

English Folk Dance and Song Society Annual General Meeting 2018

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Cecil Sharp House, London NW1 7AY,
Saturday 10 November 2018 at 11am

DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED

Present: Lorna Aizlewood, Chair of the Board, Ed Fishwick, Honorary Treasurer, Tony Garton, Company Secretary, Katy Spicer, Chief Executive, and sixteen others, including five current Board members and four who will join the Board at the end of the meeting. Proxies had been appointed by 447 members.

1. Welcome

Lorna Aizlewood, Chair of the Board, welcomed Members. She introduced the platform party, Katy Spicer (Chief Executive), Ed Fishwick (Honorary Treasurer) and Tony Garton (Company Secretary).

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Board Members Doug Oates and Alan Davey. Apologies were also received from Elizabeth Rose. Apologies for lateness were received from Alistair Anderson and Mike and Mary Wilson-Jones.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11 November 2017

The minutes were accepted by the meeting and signed, as proposed by Mike Heaney and seconded by Fi Fraser.

4. Matters Arising from the minutes

There were no Matters arising from the Minutes.

5. Presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts for the year 2017/18, including the report of the Auditors and an update on activities for the current year

The annual report had been previously distributed.

5.1 Chair's report

Lorna Aizlewood said she had been elected as chair following the last AGM and that it was a privilege to work with this forward-looking, dynamic organisation.

Lorna spoke about the complete refurbishment and restoration of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library's public space at Cecil Sharp House to something of its original glory over the summer and early autumn of 2017. This was funded by the National Folk Music Fund (NFMF). An official re-opening event which took place in January 2018 was attended by some 100 people with the ceremonial ribbon cut by NFMF Chair, Hugh Cobbe.

Lorna spoke of the new artists' development project, Musicians in Museums, funded by Help Musicians UK. Six folk musicians are artists in residents at three museums – the National Coal Mining Museum of England, the National Maritime Museum, and the Museum of English Rural Life. The artists are exploring the links between intangible and tangible cultural heritage through the creation of new musical works and delivering educational activities.

2017 saw the culmination of the first year of the National Youth Folk Ensemble and the start of the second cohort of young artists. In their final four months, the first Ensemble performed at venues and festivals to great acclaim. The year-two Ensemble gave their first performance at Sage Gateshead in February 2018. Developing more grass roots opportunities for young people to play folk music is a key objective of the creation of the National Youth Folk Ensemble.

A significant project that brought together archives, education and performance was Carpenter Folk Online. James Madison Carpenter was an American who collected folk songs from England, Scotland and the USA during the 1930s. In partnership with the Elphinstone Institute at the University of Aberdeen and the Library of Congress, funding was secured from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to add this collection to the VWML online resources. An engagement programme took place in Scotland and England, and Cecil Sharp House (CSH) hosted the launch event in March which featured our London Youth Folk Ensemble and CSH Choir.

The first conference on social dance in living memory, Steps for Success, was held in March at Cecil Sharp House attracting 85 delegates from the length and breadth of England, and representing teachers, dancers, callers, and organisers. It was a lively day of presentations, dance workshops, advice sessions and panel discussions. Subjects covered included improving dance technique, diversity and folk dance, music for dance, history of folk dance, gender-free calling, and safe and inclusive practice. The event was presented in association with People Dancing, the national development organisation for community and participatory dance practice and practitioners.

Lorna thanked our members, individuals and club donors, and organisations which have helped fund our work over this past year including Arts Council England; PRS Foundation; Help Musicians UK and the National Folk Music Fund. She also thanked PermaCulture London who support the on-going development of our gardens and who won us, yet again, Best Business Garden for Cecil Sharp House in the 2017 Camden in Bloom competition. Finally she thanked Katy Spicer and the staff and her fellow trustees for their dedicated work.

5.2 Honorary Treasurer's Report

Ed Fishwick introduced the accounts for the year 2017/8 which had been previously circulated. In summary he said that the finances sound, and the method of management of the accounts is robust.

5.3 Chief Executive's reports on the year ahead, 2018/19

We have continued our involvement with U.Dance, the annual festival for youth dance companies. In July 2018 our associate company Folk Dance Remixed worked with young people from the Eastern Region to present a folk and urban dance performance at the festival held in Ipswich.

