



Annual General Meeting

28 November 2010
Long Clawson Village Hall
Hosted by Members in the Vale of Belvoir

Minutes

The meeting started at 11.15 am. The late start was caused by inclement weather.

Present:

Officers:

Chris Hall	Chair
Wendy Bostock	Membership Secretary
John Clifford	Publicity Officer and Olympics Officer
Jenny Newson	Editor of "Dancing On!"
Kate Waller	Secretary
Phil Watson	Treasurer
Jan Wong	Web Officer

Area Representatives:	Kim Woodward	South West
	Phil Watson	West Midlands

Member sides represented:

Allington	Steve Tunnicliff
Ashley's Rise	Kim Woodward
Bedcote Morris	Kate Waller
Bunnies from Hell	Liz Pearce
Cadi Ha	Rosie Butler-Hall
Eryri	Steve Butler
Gog Magog Molly	Jan Wong
Illustrious Order of Fools & Beasts	John Clifford
Lady Bay Revellers	Gill Willson, Barry Roland
Mucky Mountains Morris	John Harris
Rag Morris	Natasha Woodward
Whitethorn Morris	Jenny Newson
Wyre Knot Mummers	Phil Watson
Yorkshire Coast	Wendy Bostock

Individual Members:

Steve Tunnicliff

Honorary Members:

None

In Attendance:

Barry Goodman – President of the Morris Federation
Peter J. Halfpenney – Squire of the Morris Ring
Charlie Corcoran – Bagman of the Morris Ring

Chris Hall (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for coming. She welcomed our guests from the Morris Ring and the Morris Federation.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Member Sides:

Earl of Stamford Morris
Braybrooke Morris
Madcap Morris
Rapper Rascals
Fenstanton Morris
Castle Clog
Anonymous Morris
St Katherine's Morris
Shinfield Shambles
Lepton
Borderline

Individual Members:

Ann Baines
Steve Adamson

Area Representatives:

Lynn Goodkin – North West Area Representative

Other Organisations:

EFDSS

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read. It was proposed that these were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting by Allington, and seconded by Gog Magog Molly. A copy was signed by the Chair for the records.

3. Matters Arising

John Clifford asked about the Treasurer's outstanding task to provide badges for Area Representatives. Phil Watson replied that our previous supplier had gone out of business and he was looking for a new one. John Clifford provided details of a company he uses who can do one-offs to the original design. Chris Hall asked that new badges should be "more orange" in accordance with the Open Morris colours.

Action: Treasurer

4. Officers' reports

(a) Chair – see attached report.

The Chair informed the meeting that she had rewritten her report this morning. It was going to be a retrospective of her years in the post in the light of her having given a year's notice of her resignation at the last AGM, but as it appears that she will have to continue in the post for a further year because a replacement has not been found, the retrospective will have to wait.

She noted that we need to get more people interested in the running of our organisation, and hoped that sides present at this meeting would encourage other sides to attend.

The Chair mentioned that despite officially being only an observer at the Ring ARM, she had been obliged to speak in defence of "Dinosaurs Not Allowed" and although this was not a pleasant experience, she had been grateful that many attendees at the ARM had approached her afterwards and expressed their support.

The Chair expressed her thanks to Jenny and Mike Everett of the Morris Federation for their organisation of the JMO Day of Dance in Bury St Edmunds. Although apparently there had been some criticism of this day, we all thought it was very well organised.

A document covering the JMO recruitment event earlier in the year, "Recruiting for the Future" compiled by Michael Stimpson, will be emailed out to all sides.

Action: Secretary

The Chair had dealt with the usual phone calls during the year, but had not had not so many strange ones this year.

She was pleased to note that we have an increase in the number of new young member sides, such as Cadi Ha whose members are all under 23.

(b) Secretary – see attached report

The Secretary gave a short report and notified the meeting that she intended to give up the post at the 2011 AGM, unless anyone would like to take it up at this meeting, but there were no volunteers.

(c) Membership Secretary – see attached report

Wendy Bostock reported that during the year we had gained 18 sides and 2 individual members, plus 4 junior sides with more expected. We have also lost a few sides who have folded. This gives Open Morris 138 member sides and 17 individual members at the time of writing.

