



Folk Association of South Hants

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held at 4pm on Sunday 22nd May 2016

at Soberton Village Hall

Present: Lin Rayner, Dennis Wheeler, Elizabeth Haigh, Karen Ilott, David & Lynda Sutton, Jacqui & Steve Longhurst, Daphne & Kenneth Coates, Sheila Andrews, Sonia Atkinson, Glenwys & Nigel Beaton, Sue & Eric Bradshaw, Judy Blake, Joy & Roly Clarke, Celia & Nigel Close, Sheelagh Collyer, Paul Cooper, Sue & Pete Hall, Tom Linley Jones, Margaret Linton, Helen McArdle, Elsa Millard, Joanna Morrell, Brenda & Peter Noakes, Roger Parsons, Terry Russell, Joy Simmons, Jane & Adam Warren.

1. Apologies: John Coates, Trevor Dando, David Doling, Lindsay Heathershaw, Rosemary Hunt, Paul Ilott, Liz Neal, Elizabeth Pennycook, Stroph Rayner, Alex Scott, Hilary & John Turner, Yvonne Wheeler.

2. Minutes of AGM held on Sunday 10th May 2015: approved and signed

3. Matters arising

para 7: web addresses on the pdf version of Solent Waves now link to the websites.

para 10: we now have our own FASH bands for women dancing as men – or vice versa.

4. Chairman's report - Lin Rayner

Lin gave an overview of the very successful 2015/16 workshops, much enjoyed by the satisfactory numbers of people who attended. We are very lucky to have live music, especially with musicians of the calibre of Pete & Sue Hall and Andrew Purkiss playing regularly for us. We held six dance workshops and two based on music, in keeping with our aim to promote all folk activities in Hampshire and not just dance. The annual Madding Crowd workshop has become so popular that it is now essential to book in advance.

The Autumn Dance with Jigfoot and Phill Moxley was very good, but will be the last for the time being. There are now two ceilidhs every month from September/October to April (the Twyford Charity Ceilidhs and the SHOCC dances), so we don't think there is a need for another one.

In response to concerns raised over complete beginners coming to workshops, we are changing our publicity slightly to encourage people to go to clubs and ceilidhs to learn the basics, such as how to do a chain or a reel. However, we would never turn anyone away, or make them feel unwelcome.

Many thanks to the committee for working hard in their various roles, with a special mention for Jacqui Longhurst, who was co-opted onto the committee this year and has taken on the role of membership secretary from John Turner. She is already doing a great job for us. Thanks to Lyn Sutton, who is efficient, thoughtful and innovative as Solent Waves distribution organiser, and also to Terry Russell and all the other Solent Waves distributors.

This was John's last year on the committee and he will be sadly missed, but he will still support FASH and is calling for us in February next year. We will be giving him and Hilary life season tickets and membership in recognition of all they have done for us over the years.

Comments

Stopping our 'one off' dance in October was felt to be a good move, but there were some alternative ideas. Jane Warren suggested an evening ceilidh at the Winchester MayFest, which used to happen and was very popular. This would require liaison and we had very little contact with the people who ran the MayFest this year. *[Also, after the meeting, Sue Hall suggested looking at the 'dead' time in August, as many people avoid going away during the school holidays and most don't go to festivals.]*

Action: committee to consider

There was a lively discussion about our attitude towards beginners and also people who are incapable of improving, but who nevertheless enjoy coming to our events. Concern was expressed that if standards were allowed to drop it could deter potential dancers, but the consensus was that standards were fairly high and that people were far more likely to be deterred by an unwelcoming or élitist atmosphere. There were several anecdotes from people at the meeting about initial encouragement having fostered their enthusiasm for folk dancing. It was generally felt that we have enough expertise to cope with the (usually) few who need help and it was said that the best way to improve one's own dancing is to teach others.

A suggestion was made that beginners should only be allowed to stay for the first hour and that callers be asked to structure their workshops to get progressively more difficult. However, it was felt that this would not generate the sort of welcoming atmosphere that we want and in most cases would not be practical as callers have their dance programmes already organised. Nigel Close said that part of the caller's expertise lies in being able to adapt to the skill level one finds and in Pete and Sue Hall's experience most callers have prepared at least 50% more material than they expect to use and then make their final choices on the day, based on observation of the first few dances.

In future we will try to encourage potential newcomers to acquire a knowledge of basic moves and terminology before attempting a workshop, but we will always be prepared to help anyone who needs more input.

Several people made constructive suggestions:-

1. an informal list of experienced dancers who were comfortable with helping those who need it,
2. asking newcomers if they have ever done this sort of dancing before,
3. having a formally designated 'host' and 'hostess' at each event, who would initially dance with that person, welcome them in and point out those on our informal list. **Action: committee to consider suggestions**

[After the meeting Roger Parsons suggested that it could be worthwhile asking beginners to let us know in advance if they were intending to come to a workshop so that we could plan for them and advise the caller or even ask them to come early so that we could run through some basics with them.]