This is the final year (ending summer 2019) for our current National Youth Folk Ensemble Artistic Director, Sam Sweeney, and we are in the process of recruiting his successor. As inaugural director for the Ensemble's first three years, Sam and his fellow tutors have created a standard of playing and performance higher than we thought possible. The 2017/18 Ensemble give performances at Cambridge Folk Festival and Sidmouth Folk Week this summer and Ensemble numbers increase from 17 to 19 players from September 2018.

In partnership with Sussex Traditions and the University of Sussex, the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library presented “Locating Women in the Folk”, a conference with speakers from across the world which seeks to celebrate and share research on the integral role women have played in the preservation and development of folk traditions. The conference was part of our recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act, which we are also marking with a focus on female folk musicians in our Cecil Sharp House 2018 autumn programme.

This weekend (10/11 November 2018) we are presenting a third Folk Song Conference at Cecil Sharp House and in the spring 2019 our popular Broadsides Day takes place in Glasgow with the University of Strathclyde, the first time this event has taken place outside of England. Staying with conferences, in autumn 2019 we will be presenting the first conference on Step Dancing in partnership with the Historical Dance Society and the University of Roehampton.

Funding from PRS for Music Foundation and Help Musicians UK continues to support our Artists’ Development programme and in particular our creative bursary programme and festival showcases, and the continuation of our Musicians in Museums programme. Our artists in residence at the National Coal Mining Museum for England will be giving a performance of their newly created work down in the mine shaft! And we are looking forward to working with Manchester Folk Festival and other partners to commission a new folk music performance work to mark the bicentenary of the Peterloo Massacre in 2019.

New funding from Marc Fitch Foundation will enable VWML to develop an online Folk Song Subject Index and related thesaurus of preferred terms, the first of its kind. While funding from the People’s Postcode Lottery (Postcode Community Trust) will make possible a significant development in our work with and for disabled young people over the next year.

5.4 Receipt of the Annual Report and Accounts

That the Annual Report and Accounts be received by the meeting was proposed by Fi Fraser, seconded by Sherry Neyhus and agreed by the Meeting.

6. Elections and Appointments to the Board

Tony Garton advised the meeting that two Board members had to retire having served for six years as a Trustee/Director. These are Ed Fishwick and Doug Oates. In addition two members of the Board have served three years on the Board and must step down, but are eligible for re-election. These are Alistair Anderson and Mike Heaney. Both have offered themselves for re-election.

Tony Garton advised the meeting that there were five candidates who had been proposed for election to the Board and since there are more vacancies than candidates no formal vote is required and all are elected. Those elected are Alistair Anderson, Mike Heaney, Nicola Kearey, Corinne Male and Sherry Neyhus. In addition the Board has resolved to appoint Lucy Hooberman to the Board. A motion to confirm her appointment will be put to the 2019 AGM.

Lorna Aizlewood thanked the retiring Board members for their work through their time on the Board and welcomed the new members.

7. Setting Subscriptions for 2019 (Ordinary Resolution 1)

The Board asked the meeting to confirm the levels of subscription for 2019. The resolution was passed overwhelmingly on a show of hands.

8. Appointment of Auditors (Ordinary resolution no 2)

H W Fisher & Co was appointed as auditors at the 2017 AGM. The Board proposed their re-appointment. of H W Fisher & Co as auditors. The resolution was passed overwhelmingly on a show of hands.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Annual General Meetings

Mary Wilson-Jones asked why the AGM continued to be held in view of the falling numbers attending and bearing in mind that it is no longer a legal requirement to hold an AGM and that since proxy voting has been introduced the majority of votes cast have been by proxy. Tony Garton replied that there were a number of changes to the Articles that the Board would be considering and that the question of continuing AGMs was amongst them.

The Chair thanked the staff and particularly Jane Gregory, Membership Administrator for their work for the AGM and thanked all present in the hall for attending.

Ed Fishwick proposed a vote of thanks to Alistair Anderson for his work during the two years as Chair. This was carried by acclaim.

The meeting closed at 11.40am.

Tony Garton, Company Secretary
27 December 2018

Disclosure of proxy appointments

484 proxy appointments were received from members 481 of which were found to be valid.

For the resolutions decided on a show of hands the following are the numbers of proxy appointments and associated instructions which were received prior to the meeting:

Resolution		Votes for	Votes against	Votes withheld	Proxy's discretion	Total proxy votes cast
1.	Ordinary	380	3	4	94	481
2.	Ordinary	379	5	5	92	481

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