Overseas member sides have been informed that they are not entitled to public liability insurance.

Membership fee payment methods were discussed. Liz Pearce (Bunnies from Hell) asked whether we advertise our account number to enable people to pay by standing order instead of by cheque. Natasha Woodward (Rag Morris) asked whether it could be done online via the website.

Barry Goodman confirmed that the Morris Federation are moving towards using online banking and hope to be fully electronic by next year, using methods such as PayPal.

Wendy Bostock pointed out that this could be a problem for sides who have specified that more than one person needs to sign their cheques; however Kim Woodward suggested that online banking may allow for having only one person to authorise payment.

The Morris Ring use standing order payments with balance by cheque, but there is a problem with identification of who has paid.

Steve Butler (Eryri) suggested that identification of who has paid could be done by using membership numbers. Kim Woodward pointed out that some sort of form is still required.

Wendy Bostock agreed that we could not move entirely to paperless membership administration, as a signed copy of the insurance certificate needs to be provided. However a PDF could be useful for sides to email out when a copy is requested by various organisations.

Phil Watson will investigate options in connection with Wendy Bostock and Jan Wong.

Action: Treasurer/Membership Secretary/Web Officer

(d) Treasurer – see attached report

The Treasurer proposed that the subscription for overseas sides should be £16 in future, given that they will not be entitled to public liability insurance. This would be backdated, giving overseas sides this year's membership free.

It was also proposed to increase the subscription for junior sides to £10, as at present the subscription did not cover the cost to Open Morris of their insurance. The Chair confirmed that she had canvassed junior sides at DNA, and none had said that this increase would cause them a problem.

The Treasurer's report was proposed by Allington, and seconded by the Illustrious Order of Fools & Beasts. The Chair signed a copy for the records.

The changes in subscription rates noted above were proposed by Eryri and seconded by Bunnies from Hell, and were passed unanimously.

(e) Web Officer – see attached report

Jan Wong informed the meeting that she will be going away soon for 5 weeks and will pass on the passwords to the Chair so someone else can have access to update the website.

John Clifford remarked that the pleasure of the Open Morris website is that Jan Wong is very quick to apply updates. Natasha Woodward said that it is very clear and easy to navigate. Links to social networking sites would detract from the usefulness of the website.

Despite our best efforts, sometimes there is not a working or up-to-date email contact for member sides on the website, or there is one which goes to someone who rarely checks the inbox. It was discussed whether we should suggest to sides that they use easily transferable addresses such as info@ or bag@ourmorristeam. Jan Wong pointed out that they need the right sort of domain to implement this.

(f) Publicity Officer/Olympics Officer – see attached reports

John Clifford reported that DNA (Dinosaurs Not Allowed) is now on Weymouth's Olympic events list, and the Voluntary Arts Network has published a case study about it. He pointed out that DNA is John Clifford's project, not Open Morris', and it is his decision to be ageist and not the decision of Open Morris. This is how funding for the event is obtained – the Cultural Olympiad specified that projects are to be for the under-25s.

He acknowledged that his written report was quite long, and highlighted the important part for anyone wishing to be included in the Olympics – the Flame Route. Route allocation is in December 2010. Councils will accept applications in January 2011 for involvement. May 18th is the date for applications to be a "runner" – note that this is aimed at people who are under 24 or who have inspired under-24s.

John drew attention to the timeline and noted that it includes the celebrations for the Queen's diamond jubilee – there may be events happening for this which morris teams could be involved in.

John announced his retirement as Olympic Representative after these Olympics, as he will be too old by the time the UK could again be eligible to host the Games in 2060.

The Chair said that she is very impressed by the amount of work John Clifford does.

(g) Editor of Dancing On!

Jenny Newson informed the meeting that an edition is almost ready to go to print and should be out before Christmas. She handed out proofs. She thanked everyone who has contributed, and said she has had some trouble getting submissions. She pleaded with members to write something, as people will want to read it.

Jenny said that she is happy to carry on as Editor, but would like to work with Wendy to get feedback about what people want from the magazine.

