

HOUSE OF GORDON
AGM MINUTES
STONE MOUNTAIN HIGHLAND GAMES
LILBURN, GA
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023

Convening on the date and at the place above written, the Annual General Meeting of the House of Gordon, USA was called to order at 2:09 pm EST by President Jennifer Martin.

Greetings and Board Introductions: The President greeted all those in physical attendance and those attending via Zoom. She also introduced the Board Members present and attending via Zoom: President Jennifer Martin, Vice President Cynthia Patrick, Communications Chair Julia Heinig, Quartermaster Kaine Aitken and newly elected Board member Tim Steele were all in attendance in person. Convener Chair Robert Gordon, Treasurer/Scholarship Chair Tony Williams and Acting Secretary Phil Gardner were all in attendance via Zoom. There were also 18 members of the House in attendance in person.

The first Order of Business was a report by the President that due to a lack of physical or digital minutes, including no video of the meeting, from the 2022 AGM, a reading of those minutes is not possible.

The next Order of Business was a Roll Call to determine if a quorum was present. With 189 proxies returned, exceeding the minimum of 20% of current members necessary for a quorum, it was determined that a quorum was present.

Next were Committee Reports presented in the following order: President's Report – President Jennifer Martin, Treasurer's Report – President Jennifer Martin on behalf of Treasurer Tony Williams due to WiFi connection issues, Scholarship Report - Vice President Cynthia Patrick on behalf of Scholarship Chair Tony Williams due to WiFi connection issues, Communications Report – Vice President Cynthia Patrick on behalf of Communications Chair Julia Heinig who was running the Zoom recording during the meeting, Convener's Report – Quartermaster Kaine Aitken on behalf of Robert Gordon due to WiFi connection issues, Quartermaster's Report – Quartermaster Kaine Aitken, Membership Report – Vice President/Membership Chair Cynthia Patrick, AGM 2022 Reports – Acting Secretary Phil Gardner, who explained that this is the best we have in terms of minutes from the 2022 AGM. The Board has tried for over a year to obtain those minutes or material to create minutes from and have been unsuccessful. Copies of the above-mentioned reports are attached at the end of these Minutes.

Old Business: Due to the absence of any minutes from the 2022 AGM, the Board is not aware of any old business that needs to be addressed at this meeting.

New Business:

Election of Officers:

Certification of Ballots: Vice President Cynthia Patrick and Acting Secretary Phil Gardner counted and certified all ballots received prior to the AGM. 189 Ballots were received and 167 of those ballots voted for all nominees. There being a majority of votes for all nominees, President Jennifer Martin declared all nominees duly elected.

2024 House of Gordon, USA Board of Directors:

President: Jennifer Martin

Vice President/Membership Chair: Cynthia Patrick

Treasurer/Scholarship Chair: Tony Williams

Secretary: Phil Gardner

Communications Chair: Julia Heinig

Convener Chair: Robert Gordon

Quartermaster: Kaine Aitken

Director: Timothy Steele

Director: Penny Pierson

Director: Joseph Yerger

President Jennifer Martin introduced and welcomed all the New Directors to the Board and looked forward to working with all of them for the betterment of the House. She especially thanked Phil Gardner for stepping in as a Director and later as Acting Secretary and for being willing to take on the job officially. She also thanked Tony Williams for stepping in as Treasurer and for his contributions as a Board member.

Purchasable Challenge Coin proposal: A proposal was submitted by House member Tommy Beard for the House to produce a bronze, non-enameled challenge coin for purchase by the general membership, with a possible cost per coin of \$10-15, with proceeds going to the House of Gordon Scholarship Fund. Discussion followed with some preferring to keep the Challenge Coin as something only for Conveners to distribute at their respective Games, a suggestion for a smaller coin than the one currently available to Conveners, pins or possible cap badges available to those making donations at different levels. A motion was regularly made and seconded for the Board to explore coins, cap badges and pins and the Board will then decide on how to move forward. This motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of Dues Increase: President Jennifer Martin discussed the history and need for dues increase. The amount of the proposed increase was put forward as \$35, with \$20 going to the House general fund and \$15 going to each Convener. There were comments in favor of the

increase, with Vice President Cynthia Patrick proposing a survey and questionnaire to the membership about the dues increase, the fact that Life Memberships are already available for \$500 was also discussed, along with the availability of Life Memberships being put on new Membership applications for 2024, including the idea of a Life Membership Certificate, coin and pin for paid Life Memberships. The Board will review, discuss and decide on this issue at the January 2024 Board Meeting.

