diane has been an active member of the club and committee for many years, and we thank her for everything she has done.

We are both delighted and saddened that a long standing member of our Committee, Heather Warner stood down from the Committee at the AGM. Heather is taking up the role of President of Fife Women in Business and we wish her all the best in her new role, which will enable us to continue to reinforce the links between the two clubs. We thank Heather for her support and service to the Club over the last few years.

Kate thanked all committee members both past and present.

Our current Committee is made up of the following:

- Kate Bell – President
- Nikki Kirkland – Membership Secretary
- Simone Hilliard – Social Media
- Fiona Torrance - Events
- Laura Sterian – Treasurer

- Leanne Shaw – Special Projects
- Janis Bovaird Martinez – Minutes Secretary

Interested Members were encouraged to step forward if they are interested in joining the Club's Committee.

4. 2024 AGM Minutes – all items were actioned and approved. Copy available on our website

5. Presentation of Annual Committee Reports

Presidents Report – Kate Bell

This has been another strong year for the Club, offering our members and non-members a variety of events and networking opportunities.

We kicked off our year of networking early with our first, First Friday, taking place on January 3rd This continues to be a "sell-out" networking event every month. We have continued to host these at Hotel Indigo, Princes Street, Edinburgh given its location and the excellent service we receive from the hotel team.

We are lucky to be supported by our Members, who give their expertise and time to deliver a mixture of business development and personal development workshops.

Thank you to our members who delivered workshops for us in 2024 – Janis Martinez, Ema Pruteanu, Leanne Shaw, Moira Cox, Sallie Bale.

We also hosted a Menopause Members Panel Discussion with thanks to Dr Laura Wyness, Dr April Blake and Dana Drzikova.

We also thank, Sandra Benn and Janice Skakel for their Qi and Tea collaboration – a very relaxing and memorable evening.

We have welcomed a number of Guest Speakers to the club this year. Thanks to Lindsay Sibbald (Business Gateway) and Nichola Kane (STV)

Our Summer lunch was held in Chaopraya and our Spring lunch this year, was in collaboration with Fife Businesswomen's Club at The Bonham Hotel. It was great to collaborate with another ASB affiliate group and it was well represented by both Clubs.

Our increased presence on Social Media has had a positive impact on the numbers signing up as Guest Members and attending our First Friday events.

We were also proud to make our 2024 charitable donation of £250 to Edinburgh Children's Hospital and a representative of the Charity joined us at our February First Friday meeting.

We continue to bring our Values – Get Inspired, Get Involved, Get Connected – into action and this year have stayed connected with Women's Enterprise Scotland, Federation of Small Businesses, Institute Of Directors and Business Gateway.

Our strong affiliation with the Association for Scottish Businesswomen continues and we regularly outline the benefits of this to our EBC Members, encouraging them to ensure they have up to date profiles and make the most of any special offers.

Our monthly Committee meetings take place on Zoom, where we plan and agree events, discuss Social Media results and Club Membership and Finances. During one of our meetings this year, we reviewed the results of our Member survey which gathers members feedback about the club and informs and shapes the activities we plan. This year we had a particularly strong response rate.

In summary, this has been another busy year for Edinburgh Businesswomen's Club and we are proud of our continued success.

Membership Report – Nikki Kirkland

On average, we have around 24 Guest members at any one time you have two opportunities to attend Non membership events before deciding whether to join the club.

Our membership levels since Covid have been steady and consistent. Referrals through Social Media are working well and we ask that our members support us with engaging and sharing our Social Media posts to extend our reach to new members.

As at 31st March '25 – 59 members

45 individual members

2 Corporate

1 Corporate + 1

11 Honorary

Events Report – presented by Kate Bell on behalf of Fiona Torrance

We had a very successful year of events and following on from the outputs of our Annual Member survey we offer a variety of events. 26 Responses were received equating to a 50% response rate. This ensures that we are catering for the variation in our member's needs.

