The British Flute Society Annual General Meeting 2016

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The British Flute Society
Held at 9 am on Sunday 21 August 2016
In the Footstool Restaurant, St John’s Smith Square, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HA

Present:
Malcolm Pollock (Chair), Julie Butler (Treasurer), Anna Munks (Secretary), Niall O’Riordan, Kate Cuzner, Kate Hill, Joss Campbell, Anne Hodgson,

Members of the BFS:

1. Apologies for absence
   Andy Findon, Rachel Smith, Nicola Thompson, Hugh Phillips, Carole Jenner-Timms, Nancy Sun

2. Minutes of the AGM held on Sunday 28 June 2015 to be approved.
   The minutes were approved. Proposed by John Rayworth, seconded by Anne Hodgson.

3. Matters arising from the above minutes
   Matters arising would be discussed during the course of the meeting.

4. Announcement of new officers and council members
   AM reported that following the call for new officers and council members, the same number of nominations as vacancies had been received and it would not therefore be necessary to hold an election during the AGM.

   She was pleased to confirm that Nicola Thompson would remain Membership Secretary and Anne Hodgson would continue to serve on the council as an ordinary council member. The position of Vice-Chair would remain vacant as no-one had been nominated for this role.

5. Reports
   Chair’s Report
   MP reported that as a founder member of the BFS, he had been honoured to be elected Chair at the 2015 AGM. The BFS had enjoyed a successful year and the annual report and accounts would deal with the activities undertaken during the calendar year 2015.

   He was proud to serve on the BFS Council working with such a hardworking and talented group of people. He thanked the council for their hard work and in particular Anna Munks (BFS Secretary); Julie Butler (BFS Treasurer) for all her hard
work putting the Society’s finances in order; Kate Hill for her unstinting work on the BFS Festival with Edward Blakeman; Nicola Thompson (Membership Secretary); Elisabeth Hobbs (Editor of BFS Journal Pan).

He also recorded thanks to Atarah Ben-Tovim who would be stepping down as Vice-President but would become Vice-President Emeritus. He was pleased to announce that Wissam Boustany had agreed to become the new BFS Vice President from 2016-2018 and he would meet with him in due course to discuss ways that he could become involved.

Following a thorough review of the Society’s finances, the Council had concluded that, in common with many other membership societies, it would be necessary to cut costs and increase revenue in order to thrive in the future. MP intended to lead the Council on the development of a business plan to refocus the purpose of the society and set out a five year plan to develop its work.

The Council had made a number of strategic decisions during 2016 that it hoped would make a positive impact:

1. The delivery of the BFS London Flute Festival with a simplified format compared with recent Conventions to give the maximum chance of achieving a surplus. However, the Council would not discount the possibility of staging differently designed events in future.
2. A review of the current membership system with a view to streamlining and improving it and enhancing the membership offer to increase membership.
3. Actively seek to make more effective partnerships throughout the UK and in Europe. It would seek to work with specialist music schools and other organisations and societies. MP was leading an international initiative to support teachers, working with flute societies from all over Europe.
4. Reduce the number of issues of Pan published per year from four to three and reduce the weight of the magazine but retaining the same number of pages.

The magazine would therefore be published in March, July and November and the change had been announced in the July issue of Pan. This decision had been taken reluctantly as an interim measure to help to balance the books and the Council would continue to review this.

MP noted that the BFS was a fantastic organisation but was not currently getting everything right and he welcomed members’ thoughts on the way forward. He thanked members for their support and encouraged them to contact members of the Council with their suggestions and ideas. He hoped to meet with various stakeholders during the year to further understand what BFS members wish to see from their society.

Treasurer’s report
JB reported that the reserves fund had been in deficit and by December 2015 this
deficit had increased. The Charity Commission allowed this temporarily but the Council acknowledged that it needed to be addressed.

It had been necessary to borrow on subscription income from members and it would be necessary to replenish this as the Society had been in danger of running out of funds. It had been necessary to collect cash from debtors and cash collections and forecasting were now under control.

