

English Folk Dance and Song Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Cecil Sharp House, London NW1 7AY, Saturday 9 November 2019 at 11 am

Present: Lorna Aizlewood, Chair of the Board, Sherry Neyhus, 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, Board Chair, welcomed Members.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Board Members Alistair Anderson, Alan Davey and Fi Fraser. Apologies were also received from Steve Heap and Elizabeth Rose. Apologies for lateness were received from Corinne Male.

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 10 November 2018

The minutes were accepted by the meeting and signed, as proposed by Andy Wooles and seconded by Mike Norris.

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 - 2018, 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 added that the Society had had another successful year especially in the light of world events. The Society was on an even keel financially and had an extensive programme of activities.

5.2 Honorary Treasurer's Report

Sherry Neyhus introduced the accounts for the year 2018/9 which had been previously circulated. She said that the Society had had a very strong financial year. In terms of expenditure, she said that EFDSS was "punching above its weight". Membership is still an important part of the Society's income.

Sherry said that use of Cecil Sharp House is strong. The rooms are generally full not only in the evenings but also in the daytime.

The Catalyst funding project, which has now finished, has been very good for the Society and has brought us £105,000 in matched funding. We now need to consider how we go forward from this. In

the last year we have had an important source of income from legacies, although this is obviously unpredictable and will fluctuate.

5.3 Chief Executive's reports on this year's activities and future developments

Katy Spicer reported on activities for the current year 2019-20.

1. EFDSS had once again partnered with U.Dance to deliver activities at their annual national festival of youth dance which this summer was held at the Southbank Centre. U.Dance is the national organisation for the development of youth dance and this year EFDSS delivered workshops for the young dancers performing in the festival and a ceilidh open to the public in the SBC Ballroom.
2. Sam Partridge has now taken over from Sam Sweeney as the Artistic Director of the National Youth Folk ensemble and led his first residency down at Halsway Manor in October.
3. EFDSS are developing projects to engage with musicians working with non-folk genres. Earlier in November we held two days of research and development with 17 professional dance and music artists from English and non-European folk traditions. The R & D explored ideas that could be developed for a schools project for next year – Folk Discovery – which will bring together English and other traditional dance and music that is practiced in England, exploring commonalities, differences, and the stories of such traditions.
4. Nicola Kearey and Ian Carter from folk band Stick in the Wheel are leading a residency project to explore English folk music working with three musicians from urban and electronic music forms.
5. We commissioned a new piece of music theatre to mark the bicentenary of the Peterloo Massacre. The show, Rising Up: Peterloo 2019, told the story of Peterloo 1819 through the eyes of a female protester and interwove other female stories of protest and resistance from 2019. The songs were composed by Sean Cooney and the text written by Debs Newbold who also directed. It was co-commissioned with English Folk Expo and Manchester Folk Festival and premiered at the MFF in October and then toured to Bristol, Liverpool, London (Cecil Sharp House) and Gateshead. The show was funded by Unite the Union, Arts Council England and a charitable trust.

Two members asked questions from the floor

Peter Slavid – asking for Katy Spicer to talk about the European Folk Network.

KS reported that this is a new initiative that has been founded by EFDSS, Trac Wales, the Traditional Music Forum Scotland, and Poppunt Belgium. The concept is based on the European Jazz Network and is to share ideas and practices and to promote folk music across Europe. The EFN is holding its first conference in Brussels at the end of November.

Mary Wilson-Jones – Katy Spicer talked a lot about music but what is happening about dance?

KS agreed that many of the projects are music focussed but said that the Folk Discovery is about dance and music and there were the U.Dance projects to help develop folk dance opportunities for and engagement with young people. She said that EFDSS had unfortunately been turned down for dance development funding by the Arts Council earlier this year but would be re-working the application and re-submitting.

5.4 Receipt of the Annual Report and Accounts

The chairman thanked the Chief Executive and her staff and the trustees for their efforts during the year.

That the Annual Report and Accounts be received by the meeting was proposed by Mike Norris, seconded by Nicola Kearey and agreed by the Meeting.

6. Elections and Appointments to the Board

Tony Garton advised the meeting that Mike Heaney had to retire having served for six years as a Director. In addition two members of the Board are stepping down for personal reasons. These are Mick Gallagher and Lucy Hooberman. Lucy's appointment had been announced at the last AGM and a motion to confirm it should have been put to the AGM this year. Clearly this was not now going to happen

Tony Garton advised the meeting that there were three 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 Alan Davey, Ed Fishwick and Steve Roud. In addition the Board has resolved to appoint Laura Jones and Ayub Khan to the Board. A motion to confirm their appointments will be voted on later in the 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 2020 (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 2)

Sayer Vincent were proposed as the Society's auditors until the 2020 AGM. The resolution was passed overwhelmingly on a show of hands.

9. Confirmation of Ayub Khan as a director (Ordinary Resolution 3)

Ayub Khan was appointed as a director appointed by the Board under Article 11.5. The resolution was passed overwhelmingly on a show of hands.

10. Confirmation of Laura Jones as a director (Ordinary resolution 4)

Laura Jones was appointed as a director appointed by the Board under Article 11.5. The resolution was passed overwhelmingly on a show of hands.

11. Alteration of Articles of Association (Special Resolution 1)

The motion that the Society's Articles of Association shall be amended as follows

- a) Delete Article 15.11 and renumber the Articles as necessary
- b) Delete Article 15.5 and substitute "Subject to the articles, the directors may make any rule which they think fit about how they take decisions, and about how such rules are to be recorded or communicated to directors".
- c) In Article 8.6.2 delete the word "ten" and substitute "five".
- d) At the end of Article 21.4.5 add "if earlier"

was passed nem con on a show of hands.

12. Alteration of Articles of Association (Special Resolution 2)

The motion that the Society's Articles of Association shall be amended as follows

Add new Article 11.2.1 “he is a member of the Society” and renumber the Articles as necessary
was passed nem con on a show of hands.

13. Any Other Business

There was no other business

The meeting closed at 11.40.

Tony Garton, Company Secretary 9 November 2019