

CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL OF PERFORMING ARTS

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Bethesda Church, Cheltenham, Wednesday 4th October 2017

Present: As Attendance List The meeting started at 7:30 pm.

1. **Welcome and Apologies** (Apologies as listed)

The Chairman welcomed everyone and announced that, this year, the Valerie Walsh Award had been won by Ella Bowman. Valerie warmly congratulated Ella and promised that her award would be sent to her.

2. **Minutes of the last AGM 20th July 2016**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were tabled and it was proposed by Janice Keen and seconded by Daphne Nutland that the Minutes be accepted. They were signed as a correct record.

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. **Chairman's Report** (Full report held on file)

The Chairman began his report by reminding the meeting of the importance of the AGM: an opportunity for the trustees to report to members on the status of the Festival and highlight current issues. It was also an occasion to thank the many people who contributed to the success of the Festival. Rod made special mention of Frances Watson, Louise Partridge, Lily Evans, Judy Kelly, and Vicki Beauregard for their work behind the scenes – and also to his fellow trustees and all the committee members who work 'tirelessly' throughout the year to ensure the smooth running of the organisation.

Rod emphasised the importance of our connection with Cheltenham Borough Council and the good work of our new President, John Rawson – as well as Anna Treasure, who each year produces the Council Report, the Syllabus and the Programme, as well as arranging CFPA's involvement in many local events.

'People have asked me why we devote so much time and energy to the Festival! The answer is simply: because it's worth it. Anybody who has seen the look on the face of a seven year old, after they have successfully recited a poem in front of a room full of people, will know exactly what I mean.'

Rod made special mention of Janice Keen for her support, friendship, and wise counsel over the last six years. Finally, Rod was delighted to announce that his last duty would be to present Shirley English with the Festival's first Honorary Life Membership for her highly valued work for the Festival for over 30 years.

The report was accepted with sustained applause.

5. **Treasurer's Report** (Full report held on file)

The Treasurer presented the accounts and reported an overall loss during the year of £6881. He explained that this figure is almost entirely due to planned expenditure on the website and on-line entry system – which had been funded by a grant received during the preceding year. Taking this into account, the year ending June 2017 was essentially 'revenue neutral'.

Gillie highlighted minor variations in income and expenditure between this year and the previous year,

Two new policies have been formulated: a Purchasing Policy and a Reserves Policy:

'The one should help guard against any unwarranted spending, the other should ensure that sufficient reserves are held to cater for even the rainiest of days and at the same time satisfy a key requirement of the Charity Commission.'

Gillie concluded by warning that the Festival needs to pursue new avenues for funding and sponsorships, otherwise, although the current position is healthy, things might change for the worse and a loss-making spiral might develop.

Gillie invited questions and Cecil Sanderson asked, if income was down, why not increase entry fees? In response, Gillie felt that this would deter the number of entries and might be counterproductive. Cecil also suggested that better use could be made of the Town Hall during the evenings, thereby reducing the rental cost. The response, made by several members of the Executive Committee, was that this had been considered in the past, and there would be no saving due to the additional costs of Town Hall staff and adjudicators who would be needed for the longer day.

Fiona Wild pointed out that the timing of the Festival made it somewhat unattractive for many children preparing for and doing exams. It was agreed that, although May was possibly not the best time of year, it was the 'least worst' time available.

Acceptance of the report was proposed by Janice Keen, seconded by Cecil Sanderson and passed unanimously.

6. Hon Secretary's Report (Full report held on file)

The Hon Secretary reported on the response made by the Festival to the new Child Licensing regulations. Brian described the implications of the new legislation and emphasised the damage it might cause to the Festival if our local authority insisted that a licence were to be required for every performing child. He related how the trustees had taken the initiative by calling a meeting with the Gloucestershire County Council Education Performance and Inclusion team and explained how this had led to the 'no notice' inspection in May.

Brian thanked everyone for adhering to our safeguarding measures and commented on how important it had been for the inspection to go so well.