Annual General Meeting location for 2024: President Jennifer Martin announced that the 2024 AGM would take place on Labor Day Weekend, Friday August 30-September 1, 2024, at the 158th Scottish Highland Games and Gathering in Pleasanton, CA. The AGM will take place on Saturday, August 31st at a time to be determined by the Board.

President's Closing Remarks: President Jennifer Martin announced that she would be stepping down as President at the end of her new term but would remain on the Board. She also brought up the idea of exploring term limits for all Board Members and would explore a change in the by-laws to be able to put this into effect.

Motion to Adjourn: There being no further business, President Jennifer Martin moved that the AGM be adjourned. That motion was duly seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous. The AGM was adjourned at 3:01 pm EST.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Gardner, Secretary

Northern California Convener

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Good afternoon, cousins! What a year, term, it's been!!!!

We've experienced some growing pains over the past two years, still having a few. Still trying to get all information from the past administration shared with the Board and the not-so-new administration, but I feel we're getting into a good flow and will continue to grow and do some fine things here in the House during this new term! Bullet points of our year:

I'm super excited to be here, at a different game for our AMG! It's the 1st time it's moved in over a decade! I plan to continue moving the AGM every year, just as our Bylaws have always stated, it's to be moved around the US!

We (the Board) have gotten into a fluid routine with our quarterly zoom meetings! I'm proud of the fact that we have a board from all the corners of the USA actively involved in the business of running the House! We've enjoyed touching base, and planning some wonderful things. We're also having Convener zoom meetings in the spring and fall every year so that we can help our Conveners have a voice for themselves and for the members in their area. Out of 50 states we have 28 hard working conveners, which is outstanding. During the pandemic years we learned just how important it is for the House to be at the Scottish games and festivals and the conveners are the ones that make it happen. We encourage everyone to volunteer with their local convener and to get more involved in the House.

Our Challenge Coins that have been given to our Conveners so they can award it to a worthy member who've helped out or done something worthwhile in their area have been a great success! They're not for sale, but rather these coins are intended to be something super special for our Conveners to have another way to connect with the members in their area!

We're still looking into sponsoring awards at other games like we have for years at Grandfather Mountain, we're trying to hammer out the kinks.

All in all, I believe we've had a very successful year and I look forward to continuing our positive flow moving onward and upward.

Yours,
Jen Mills Martin

HOUSE OF GORDON COMMUNICATIONS REPORT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023

Good afternoon fellow Gordons! I'm so glad I could be in attendance this year. In the past year we have revamped the House of Gordon USA website and redesigned *In The House!* bi-annual newsletter. Prior to the website relaunch, we experienced a lot of outages on the site due to outdated themes and plug-ins from our CMS. At that time approximately 45% of our visitors were coming from Asia (primarily Turkey). Since our launch in late April our average visitors to the site have remained over 50% from North America, with visitors

from Asia continuing to drop each month to a total of a 19% decrease. Our visitors from Europe have also increased each month to a total of a 10% increase. We also incorporated a new form for members to sign up, renew their memberships, or simply make a donation. We also created a form to allow individuals to apply for a scholarship online. Additionally, we have revamped some of our convener tent resources to create a more uniform branding and create more familiarity.

This past August we set up Google Analytics to get more accurate reporting of visitors and hope to use that information to discover how we can improve our site to make it more user friendly. In the coming year, we will also be working on updates to make the site accessible and follow the WCAG guidelines for those visitors with various disabilities which will most likely involve rethinking some of our pages.

As of writing this, we have 3,276 Facebook members. That is up from 2,931 this time last year. It's a lot to keep up with for us five admins so we appreciate your participation in keeping the conversations going. As well as your patience when those pesky spam comments get by.

