

**Minutes of SPF Judges Meeting on Sunday 3rd July 2016
at Stirling Court Hotel, Stirling at 10am**

PRESENT		
George Neilson (Chair) - SPF	Neil Smith (Minutes) - SPF	Libby Smith - SPF
Rod Wheelans - SPF	Allan Gawthorpe - SPF	Charles Summers, Midlothian
Gordon Scott, Mid Calder	Andy Bennetts, Haddington CC	David Pickford, Donside CC
Andy Hayes, Brechin PS	Guy Phillips, PCPC	Eddie Telford, Ayr PS
Ian Tully, Kirkintilloch CC	Bob Collins, QPCC	Ian Sturrock, Dundee PS
Matt Johnston, Milngavie & Bearsden	Rikki O'Neill, Dundee PS	Al Buntin, Dundee PS
Stewart Dodd, Dundee PS	Ron Bell, Galashiels CC	Neil Scott, Edinburgh PS
Elspeth Fear, Strathaven CC		
APOLOGIES		
Hunter Kennedy	John McVie	Ian Davidson, Irvine
John Simpson	Scott Marshall	Clive D Turner

1. Opening Remarks –

George Neilson, SPF Judges Secretary, chaired the meeting in the absence of SPF President Hunter Kennedy. George welcomed everyone to the Meeting, and introduced members of the SPF Executive attending, and invited all present to introduce themselves.

2. Aims of Judge's and Club's reporting forms –

George outlined the background behind the proposals; He outlined the PAGB Judges Secretaries Seminar he had attended where he discovered almost half of the PAGB Federations had a similar system to that being suggested by the SPF to trial.

We have all heard someone saying "We will not have this judge back", but neither the Judge nor the SPF gets direct feedback from the Club about 'why' at the time, sometimes not knowing whether this is an Individual's opinion or not. On the other hand we have also heard of problems encountered by Judges when dealing with Clubs – from very late delivery of entries or entries not in the order of the paperwork, to lack of contact details, directions, help or welcome at the Club.

The PAGB seminar, together with these general comments heard over the years, suggested to George, that the SPF should try to do something to improve the Judging experience for Clubs and Judges alike.

Not inviting a Judge back is the solution most Clubs take if a Judge does not go down well, but this is not very constructive if the Judge has no feedback on how he/she has come across to that Club. Given that there is only a limited number of Judges, this becomes self-defeating.

The first proposal was the introduction of Feedback Forms for Judges and Clubs (sample forms were supplied);

Judges would be able to give constructive feedback on how well a Club had supplied work/paperwork to a Judge, their booking process and details supplied to the Judge, along with their hosting of the Judge/Competition. The Club and SPF Judges Secretary would each get a copy of the form.

Clubs would be able to give constructive feedback on how the Judge had come across to the Club members on the night. The Judge and SPF Judges Secretary would each get a copy of the form.

