



Folk Association of South Hants

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

4pm Sunday 12th May 2019

Soberton Village Hall

Present: Dennis Wheeler, Lin Rayner, Elizabeth Haigh, David & Lyn Sutton, Jacqui & Steve Longhurst, Ian Kirby, Daphne Goddard Coates, Karen Ilott, Sheila Andrews, Sue & Eric Bradshaw, John Coates, Trevor Dando, Martin Davis, Elizabeth Habens, Sue & Pete Hall, Tom Linley Jones, Joanna Morrell, Liz Neal, Liz Norris, Joy Simmons.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Glenwys & Nigel Beaton, Celia & Nigel Close, Kenneth Coates, David Doling, Margaret Linton, Elsa Millard.

2. **Minutes of AGM held on Sunday 20th May 2018:** approved and signed

3. Matters arising

para 10: callers' workshop – this was a suggestion that the committee had felt was unlikely to be successful, but John Turner would still be happy to run one in some form. A few people expressed an interest and Joy Simmons suggested that clubs could publicise it once the plan was known.

Action: the committee will liaise with John and see what can be done.

4. Chairman's report – Dennis Wheeler

Having found dancing more and more difficult I switched jobs with Lin, she becoming Treasurer and I picked up the Chairman's role. This meant that I didn't get to many of the workshops this year - which has the merit of making my report short!

Membership has held up well, but lower numbers attending dance workshops are a cause for concern as we like to fill the hall for the callers and also for financial reasons.

We ran six dance workshops this year:-

- Lisa Purkiss - 'Dances Old and New'
- John Turner - 'From Playford to Shaw'
- Mike Courthold - 'Something Borrowed – Squares & Contras, both with figures borrowed from Modern Western Square Dancing'
- Ivan Aitken - 'Mathematical Nightmare from Gary Roodman and 'Sets in Order' – Square Dances 1948 to 1985'
- Nigel Close - 'A Polychromic Gentleman - dances by Chris Turner'
- Ray Goodswen - 'Crossing Borders and the Pond' - Dances from both sides of the Atlantic & Scottish style

As well as great callers, all these workshops had wonderful live music. Now that I play a little myself, I respect Andrew Purkiss and Pete & Sue Hall even more. They all play wonderfully whatever music the caller needs.

As usual we had a different style of workshop in early December and FolkActive led us through some drumming, spoons, jig dolls and stepping. As well as being enjoyable, it was good to see some different people at the workshop. FolkActive have been doing more and more around the area, running monthly dances for older people and sessions in schools, care homes and hospitals and they are now trying to help people with dementia. They are a great asset to our folk scene and FASH supports them when possible.

The last workshop was our singing of West Gallery music with The Madding Crowd. This has become a popular annual offering and is the only well supported workshop. It is good for both FASH and The Madding Crowd's finances and so a nice partnership.

Solent Waves continues to be the prime (arguably only) folk newsletter for our area. It is wonderful that this has been kept going for over 40 years and David Sutton works hard to produce an edition each month. Also Lyn Sutton leads the distribution team and folds and posts hundreds of editions each month. Many thanks to both of you.

I will now be standing down. My thanks to all the committee members and everyone else who makes a contribution for their invaluable help this year.

5. Membership secretary's report – Jacqui Longhurst

We had 16 season ticket holders last year and 75 members in total, so numbers were almost exactly the same as in the previous year. We can contact 65 members by email and 7 by post. One person prefers not to be contacted and two of last year's 'Early Bird' members have not yet signed the new membership form containing the GDPR consent.

So far this season we have 6 Early Bird members and 2 season ticket holders, but we are expecting many people to join today.

6. Treasurer's report – Lin Rayner

We have £1959.57 in the bank – about £800 less than last year. This is double last year's loss, mainly because there were no grants available and we received only minimal donations. We also received less income from advertisements in Solent Waves and attendance at workshops (also therefore income) was very patchy, the overall average figure of 33 being lower than for some 6 years.

We offered support to some local activities by underwriting any losses, but the events proved successful enough not to need any funding from us. This year we will again be underwriting possible losses on some local events.

Our biggest outlay each year is for the schools ceilidhs, which we think is a worthwhile investment! This year the cost will be higher as we are facilitating the Youth Ensemble in providing the music, but some good news is that we have received a grant of £300 from Bishops Waltham Educational Trust towards this.

We are determined to continue the high standard of our workshops with the help of our wonderful musicians, who charge us a much discounted rate. However, good callers are not cheap and the cost of hall hire has risen considerably at both venues for the coming season (from £84 to £108 per workshop at Soberton; from £72 to £84 at Twyford). We have reluctantly had to increase prices this year so that we can continue to run workshops and support folk activities in the years ahead.

Chichester Folk Dance Club, which is closing down, has generously offered FASH a donation of £1000 which will help considerably with next year's funding, so you might question our decision to increase prices for 2019/20. However we can't depend on receiving grant aid or such generous donations in future and we need to ensure that we have sufficient funds to enable us to fulfil our obligations to you.

Thanks to John Martyn for inspecting the accounts. Lyn Sutton proposed their acceptance, Elizabeth Habens seconded and it was agreed unanimously.

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

Website – event listings are all up to date apart from 'Other' (events that don't fit into the main categories) which is nearly complete. Morris programmes for this season are all listed on the website and FASH workshop dates for 2019/20 will be there soon. Jacqui has already added them as 'Events' to our Facebook page, which she maintains.