5. Treasurer's report – Dennis Wheeler

We have £3725 in the bank, just £60 less than last year. As our turnover is quite high, we need to keep a balance of at least £2000. Income and expenditure were both up by about £200. More people have been coming to workshops (5 made a profit and 3 made a loss, so they approximately balanced out) but the hall fees have gone up. Print and postage costs for Solent Waves have gone up (although Lyn has streamlined the mailing system to cut costs) but so have donations - both to FASH and specifically to Solent Waves. If Solent Waves is not specified, donations go into a 'general' pot. Dennis is always looking for grant possibilities, so he tries not to assign too much profit to Solent Waves! Income from membership fees tends to go up and down, but is still healthy. Dennis is proud of having doubled our interest income – to £1.30!

Apart from subsidising the School Ceilidhs, we have not been asked for any assistance this year. We would be happy to consider other requests for funding. As we did last year, we have placed adverts in local Folk magazines and in the publicity for local festivals as we thought it important to try to make more people aware of what we do. Miscellaneous costs covers the EFDSS subscription that provides our insurance.

Dennis thanked John Martyn for inspecting the accounts. Lyn Sutton proposed their acceptance, Nigel Close seconded and it was agreed unanimously.

6. Membership secretary's report – Jacqui Longhurst

Jacqui asked people to introduce themselves to her so that she can put names to faces. She drew attention to the increase in the non-member's workshop price to £10, which makes the season ticket an even better bargain than before! 34 people had joined so far for this season with 19 buying season tickets. There are 102 people currently on the data base for reminders etc.

7. Editor's report – Solent Waves & website – David Sutton

Solent Waves

We like advertisements as they help the finances, but not so many that they squeeze out other things, such as your articles! Please do send in articles about anything you feel may be of interest – Dave is always delighted to receive them. The dance and folk club diaries are hopefully a useful directory of what's on and where to go, but Dave does need to receive the information. Please would clubs send him their programmes, especially if there is no website or facebook page where he can find them.

There has been confusion in the past where people don't take a copy of the current month's edition, thinking it's the same as the previous month and that they already have it. David has therefore been trying to make the front page of each edition a bit different from the last. The current number is now more prominent and in a different shaped box each month.

Comment

Adam Warren suggested making the month and year more prominent.

Action: Dave to experiment

Website

The website reflects Solent Waves, but also has room for all the directories and listings up to 6 months ahead and can include events sent in at short notice (after the relevant Solent Waves deadline) as well as interesting events within a wider area. It is becoming even more useful with the demise of other magazines. Sussex Pie has gone and so has Steve Hunt's Dorset based publication. The website is updated pretty regularly and Dave is proud that it has the most comprehensive directory and diary of display sides in the South that can be found anywhere. He just asks that people please do use it!

Comment

Adam Warren offered to send us details of 'google analytics', so that we could find out how people were using the website. Whilst Dave edits the website day by day, Dennis is the webmaster who makes structural alterations and he would be interested to see it.

Action: Dennis to consider

8. Primary School Ceilidhs – Dennis Wheeler

Numbers continue to grow! This year 380 children from 14 schools will attend the two Ceilidh Days in Bishop's Waltham on 15th and 22nd June and even more are getting used to folk music and dancing. Several volunteers are now helping in schools. Of the approximately £800 recorded in the accounts, £600 was mainly for hall hire and the production of cd's and £200 went to subsidise the first Portsmouth schools Ceilidh Day. FolkActive (a social enterprise company founded by Cath Watkins and Jo Harmer) has been working in Portsmouth schools ever since. They are running their own Ceilidh Day this year and will no longer need our financial support. An official thank you and a report from FolkActive is available from Dennis if required.

We were grateful to receive a grant of £100 in memory of Wendy Crouch, which went towards the cost of the Bishop's Waltham Ceilidh Days.

9. Committee nominations

The following committee members were willing to stand for another year: Lin Rayner, Dennis Wheeler, Elizabeth Haigh, David Sutton, Karen Illott, Jacqui Longhurst and Daphne Coates. Nigel Close nominated them all, Jane Warren seconded and it was carried unanimously.

We would as usual be very grateful if anyone else felt able to join the committee. It doesn't have to be for a specific role as we are prepared to be flexible and use whatever skills are on offer!

10. Any Other Business

Kenneth Coates proposed a vote of thanks to the committee and there was a round of applause.

The meeting closed at 5pm, after which we enjoyed Elizabeth Haigh's traditional cream tea, followed by an excellent dance led by Joy Simmons with music from Pete & Sue Hall and a singing 'spot' from Roly Clarke, whom we were delighted to welcome back after 3 year's absence through illness.