

The British Flute Society Annual General Meeting 2019

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The British Flute Society
Sunday 30th June 2019
The Royal Academy of Music, London

Present: Lisa Nelsen, Kate Hill, Alena Walentin, Julie Butler, Rachel Smith, Kate Cuzner, Hugh Phillips, Jonathan Rimmer, members of the British Flute Society; Rachel Shirley (BFS Secretary); Sophie McGrath (Marketing)

1. Apologies for absence

Received from: Abby Charles, Julie Twite

2. Introduction and explanation re the two charities

Rachel Shirley explained that the AGM would simultaneously cover business for both BFS organisations which currently exist - the old unincorporated charity and the new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

3. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Lisa Nelsen was approved as Chair of the unincorporated charity and Alena Walentin as Vice-Chair. These appointments had already been made in regards to the CIO.

4. Minutes of the 2018 AGM to be approved

The minutes were approved

5. New officers and Council members

Five new trustees were appointed to both charities, and Julie Butler's re-election as Treasurer was approved.

Following the AGM, the British Flute Society Council consists of:

Lisa Nelsen (Chair)
Alena Walentin (Vice-Chair)
Julie Butler (Treasurer)
Kate Cuzner (Area Reps representative)
Jonathan Rimmer
Rachel Smith
Julie Twite
David Barton
Alison Hardy
Nicola Rossiter
Katy Ovens
Susan Torke

6. Reports

6.a. Chair's report (Lisa Nelsen)

Lisa explained that at her first Council meeting as Acting Chair she had asked the Council whether the BFS should continue and there was overwhelming support for it doing so, and much ongoing discussion about the purpose and future of the society with lots of enthusiasm for pushing it forward and making it really work for members.

See appendix 1 for the rest of Lisa's report.

6.b. Membership (Rachel Shirley)

Membership numbers are now steady after declining over the last few years - people are renewing and rejoining. The Council are looking at bringing in a new membership system to make the practical side of joining and managing memberships easier for members and from the administrative side. We have sent and are intending to send out surveys to ask members what they want/ how we can help them/ what support we could offer. We are also looking at ways members that could contribute their skills - e.g. being co-opted for short projects or giving advice/ expertise.

6.c. Area reps (Kate Cuzner)

We have new area reps covering Leeds, Berkshire, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands. Pat Daniels is stepping down and we will therefore be looking for a new area rep for Kent.

6.d. Treasurer report/ 7. Accounts (Julie Butler)

See appendix 2 for report and appendix 3 for summary of accounts.

8. Future projects

Sheffield event and future events (Rachel Shirley) - the survey of members about BFS events showed that the two top wants were professional performances and group sessions, and there was an emphasis on running events outside of London, and on plenty of participation for attendees. We are looking at the needs of players at different levels and aiming to put on events that meet as many differing varying needs as possible (e.g. masterclasses for more advanced players, tips for early stages, ensemble playing). The first of these events will be in Sheffield on 30th November 2019.

Birmingham/ Midlands (Jonathan Rimmer) - there are already many groups in this area running events and concerts, e.g. through the music services, but they are not linked up with each other. There are prospects for BFS to join in with these events, e.g. a concert which includes lots of flute choirs doing a slot each, then playing en masse. We are aiming to help build a community - and to create a model which could be rolled out in different areas.

The Council is aiming to have a series of events booked in so people can plan ahead - if they enjoy one event there will be others lined up for them to go to.

9. Questions and comments from the floor

Trevor Wye - suggested looking at European Flute Societies to see how they run/ finance events.

More editions of magazine? Currently too expensive. Need to look at increasing membership and revenue before we can consider this as an option. Members discussed the option to choose between paper or online versions - however, lots of the costs are fixed, such as editing and content. Offering online-only also brings in issues of VAT/ tax for members outside UK. Reducing numbers doesn't necessarily reduce printing costs. Postage is a big cost.

Support for teachers - Jonathan Rimmer explained that we are looking at running teacher-specific events, and sessions on repertoire, teaching techniques, etc. Lisa Nelsen emphasised that Council members are keen on giving back and sharing their skills with others.

Several members suggested looking at the Society of Recorder Players structure, which consists of individual local groups who meet regularly (monthly), plus an overall Society with a Council. Members join both their local group and the national Society. Groups don't perform, just play together. Other regions host playdays, with a small fee to attend.

There was some discussion about location of events (needing more outside of London) and people's reluctance to travel far. Jonathan Rimmer discussed the difference between UK and US culture - people are more likely to travel to each other's events in the US. How can we build similar links between areas so people will travel to events?

We discussed the poor turnout to events e.g. FFF - one reason suggested was that younger people tend to prefer free content (e.g. online) rather than events they have to pay for. How can we give events 'added value' to encourage people to turn up? How to get students involved? New younger Council members may be able to give insight.