The average subscription was £25 per year and this did not cover running costs and the costs of producing Pan. The Council had reluctantly taken the decision to reduce the number of issues of Pan from four to three per year as there was not enough income generated to cover costs. The decision had been taken to avoid a continuing deficit.

After analysing the cash flow of life memberships, the Council had taken the decision to withdraw the option of purchasing life membership but would retain the option to purchase 6 years for the price of 5 for the time being.

The Festival had been very successful with ticket sales at least 25% above projected figures. This would help to boost reserves and it would then be necessary to decide on and keep to a level of reserves and this might be, for example, one issue of Pan plus 4-5 months of overheads.

The Society did not have enough income to cover the costs of producing Pan and the Council had taken the decision to reduce the number of issues from four to three per year to avoid a continuing deficit.

MP and the Council thanked JB for all her hard work as Treasurer. The Council had a clear picture of the Society’s finances for the first time in some years.

Membership Secretary's report

NT had sent a report for the meeting. As at 31 July 2016, the British Flute Society had 1043 members and this represented a 6.8% decrease since June 2015. Various meetings had taken place during the year to discuss ways in which to increase member numbers and streamline membership processes.

Action was ongoing as amendments were being made to the membership system and additional people were being assigned membership tasks. The Council thanked NT for all her hard work as Membership Secretary and it was hoped that these steps would help to make life easier for her.

Legal Adviser's report

NS was appointed as a legal adviser at the last AGM in 2015. During this one year period, she had attended Council meetings and advised on legal matters including the BFS Constitution, Child Protection Policy, BFS flute festival insurance and contract, employment contract, Health and Safety Policy and Data Protection Policy.
Area Representative Coordinator's report

KC recorded thanks to Margaret Lowe and Louis Henry who had recently stepped down as Area Representatives and welcomed Emily Knowles, a new Area Representative for North Wales. She hoped to recruit new Area Reps to areas not currently covered and acknowledged that the BFS needed to be more proactive to sell the BFS to flute players across the UK.

AFT (Association of Flute Traders) Representative's Report

There was nothing to report but thanks was noted to HP for his work as AFT representative.

6. 2015 Accounts

The 2015 Annual Report and Accounts had been available to view on the BFS website and were circulated during the meeting. After discussion, the report and accounts were approved. Proposed by John Rayworth, seconded by Anne Hodgson.

7. Future projects

The BFS competitions had been very successful and the standard of performances continued to be very high. The Council looked forward to the next competitions to be held on Wednesday 17 February 2017 again at the Regent Hall, Oxford Street, London.

The BFS Premier Flautist Series had been held on Sunday afternoons at the Royal Academy of Music for a number of years and the last artist to perform had been Robert Dick in November 2015. The Council wished to continue with the series but for various reasons it might be necessary to look at alternative venues and it was hoped that the Council would be able to give further news about this soon.

8. Questions and comments from the floor

Members of the BFS thanked the Council for all their hard work during the year and understood the financial difficulties that had been discussed during the meeting. It was noted that Pan was sometimes late being delivered and it was suggested that a message on the website to alert members as to when it would be delivered would be useful.

Suggestions from the floor included:

- Create a clear appeal for funds. Even small amounts could make a big difference.
- Creating a donation structure – perhaps silver, gold and platinum.
- Establishing a subscription minimum amount to encourage further donation.
- Subscriptions should be incentivised – members only events etc.
- Prompt the consciences of established life members to ask them if they would be willing to give a voluntary amount.
• Explore the option of e-membership but acknowledging that not all members would wish to receive Pan as an online journal. MP confirmed that the Council was looking at this but there were Gift Aid and VAT implications that would need to be addressed.

• The BFS should develop its presence on social media and should consider a presence on Instagram. Thanks was recorded to NO for all the work he had done on Facebook/Twitter for the Festival.

9. **Any other business**

The Council and members thanked Edward Blakeman and Kate Hill for putting on a wonderful Festival at St John’s Smith Square from 19-21 August.

Julie Twite had offered to assist the Council with its online presence and she agreed to become co-opted to the BFS Council. She had also agreed to become an Area Representative for West Sussex. Proposed by Anne Hodgson and seconded by Elizabeth Malloy.

10. **Date of the next AGM**

To be announced