Summary of events: Attendance as a Percentage of numbers booked

- 12 First Friday Networking Events – average of 93% attendance and a total of 284 people
- 1 Netwalk - attended by 5 people – 100% (led by Diane Roe & Gail Ricketts) We have decided to stop planning any further Netwalks due to the challenges of low numbers combined with poor Scottish weather!
- AGM – 16 attendees – 64%
- Leading on Empty, facilitated by Janis Bovaird Martinez – 40%
- How to build a Solid foundation to sell your services and products on Social Media facilitated by Ema Pruteanu – 50%
- Ideas Into Action, facilitated by Leanne Shaw – 67%
- A discovery of the best Authentic You, facilitated by Moira Cox – 75%
- Qi and Tea – 60%
- Menopause Discussion Panel with Dr Laura Wyness, Dr April Blake and Dana Drizkova – 35%
- Mapping The Future of Your Business Journey, facilitated by Sallie Bale – 75%
- Summer Lunch at Chaopriya – 55%
- Spring Lunch at The Bonham Hotel – 87%
- Christmas Evening at Dine Restaurant – 71%

Treasurers Report – Laura Sterian

Closing balance at the end of Dec '24 of £6016.67

As a Not For Profit organisation, all our income comes from Membership fees. There are other ongoing expenditures; our website, Zoom for Committee meetings & Stripe Fees. We also pay fees to ASB to continue our Affiliate Group Status.

Questions were invited from the floor from members.

A copy of our Finance Report was signed and ratified by members Dana Drzikova and Amy Reilly

Social Media Report – Simone Hilliard

Linked In – Engagement has increased by 29.4% in 2024 – 25 and we gained 164 new members, increasing our total to 857. This has been the biggest growth across all of our three social media platforms. Our engagement rate is 146.5% versus other groups and associations like EBC. First Friday posts are the most popular.

Facebook – fluctuating across the year. Reach and visits on the page have increased by 35% and 8.2% respectively. We have 1211 followers on Facebook.

Instagram – Also fluctuated across the year. Content interaction increased 100% from the pervious year and stories are as popular as posts. We gained 68 followers for the year, bringing the total follower count to 386.

Insights – LinkedIn has performed well in 2024 with weekly and ad hoc posting and required less posts than Facebook ad Instagram to achieve growth.

First Friday posts achieve the best results for all three platforms.

Questions were invited from the floor and we requested that Members continue to interact with our posts to extend their reach.

We have reintroduced Member Spotlight posts and we invited all Members to get in touch if they are interested in being featured.

6. ASB (Association of Scottish Businesswomen) Affiliation

EBC is one of 8 affiliate groups of ASB and we participate annually in the ASB Conference and Awards Ceremony. The 2024 Conference was hosted in Perth Theatre for the first time. A great location and a successful event.

We were delighted as a club to have 4 members nominated as finalists in their award category:

- Dr Laura Wyness - Business Woman of the Year finalist
- Lorraine Wesleby - Business For Good finalist
- Juulia Karlstedt – Business For Good and Business of the Year finalist
- Leigh Forbes – Business of the Year finalist

Huge Congratulations to our President, Kate Bell who was the winner of the inaugural Presidents Award for her support, guidance and service to ASB

We welcomed Isabel McNicoll, Co-Chair of ASB to our AGM, who shared an overview of ASB, reminding EBC members of its benefits and an update on their growing Committee and increasing

activity on Social Media. Isabel congratulated Heather Warner on her new role as President of Fife Women in Business.

The 2025 Conference has been announced as Tuesday 4th November in Perth Theatre from 10am – 4.30pm. Members were encouraged to hold the date.

7. AOB

Kate Bell is collaborating with Chloe Ainslie and Nikola Kirszniewska on an event to encourage Young Female Leaders into Networking, following the successful mentoring that Kate and the Club has provided for both Chloe and Nikola.

We are planning a full day event on Sunday 22nd June called "Just For You" with a focus on personal development – book via the website. Tickets are £45 and the event will be hosted in The Charlotte Kimpton Hotel.

Simone will be hosting a Photo Walk in Princes Street Gardens on Thursday May 22nd – book via the website.

Members were encouraged to come forward with any ideas that they have for future workshops.

Dana Drzikova asked the Committee about the performance of the Club's website and we discussed how our Social Media performance is tracked rather than our Website performance.

Eteri McKenzie encouraged the use of @everyone for Social Media posts to raise awareness for club members.