Action: Editor of Dancing On!/Membership Secretary

There followed a discussion about how to increase the level of submissions, options for the future format of the magazine, and alternative distribution methods.

The Morris Federation said that their response level has increased since they have had a new Editor and new colour format. Natasha Woodward said that the reason one of her teams had not switched

from the Morris Federation to Open Morris was the magazine. She passed round copies of various publications from other organisations.

It was suggested that area representatives could speak to their local sides regularly for any news, and since some area reps are more proactive than others, perhaps this could be added to their job description.

Kim Woodward (Ashley's Rise and South West Area Representative) said that she had previously submitted a number of articles but had been discouraged when they did not appear.

John Clifford said that in order to encourage contributions, it is critical to have a submission date for articles. He suggested that this should then result in a regular publication, regardless of the amount of content available.

Another suggestion was to have an annual "yearbook" style of publication, with news and other information going out in periodical updates by email. Jenny said that if we were to do this, then the regular newsletters should go out in a more interesting format than the current one, with some elements of design added.

It was suggested that distribution of the magazine could be online, and Jenny Newson replied that it is online as a pdf but the document is too big to email. Another suggestion was to save costs by sending one copy only per side, and point people at the online version. The Federation are now doing this. However Jenny said that the cost difference for printing and postage between one copy per side and 6 copies is negligible.

Gill Willson (Lady Bay Revellers) said that she really enjoys getting the magazine – it is interesting even though some of the content may be out of date. She likes the idea of an annual yearbook and regular newsletter, and finding out about other sides' experiences and events. This would also create an interesting historical document - also what we have done during the year seems more interesting in retrospect.

Advertising in "Dancing On!" was discussed under item 7 of the Agenda.

5. Election of Officers

Next year the posts of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary will be vacated and volunteers are therefore required. Kim Woodward suggested that we publish brief biographies of those standing for election. It was noted that all posts are available for election every year.

As there were no volunteers to take over any of the officers' posts at this AGM, the Chair suggested re-election en bloc of existing officers for a further year. This was proposed by Mucky Mountains and seconded by Bunnies from Hell. There were no objections so this was carried unanimously.

Area Representatives

Lynn Goodkin had submitted her resignation as North West Area Representative to this meeting. She feels that the post is not required. Vacancies therefore existed in the North West and South East regions. Natasha Woodward volunteered to fill the East Midlands post, and the Chair therefore happily appointed her, remarking that we are very pleased to have her.

Wendy Bostock queried what constitutes the East Midlands for this purpose, and the Chair said that she would send to all sides what constitutes the Representatives' areas. Wendy Bostock will help with a list of sides.

Action: Chair/Membership Secretary

Natasha asked how many Open Morris sides there are in the South East. Kim thinks we will soon have a South East Area Representative.

Kim asked what we propose to do about the position of North West Area Representative. Phil Watson said that he will check whether Gordon Monks is still interested in doing this job. If not, perhaps Nicki Pickering could be asked whether she would like to cover the area.

6. Events

(a) Open Morris

The meeting was not aware of any Open Morris events planned for the next 12 months. Natasha Woodward asked whether OM has an Events Officer and it was confirmed that we do not.

Natasha suggested an Open Morris 18-30 event, which she would be happy to lead but would need some support. This would be open to dancers from teams from all organisations. Charlie Corcoran (Morris Ring) pointed out that an Open Morris 18-30 event would need to be an affiliated OM side for insurance purposes. Peter Halfpenney (Morris Ring) said that an event of this sort can attract new members, and Wendy Bostock thought that an 18-30 event might help to revive days/weekends of dance.

Natasha also suggested an annual Open Morris Day of Dance. Chris Hall replied that Open Morris have had brilliant Days of Dance in the past, perhaps because mixed groups were not so common as they are today. However the last one, organised by Mucky Mountains, was the only one to have taken place during the last 10 years.

Chris said that she personally had put a lot of effort into trying to organise an Open Morris Day of Dance for an anniversary celebration but unfortunately was unable to attract enough teams to make it viable.