Clubs are now asking to be included in our listings, which is most encouraging. Keeping up to date is a challenge as things constantly change. For example the Winchester Discovery Centre now rarely has folk concerts, but the Hyde Tavern has more folk events and hosts Winchester Folk Club.

Solent Waves – Sarsen Press are changing their technology which will enable Solent Waves to be printed in colour! Please use colour in your advertisements from now on and be aware that photographs also come out very well under the new system. There have been a few teething problems – April's month logo lost its daffodils and May's was missing a bobble hat! The front page will remain the traditional blue.

Full and half page advertisements from festivals and larger venues bring in more revenue, but there have been fewer of them so we don't want to raise the prices. Also we won't charge more for smaller ones as they tend to be from individual members and clubs whom we want to encourage to publicise their events.

'Suggested Donation 25p' is no longer displayed. It was becoming increasingly irrelevant and possibly preventing people from picking it up, which is what we want them to do. Our aim is to get the information out to as many people as possible! It is free to members anyway, libraries don't pay and nor do those who receive it by email. We will still ask people to pay the cost of postage if they want to be sent an individual copy. We are also very grateful to clubs for any donations they decide to send!

8. Lunch at workshops

We have noticed an increase in the number of people who bring their own packed lunches to dance workshops, often because of specific dietary requirements, rather than joining in with the Bring & Share. This makes the Bring & Share less viable, so we asked for feedback as to what people would prefer to do for the coming season. The feeling was that we should go back to bringing our own as used to be done many years ago, with the proviso that we still put out the tables and continue to create the sociable atmosphere that has been such a feature of lunches at our workshops. One advantage would be less washing up, but we wouldn't like to lose Elizabeth's delicious soup!

One of the committee will provide lunch for the caller and musicians, making sure we ask about any dietary requirements, unless they prefer to bring their own. (If any member offered to provide some food for a particular workshop we would be happy to accept!) We will also ask them where they would like to sit and make sure appropriate places are available.

Action: the committee will discuss the soup, amend the 2019/20 flyers, and review again next year.

9. Review of workshop venues

Several years ago we began alternating between Soberton and Twyford, hoping to attract some new people to the new Twyford venue. This doesn't seem to have made any difference to our numbers, so we asked whether people wanted to continue using the two venues after 2019/20. The general feeling was that having both venues was quite positive. Twyford is now £24 cheaper than Soberton and they have just spent quite a bit of money on laying a new floor, so it would seem somewhat churlish to abandon it now.

10. Primary School Ceilidhs – Dennis Wheeler

Last year's two ceilidhs went well with 10 schools and 300 pupils being involved. The Hampshire Youth Folk Ensemble joined Jigfoot on the stage and it was great to see young people enjoying their music. FolkActive run a similar event in Portsmouth and one is beginning in Southampton.

The two Ceilidh Days in Bishop's Waltham this year will be on the 19th and 26th June with Jo Harmer and Tom Gregory of FolkActive calling. We need volunteers on the day and also to help teach the dances beforehand in school. If you feel you could help please talk to me afterwards.

Disappointingly this year two schools have pulled out at this late stage for what seem plausible reasons, but they possibly don't value the event sufficiently because it is free and not 'official'. We would like to move it nearer to the model used by FolkActive in Portsmouth with more involvement (and funding) from the Hampshire Music Hub, but progress towards this is slow. We may only hold one ceilidh next year.

This year the Youth Ensemble will lead the dance music with Cath Watkins in support rather than leading the music with Jigfoot. Also we have set the schools a piece of music with no notation and encouraged them to invent their own dance to fit it.

We have some encouraging news from Fair Oak Infant School, which has left everything to our volunteers in the past. This year the teachers have done a good job of preparing the children and could even specify which dances they would like some help with – excellent progress! FolkActive’s twilight sessions for teachers, which Fair Oak attended, may have made the crucial difference.

11. Committee nominations

The following committee members were willing to stand again: Lin Rayner, Elizabeth Haigh, David Sutton, Jacqui Longhurst, Ian Kirby and Daphne Goddard Coates. Sue Hall nominated them all, Karen Ilott seconded and it was carried unanimously. Especially this year as Dennis is standing down, we would welcome anyone who felt they could volunteer to join the committee.

Trevor thanked the committee and our musicians Pete & Sue Hall for everything they do and there was a round of applause.

12. Any Other Business

A ‘Dates for Your Diary’ sheet was available giving details of the 2019/20 workshops. More detailed flyers with explanations of the workshop content should be available soon and the July/August edition of Solent Waves will also give more information.

The Winchester MayFest is this Saturday 18th May and will be followed by the season’s last SHOCC Dance, to be held in the Guildhall.

Dennis has plants for sale in the lobby – all contributions to charity.

Lin paid tribute to Dennis Wheeler, who is standing down from the committee after many years and will be greatly missed. His contribution has been huge in countless ways - organising the schools ceilidhs, editing Solent Waves, masterminding the website, taking over as treasurer and modernising the system, designing the distribution system for Solent Waves and being instrumental in its implementation and coming up with most of the innovations that have been put in place recently. For example, season tickets and our tee shirts were two of his suggestions. Lin presented him with life time gold season tickets for himself and Yvonne as a mark of our appreciation and he received a well deserved round of applause.

The meeting closed at 5pm, after which we enjoyed Elizabeth’s now traditional cream tea, this year including gluten free scones and cake.

This was followed by an excellent dance led by Karen Ilott with music from Pete & Sue Hall.