'Having a good report for our first inspection was crucially important, but we are not out of the woods yet. We must continue to recognize the importance and quality of our safeguarding procedures, and the good work of our stewards who enforce our rules.'

He emphasised the need for CFPA to continue to maintain a strong and professional working relationship with our local authority and to continue to be prepared to adapt our procedures and practices to keep in line with current legislation.

7. Committee Reports

a) Dance (Full Report held on file)

Carol expressed her thanks to all the people who volunteer their time, talent and enthusiasm, to make the Festival such a success. She particularly mentioned the Dance Committee, the Executive Committee, and Judy Kelly and her team.

Carol reported high entry levels across all age categories, including senior students who, somehow, manage to fit dancing around their academic timetables, GCSE and 'A' level exams. Every effort will be made in the timetabling for 2018 to minimise possible clashes with SATS. Sadly, the Pas de Deux class attracted no entries this year and changes are being considered to the title of this class in order to stimulate interest.

Carol mentioned that the adjudicator had been most impressed with the venue, organisation and friendly atmosphere of the Festival. She thanked Ginny and David for their co-operation and flexibility in agreeing the timetabling arrangements. Carol also described how new changing area arrangements had been established in time for the local authority inspection. She warned about the need for everyone to be alert to the problem of members of the audience videoing performances, which could jeopardise the future of the Festival. Planning for 2018 is well under way, with the main change being the use of 31st August 2017 to determine Age for entry to classes.

Finally, Carole referred to the high standards of organisation and performance for which our Festival is known, and the reliance we place on the support of dancers, teachers and parents.

b) Music (Full Report held on file)

David highlighted the excellent atmosphere of the 2017 Festival and the obvious enjoyment of performers and members of the audience. Thanks to good stewarding, compliance with copyright rules

was maintained and performances kept well to time. There were increased entries for string classes and junior piano and junior choirs classes were, once again, well subscribed. School choir day was thrilling for the quality of music, but entries for choral day was unusually poor – in David's view, simply a temporary setback.

'Next year, we will have a new classes section created for the ukulele. So, get practising and spread the word.'

Many competitors remarked how well the Festival was run – a comment on the good work of stewards, front desk, and back office staff, especially Judy Kelly and her team, as well as Lily Evans. David thanked Anna Treasure for her dedication in ensuring the success of the Festival and also his Music Secretary colleagues: Sally-Anne, Vicki Beauregard, and Martin Fry for their energy and shared good fun.

David concluded by thanking Margaret Crompton for her enjoyable company, experience and support and wished her a happy retirement.

c) Speech and Drama (Full Report held on file)

Ginny reported a successful 2017 Festival with a healthy number of entries and attendees. She highlighted, in particular, the Junior Choral Speaking, Special Educational Needs classes and primary age prepared reading classes.

Ginny praised the excellent adjudicators and informed the meeting that, as a result of feedback from some of them, amendments will be made to the timing of some classes, as well as the wording of some of the class descriptions in the Syllabus. She also thanked Frances' team of stewards for their feedback which will be used to ensure the best possible preparation for next year's Festival.

Due to poor uptake, some of the dramatic scenes classes will be dropped for 2018, and the distribution of cups in classes with low entry numbers will be evaluated.

Ginny thanked two colleagues; Pippa Phillips, for booking the adjudicators for 2018 - as well as her fantastic help throughout the year - and Shirley English for her guidance and support during her first year in the role.

8. Officers' Reports

a) Steward Co-ordinator

Frances informed the meeting that the number of stewards who helped during the Festival was 65. Eleven of these were new recruits who learned their role quickly by working alongside more experienced colleagues. Three new recruits have already volunteered their services for next year, but Frances asked members to encourage as many people as possible to become stewards.

Frances has collected feedback from this year's stewards which she intends to use to make the Festival even more successful next year.

'It would be difficult to run the Festival without the volunteer stewards and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their valuable contribution. They are often the first people to greet the adjudicators, competitors and audience. Their friendliness and professionalism is a key part of the Festival.'

Frances announced two social events: the November Coffee Morning and a Tea Party shortly before the 2018 Festival. She expressed her thanks to Karen Gillespie for managing the catering for these events.