Wendy Bostock suggested that the JMO Days of Dance may be more attractive. John Clifford thought that we could go back to organising OM Days of Dance when the JMO days revert to being every other year.

Phil Watson said that small days or weekends of dance are what people want – big days cost time and money and tend to be regional. Natasha suggested we could organise something to tie in with the AGM, but it was pointed out that the November timing of the AGM is a problem. The Morris Federation confirmed that they have found member sides are not so keen on committing to large events, and theirs have also tended to become regional.

Jenny Newson remarked that there are now more festivals as opportunities for dancing weekends and teams tend to go to those instead of days of dance.

(b) JMO Day of Dance 2011

This will take place in Sheffield, organised by the Morris Ring. Peter Halfpenney said that people are keen to keep this as an annual event – it is fun, and a good recruitment opportunity. He said that there were proposals for a possible evening event afterwards, perhaps to take place in a marquee which could have stalls in it during the day. Accommodation could be organised as part of it. It was thought that some people might want to do this if they live a long way away, but Phil Watson remarked that we do not want to discourage sides from volunteering to organise future events which might happen if a precedent was set for the events to become more than a Day of Dance.

(c) Olympics

John Clifford informed the meeting that the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) are keen to provide support to hold a morris day in Stratford-upon-Avon in 2012 during the 6 – 8 weeks before the Olympics. This is a fantastic opportunity. They would also support local teams to dance there during the period. It was noted that the Olympics start on 26th July 2012.

It was therefore proposed that the JMO Day of Dance in 2012 should take place in Stratford. Although we do not have any truly local team to organise this, Foxs Morris have said they can offer some support.

7. Advertising in “Dancing On!”

Jenny Newson has been approached by a number of people enquiring about advertising in “Dancing On!” and therefore brought this issue to the AGM with a request for opinions and a decision.

It was noted that Open Morris occasionally receives requests to publicise events or items such as books on our website or in our newsletter, and offering a paid advertisement in the magazine could give us a way of dealing with these attempts to gain free publicity for ventures which Open Morris may have doubts about appearing to endorse.

Jenny would look at including one page of advertising in colour and two in black and white. This would leave the fourth additional page free for editorial content.

Chris Hall does not see why there should not be advertising if it is relevant. John Clifford is against it in a lukewarm fashion. He has a concern about who will exercise editorial control over whose advertisements would be accepted. There were no serious objections from the meeting, but a discussion followed about what sort of advertising we should accept, how we should decide who to charge, and how much we should charge.

The general feeling was that an obviously commercial venture – someone making money from what they are advertising - should be charged a full rate. The Morris Federation confirmed that they have different rates for members and for commercial advertisers, using the same rates for the online version. Their rates are shown in the front of their magazine.

Chris Hall said that we need to be aware that some advertisements may be time-sensitive.

Gill Willson asked whether we could afford the suggested new format if advertisements are not accepted. Jenny replied that the proposal will need to be accurately costed. However she thinks that with advertising the current format could be produced twice a year, plus periodic updates.

The Morris Ring confirmed that their publications are all funded by paid advertising.

No vote was taken, pending costings and further thought. Jenny asked whether we should canvass the membership but this was not considered necessary since the subject had been included in the agenda for this meeting.

8. Workshops

Kim Woodward will be running a Border Morris workshop for Morris Mynahs on the Isle of Wight in February, and a public “Morris for Fitness and Fun” workshop in Weymouth in March.

Whitethorn will be holding a North West workshop, in the lower M40 area.

10. Any Other Business

(a) Email addresses for Area Representatives

Natasha Woodward asked whether Open Morris email addresses for the Area Representatives could be provided. Jan Wong replied that we only have 10 mailbox addresses but we could supply addresses similar to those for the Officers, which are then redirected to the recipient’s own email account. Chris Hall suggested that we sort out who the Area Representatives are first. Badges for the Area Representatives were mentioned again.

11. Open Morris AGM 2011

The date for this is definitely and irrevocably 27th November 2011. It has to be this date as the 21st clashes with the AFO. Jenny Newson said that she will consult her sides. She can provide overnight accommodation, and one of her sides would be able to find a hall.

The meeting closed at 2.00pm.