During a healthy discussion various comments were made by the Judges present –

- If adequate support and guidance is given it may encourage judges

- A risk that some people will be put off Judging, or would feel under more pressure.
- Need to have whole process explained and make our objectives clear for it to succeed.
- There should be some kind of monitoring process of Judges (Particularly new Judges) – It was felt generally this would be useful. - *Cost factor? and Who would do this? - The SPF would consider how this could be done.*
- Need to ensure the form is completed by more than one person - Can get a biased view from an individual completing – *It was thought essential that the form be completed by more than one person.*
- Most complaints are likely to be against new judges - *Most complaints were actually involving longer serving Judges – SPF. This was born out by several Judges present.*
- *A common complaint was for ‘Sexist Remarks’ – People are very PC minded nowadays- SPF*
- Judge present admitted that his own Club had had a Judge where members had said they would not enter again. *A number present admitted that comments made by a Judge in their own Club had put Beginners off.*
- It was also said that some judges are not ‘broad enough’ in their knowledge base to be able to judge.
- There is currently a shortage of Judges - *Although Clubs generally have many more Club members than they used to, it takes a while for those members to gain the necessary experience to become a Judge -SPF*
- One Judge thought feedback was important. They hadn’t received any when they began, and thought it would have been helpful. – *A number of Judges present agreed they would welcome feedback and find it useful.*
- One Judge reported that a fellow Judge had indicated ‘he would give up Judging if he received a negative comment’
- Some Club Committees, or Judges, will feel it an onerous task to have to complete the forms, but must be sold it as a positive thing with benefits for Clubs and Judges alike.
- Need to encourage Clubs/Judges to complete the forms for positive feedback as well as negative.
- We need to make it clear that the aims of the forms are to give helpful advice and be proactive.
- The quantities to be Judged in a very short allotted time was felt detrimental to the quality of Judging for some – *Judges can state the maximum number they are prepared to Judge in advance*
- To get better Judges, we need better education. Very difficult to get Judges to broaden their outlook (Go to Galleries, enter Salons, look at magazines – breadth of knowledge will become greater) – Try to be fair and honest about an image even though it’s not your genre.
- It was agreed that excellent photographers do not necessarily make good judges.
- Have the SPF asked Judges if they have judged/entered or visited Salons, FIAP comps etc. – *Yes, we do as part of our Judge’s Assessment Course Questionnaire- SPF*
- Judges should be encouraged to regularly attend SPF Events to keep up to date as styles and quality; This has changed quickly in recent times – *It was also thought the Newsletters were very useful in this regard (e-flash and e-news)*

The current SPF Judge’s Assessment Course was outlined - this has changed in format in recent years. (See <http://www.scottish-photographic-federation.org/spf-workshops> SPF Judge’s Assessment Course area) - We do not try to teach people to pick the best picture, but teach them presentational skills and ‘do no harm’

- It was thought the format of this was good, but when Judges leave they develop bad habits.
- It was very stressful to do the workshop, but it was a good grounding
- Is the SPF Assessment trying to only increase number of Judges who are fit? – *To date, yes, but we are keen to introduce new three-tier levels of Judges. Some of the ideas raised today may introduce other possibilities- SPF*

3. Format of Club’s Report on Judges (Form) –

- It was suggested that the forms be mandatory, but this was not thought possible, but the word ‘voluntary’ should be removed (*for both Club’s and Judge’s forms*)

- It should be made clear on the form that the form is completed as a collective Club response not solely the opinion of an individual.
- Rather than Yes/No, a ranking range should be given. This was agreed as 1 to 4, where 4 was Excellent and 1 was Bad. This would also make it easier to do an analysis later.
- After going through all of the questions, with the above amendments, there was a unanimous vote in favour.

4. Format of Judge's Report on Clubs (Form) –

It was clarified that this Form does not take away from any arrangements a Judge will make with the Club. Completion of Booking Forms/Booking Reply Forms (Supplied in SPF Directory and PAGB Handbook) would still be required. This new form is a measure of how close the Club has come to meeting the mark.

Judge's Comments/Questions -

- It was thought that many Clubs required to be educated on what they need to provide to the Judge – *The SPF would make them aware of all the information available to them. See <http://www.scottish-photographic-federation.org/guidance> SPF Judges and Lecturers and Booking Forms areas will be highlighted in pack.*
- How marking is done is up to the Club, not up to the SPF. Judges require to follow the guidance supplied by the Club, or they may blow the Club's League. *Likewise the Club should ensure that all necessary details are supplied to the Judge to enable them to do this.*
- Should stress that we are trying to improve the system
- Did you receive a thankyou note?
- Should you send a CV for use in Club Introduction? – *There was a general agreement that a brief resume for Introduction purposes should be made available.*
- After going through all of the questions, there was a unanimous vote in favour.

5. Agreement to Proceed with a trial of Forms for one year – Everyone agreed, with emphasis that this was an ongoing process.

