



Friends of American Old Time Music and Dance
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held at Queen Elizabeth's High School, Gainsborough on Sunday 11th
February 2024 at 10 am

Committee present:

Chairman	- Alan Pridgeon	Dance Representative	- Sara Marshall-Rose
Treasurer	- Bridget Storrar	Webmaster	- Tim Mason
Secretary	- Sue Rooke	Design Editor	- Dave Proctor
Membership Sec	- Maureen Pridgeon	Festival Organiser	- Tim Rooke

Apologies: Workshops Organiser - Nick Pimbert

Members present: Diane Carr, Jimmy Carr, Jo Wright, Paul Fundak, David Handley, Ray Banks, Paul Sheridan, Clare Sheridan, Alan Green, Alan Spindler, Stu Weetman, Fran Weetman, Michi Mathias, Andrew Cocks, Jane Lewis, Hugh Connor, Liz Mars, Caroline Cottrell, Mandy Emerson, Karen Draysey, Pete Budd, Glenys Petz, Martina Munar, Colin Thompson, R Beach.

1. Minutes of last Meeting - Last year's minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous AGM held on Sunday 12th Feb 2023.

2. Matters arising - Sibs Reisen had provided some names of professional dancers that we could look at for the festival. Campsite alternatives is an ongoing project but nowhere suitable had been found as yet. The Treasurer had moved some of the FOAOTMAD monies into accounts with higher interest rates.

3. Committee Members' Reports

Gainsborough Festival Organiser - Tim Rooke

Tim reported that this year the numbers attending the festival were higher than last year and prepaid ticket sales were good. The festival costs had risen this year and the school had increased its fee by almost a third. He estimated that approximately one third of the members attended the festival. He said that 22 new members had bought tickets this year. He was hopeful that the festival costs would break even.

Clare Sheridan said she was very disappointed with the lack of dance workshops and might not have bought a ticket had she known. Various discussions ensued. Alan said she had made her point, and it was noted. Tim said that he thought it was difficult to find a suitable wooden floor in the school on which to hold the workshops, the stage floor was probably the best but that was not very large and had a lot of sound equipment on it. Hugh Connor mentioned that he thought beginners could dance on a hard floor in one of the larger classrooms.

The lottery grant of £1,000 that we received last year helped to pay for the rent of the hall chairs. Caroline C asked why we hire the chairs, and the reply was that the plastic school chairs are so uncomfortable. Ray Banks said he thought the sound man was very good. Tim had provided feedback forms for all festival goers to make any comments or suggestions.

Old Time News Magazine, Production and Design Editor - Dave Proctor

Following the loss of Judy Spindler in 2023 there is the role of Editor to fill. Dave Proctor stepped in and was happy to do the production and design. Nick Grant has come forward to help with 7/8 pages, and they had found compatible systems. We have several members who came forward to help with proof reading. Dave said it was challenging to get articles. He has been checking print costs with other companies and where any savings could be made. He thought the magazine was a real asset.

Treasurer's Report - Bridget Storrar

Bridget produced copies of the FOAOTMAD Accounts, which were distributed to those present and would be published alongside the AGM minutes. These had been reviewed and signed off by an independent specialist. The accounts showed the balance sheet as of 31st December 2023. The overall position showed a healthy balance. Money in the deposit account had been moved to get a higher interest rate. Membership subs were up and there was some income from merchandise and sales from Eve's collection. Gainsborough and Dunfield House made losses in 2023, but costs had been reduced due to the new membership system. Some of the sponsorship money received had been spent on providing workshop tutors.

Membership Report - Maureen Pridgeon

Maureen reported that currently we have 459 members. 262 individuals, 79 couples, 6 groups, and 21 non-UK (6 USA, 12 Europe, 3 Rest of World). We have a new on-line membership system called Membermojo, which is a database that holds all the details of members and lets them know when their renewal is due and can generate payment automatically if agreed. Generally, the system is working well. There have been savings in postage of £545 this year due to the new on-line system. There are a variety of ways to pay subscriptions, but Gocardless is the method preferred as it is the most economical. Members can go into the system and change their own details if they alter. There is a member's page within the system that has various articles, online workshops, and an archive of the Old Time News magazine. Maureen said she would write an article for the magazine explaining to members how to access and use the new system.

Webmaster - Tim Mason

Tim reported that the website attracted approximately 200 visits per week. He regularly updated the pages and if anyone spotted anything incorrect to let him know. Membermojo is linked to the website member's page. Gainsborough festival has its own website and was linked to the FOAOTMAD site. Ray Banks suggested leaving the festival site open for a couple of months after the festival rather than close it straight away. Tim gave his thanks to Paul Bennett for updating the news page on the website, running the blog, and keeping the sessions and maps up to date. A member mentioned having difficulty using the site, which Tim suggested may be due to their web browser and he recommended trying an alternate browser and/or clearing cookies.

Dance Representative - Sara Marshall-Rose

Sara reported that she had not been able to contribute much this year due to pressure of work, time, and money, and she would be stepping down from the committee. The workshop at Dunfield House in November attracted 4/5 people. This was run with some of the money donated by Raise the Dust. She thought the festival needed to improve the dance profile and could fund instructional videos. She said that she had found it difficult to get dance teams interested in the festival or FOAOTMAD. Clare Sheridan said the dance party when Ira Bernstein came over was very successful. It was agreed that this was a special event as it was likely to be the last time for him. There were discussions about the possibility of purchasing a floor and trailer and storing it at the school.

Chairman's Report - Alan Pridgeon

From the sales of the CD's donated by eve's family last summer we have been able to finance an online Double Bass Workshop with Jules Bushell.

Summer camp last year seemed to be quite successful in the lower field at Croft Farm and most people were positive about it, even though there were no electric hook-ups. The campsite did hire a generator in 2023 but this would not be done again as it was too expensive. Dave Proctor reported that it be possible to book a hook-up along the top edge of the field, but these were limited. He had already booked his for 2024. Alan had spent days and weeks looking for other potential sites. Most sites won't allow campfires. He had a couple of sites that might be suitable for a spring camp. The search will go on. Spring Camp will be in the top field at Croft Farm, and you can book electric hook-up from 1st April.

Workshops - Alan reported that this year we had arranged two online workshops, and the November weekend workshops at Dunfield House. Dunfield House turned out to be a bit of a disaster, due to the two American tutors dropping out at the last minute and Dan Stewart coming down with Covid. Despite that, and with thanks to Kate Lissauer for stepping in to take the banjo, fiddle and guitar workshops, and Stu Weetman for taking the mandolin workshop, it went well. Sara ran a dance workshop, which was financed by some of the donations received from Kicking Alice.

Subscriptions - The current UK subscription covers what we do, but for the USA members we made a loss of £12 per member per year, due to the postage costs. It was decided that we opt to increase the USA membership subs to £45 or give them the option of getting a PDF copy of the magazine and dropping the subscription to £25.

4. Retirement of present committee members

At this point the current committee members were retired.

5. Re-election of Committee

Clare Sheridan said she would take over the Dance Rep position from Sara Marshall-Rose and was elected. Nick Pimbert has resigned from the position as Workshop Organiser. All other current committee members had agreed to remain and were re-elected. There are currently vacancies for Workshop Organiser and Magazine Editor.

6. Any other Business

Alan reported that Dunfield House had been provisionally booked for the November Picking, Dance and Workshop Weekend to be held on the 8/9/10 November 2024 and the deposit had been paid.

The meeting closed at approximately 11.30am.