9. Constitution Amendments

The Chairman explained that it was necessary to amend the Constitution in order to bring the two new policies within the rules of the Festival. The proposed amendments are:

(a) to add the Purchasing Policy and the Reserves Policy as Appendix A and B respectively.

(b) to modify clause 5.1 to read:

(1) buy, take on lease or in exchange hire or otherwise acquire any property and to maintain

- and equip it to use subject to the conditions specified in the Purchasing Policy document (Appendix A).
- (c) to add a new sub clause 13 (1) (c):
(c) to conform as is reasonably practical to the provisions as specified in the Reserves Policy document (Appendix B)

These amendments were proposed by Carol McDowall, seconded by David Terry and passed unanimously.

10. and 11. Re-Election of Friends Secretary and Re-Election of Dance Representative

It was proposed that Daphne Nutland be re-elected as Friends Secretary and Carol McDowall be re-elected as Dance Representative.

Both proposals were passed unanimously.

12. Election of Chairman

At this point, the President, John Rawson, took the chair and announced that Garth Barnes had been nominated for Chairman. In the absence of any other nomination Garth Barnes was proposed by Rod Davis, seconded by Janice Keen and passed unanimously.

Garth Barnes said he was delighted to accept the role and acknowledged that adequately 'filling the shoes' of his predecessor was a considerable challenge. He promised that, with the help of, what was clearly an accomplished and experienced team, he would do his best to continue to steer the Festival along its present, successful course.

On behalf of everyone involved in the Festival, Janice Keen presented Rod with a case of wine in thanks for his invaluable contribution to the Festival over the last seven years. Janice described a few of Rod's many achievements as Chairman: 'I would be here all night if I were to list them all!' Among the most notable were changing the legal status of CFPA to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and securing the annual grant from the Cheltenham Borough Council.

In reply, Rod paid tribute to the colleagues he had worked with over the years:

'It has been a privilege to lead such a dedicated and hard-working team and I would not have missed it for the world!

13. Festival 2018

At this point, Garth Barnes took the chair.
There were no comments from the meeting on this item.

13. AOB

(a) Fiona Wild asked everyone to consider attending two events that were being planned to support the Festival: The Quiz on 17th November and the Nutland Concert on 4th January 2018.

(b) Gina Went raised the issue of Dance Rule 15, which bars dancers from entering the Festival if they have changed dance schools in the last 12 months, unless they have permission from their earlier dance school, or teacher. Mrs Went explained how unfair and damaging this rule is to many young dancers, who are so passionately keen to perform at the Cheltenham Festival, and asked that the rule, which does not apply to Music, or to Speech & Drama, be dropped.

In response, Carol McDowall, informed the meeting that the Dance Committee had considered whether this rule should be dropped or amended, but their current view was that the rule, which is common practice throughout the dance school community, should remain.

The Chairman suggested, and it was agreed, that this matter should be discussed at the next Executive Meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:10 pm.

Attendance List

**Ginny Burge
Sally-Ann Davies
Rod Davis
Shirley English
Wendy Finch
Allan Gillespie
Karen Gillespie
Brian Harding
Jean Harding
Patricia Hemming
Ailsa Howarth
Gerry Howarth
Janice Keen
Anna Treasure
Ian Marshall
Carol McDowall
Daphne Nutland
Louise Partridge
Christine Pringle
John Rawson
Cecil Sanderson
Lynn Stephens
David Terry
Valerie Walsh
Frances Watson
June Whittaker
Fiona Wild
Caroline Powell
Dawn Dunleavy
Gina Went
Garth Barnes
Rita Barnes**

Apologies

**Janet Marshall
Philippa Phillips
Christine Samuda
Sheryl Walpole
Belinda Ricketts
Geoff Craven
Margaret Craven
Elizabeth Bennett
Valerie Walker
Wendy Ku
Irene Finlayson
Caroline Sparkes
Liz Horder
Mike Mackenzie
Chris Keen
Margaret Woodward
Angela Walker**