- It was asked that the forms be downloadable or able to be completed online; that once completed they should be able to be emailed – *This was agreed – SPF Timescale – Forms would start in September 2016.*

6. Change of Classification of Judges within SPF Directory – The second proposal was to introduce three classifications of Judges (A, B and C), to replace the existing, which we would publish in our SPF Directory. The SPF "A" list would be those Judges who are currently PAGB Approved Judges (Page 113 in PAGB 2016/16 Handbook). The SPF "B" list would be the remainder of the SPF's listed Judges. In future anyone attending an SPF Judges Assessment Course, who was felt up to the necessary standard, would go on to the SPF "B" list. The SPF "A" and "B" lists would therefore be the SPF's list of accredited Judges.

We proposed the introduction of an SPF "C" list – For non-accredited Judges. Those wishing to gain experience prior to coming to an SPF Judges Assessment Course, or for those who attended the course who required more experience before going on to our list. This would help introduce some people to Judging and hopefully, eventually encourage more people on to our lists.

Judge's Comments/Questions -

- Many Clubs currently use Judges close to them who are not on the SPF list, particularly for friendly competitions
- Hope that some people who may not consider themselves good enough to go on an SPF Assessment Course, may be prepared to go on the "C" list.
- May have to introduce a 'filter' of some sort to 'filter out chancers'
- To try and encourage Clubs to book "These people need experience, please give them some" would be added to the Directory listing.

- After a period of time they would be encouraged to attend an SPF Assessment Course. The feedback forms would become extremely useful in this regard. The introduction of the “C” list could also give a higher success rate at the Assessment Courses if candidates had had more Judging experience prior to attending the course.
- Query how people would be added to the “A” List – This is effectively the PAGB’s requirement of an approved Judge. The conditions for nomination are in PAGB Handbook. An individual can contact the SPF to indicate they are interested. In brief terms they require some national/international Judging experience before being considered – The same as for all other Judges, a certain level of experience is required prior to accreditation, the same is expected at the higher level.
- It was confirmed that ‘forms’ would not be used as a way of relegating a Judge – *It was also confirmed that the SPF do not strike people off.*

A vote was taken and this was carried unanimously.

Timescale – The SPF “C” List would be advertised from Sept to Dec in time for the new SPF Directory and PAGB Handbook updates in the New Year. *The three sections would therefore come in to effect 1st Jan 2017.*

7. AOCB –

a) Data Protection – Concern was raised. Libby explained that the SPF is fully Data Protection compliant in regard to all personal details. This applies to all details listed in the SPF Directory. All forms completed will be considered confidential in nature, between the SPF Judge, Club Officials and SPF Judge’s Secretary (& SPF Officials as required).

b) Would the SPF be running a refresher course? – *The SPF would definitely consider doing that following the comments of this meeting. When asked how many would attend such a course, almost 1/3rd of the Judges present would be interested.*

c) Expenses – One Judge said that he thought that current SPF/PAGB rate was very high. *(PAGB rate 30p plus petrol. SPF was an all-in rate of 45p to simplify. - These equate to the amount acceptable before tax).* At the moment the rate may be slightly generous, depending on your vehicle’s mpg, but it is not long ago that it wasn’t – It tends to average out. You are free to ask for a lesser amount, but if you don’t ask for the full rate it is unfair on the next Judge who may need the full rate. Many are sympathetic to smaller Clubs. At the end of the year, Judges are likely to need all their expenses to cover all of their incidental costs e.g. evening meal/snacks etc. taken en-route not charged to Club.

d) Query re how a Judge should handle an inappropriate image? – *The Club should attend to this prior to the Judge receiving the entries. If the Judge is not happy Judging or showing an image he is within his rights to Judge it appropriately (i.e. mark but not show for instance)*

e) e-flash – Rod was happy to introduce a ‘Judge’s Corner’, and would like attendees to send him articles of their Judging experiences – Philosophy – Comments – Funny Stories. Send to rod@creative-camera.co.uk

In closing, attendees were asked if they hear of any Judges that are sceptical about this trial, to please encourage them to contact George to discuss their concerns. The SPF will hold another meeting after the year is up to review how the trial has worked. Abridged minutes of this meeting will go out to the attendees. All Judges will receive a ‘pack’ containing full details of the trial, the Clubs will then also be sent full details, along with an explanation of the background to the trial and changes to the classifications. The meeting closed 1pm.