On a final note, I'm going to start working on the December newsletter. I encourage all members to submit any births, deaths, marriages, accomplishments, etc. for the newsletter. They can be submitted to me at Julia.heinig@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Heinig
Communications Chair

HOUSE OF GORDON
SCHOLARSHIP REPORT
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023

This year we received six scholarship packets from some well deserving applicants. Of the six, three were awarded: Drummer Cohen Pritchard (11), Dancer Mercedes (13), and Dancer Molly Smith (20). This was a great year as we haven't received this many packets in a couple of years. This also gave us the opportunity to recognize both Drummers and Dancers. In the past we have also recognized game athletes, keeping our relevance in three areas of highland culture. The advertising efforts of the Scholarship are paying off. I enjoyed submitting articles on the recipients and our program this past year. Currently the Scholarship Fund sits at \$7,314.49. This places us in a great position to continue our assistance to upcoming Highland enthusiasts for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony T. Williams, MHA, BA Scholarship Chair

HOUSE OF GORDON
CONVENER'S REPORT
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023

Over the past year, two Convener meetings were held, one in the Spring and one last Fall. During the Fall meeting the topic of convener code of conduct was discussed. This led to the recommendation of writing up guidelines for new conveners with recommendations of 'what to do' and 'what not to do.' With the input of other conveners, "A House of Gordon Convener's Survival Guide" was completed and made available on the Convener Resources tab on the website this past Spring.

With the Kick-off-the-Season Convener Meeting this Spring, one topic discussed was supplies, and providing Conveners some items they may need. The board had voted to provide the parade banner in the boot up kit, so it was also offered to any convener who wanted one, and a number of them took up the offer. Another item that was a big hit were convener name tags. Bill Linse graciously offered to manufacture them for any convener who needed one. They look very professional. I would like to thank him for his efforts on this.

Tracey Penwell stepped down as our Kansas convener. Damien Broussard has stepped back from convening in Louisiana, and Michael Hilden is no longer convening in Minnesota.

Conveners Penny Pierson and Mark Memmo have taken over more areas in the Mid-Atlantic region for David and Lois Todd. Lois has said she and David will be stepping back all together from convening after the Richmond Scottish Highland Games in November. They plan on turning over after these games to our new Virginia Convener Angie Nash and her husband Rob.

This past spring, Donald and Diane van Stratten said they were going to step back from convening in Arizona but have since changed their minds. They plan on convening at the Phoenix Games next March.

Chuck Tarbay is our new Eastern New York Convener; he will be splitting duties with Holly Warren who will now be our Western New York Convener. Holly had been covering the whole State for many years.

Tara Welborn will be helping Mark Dodd convene in Tennessee and Kentucky next year, with the goal of taking over Kentucky in the future.

Along with looking for conveners in Kansas, Arkansas and Minnesota, we are also looking for conveners in Missouri, Illinois, Louisiana and Montana. Finally, I'd like to give a big thanks to all our Conveners for their hard work in representing the House of Gordon USA at all the games! You are the heart and soul of our organization.

Rob Gordon

Convener Chair

House of Gordon USA

HOUSE OF GORDON
QUARTERMASTER'S INVENTORY REPORT
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023

To the House of Gordon Board of Directors and members of the House of Gordon, the Quartermaster presents the following report to the Annual General Meeting:

Currently in stock, we have the following:

4 small hanging crest banners

2 sept banners

2 header banners

1 tartan tablecloth (with many more on the roll, waiting to be cut)

1 poly-viscose tablecloth with tartan print

And 1 bag of various buttons and patches

Missing Inventory: Big special banners from the Chiefs visit in 2017.

Also working on getting back supplies from former Conveners to be able to use for new Conveners.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaine Aitken, Quartermaster

Membership Report
AGM October 2023
Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

Total Active Members July 1, 2023: 404

Certified Voting Members: 189

Quorum Needed (20%): 80

Total active members as of 10/1/2023: 488

Cynthia Gordon Patrick
House of Gordon USA
Membership Secretary