MORTIMER'S MORRIS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER 2016 AT 1200 HOURS
AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH HALL, BILBOROUGH

MINUTES

1. Attendance

Apologies

Apologies were received from: Hazel Old, Tanya Grimes, Ruth Lewis-Jones, Amelia Collins, Linda Sullivan, Sheila Garner, Lys Evans, Charles Chambers and Ed Marchewicz.

Present

Present were : Kath Childs, Pat Clarke, Victoria Day, Gill Francis, Liz Fraser, Sarah Fowler, Cindy Grant, Claire Halliday, Vicky Johnson, Yvonne Kawecka, Kathryn Mahon, Celia Mahon, Fran Moore, Chris Plant, Hannah Sutcliffe, Keith Baker, Anthony Dudson, Chris Lewis-Jones, Peter Millington, Trevor Webster.

2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the AGM held on 4 October 2015 were approved.

3. Matters arising

Use of 'reply all' to emails - Liz reported there had been some improvement but members were urged to avoid using reply all unless there was a reason for it.

Facebook group has been set up.

Web problems had been advised to the webmaster and were being sorted.

New skirts - thanks were expressed to Gill and Betty.

4. Annual Reports

(a) Squire (Victoria)

See report at **Appendix A.**

Victoria highlighted the rather blank spring but this was made up for later. Although there was rain everywhere, there were good things to do, Bunkfest, Guernsey went well and some new events were visited. There has been good feedback from the Morris Federation AGM. The side did pull out of Sandwich and Stuff of Life at short notice - maybe we should review bookings with a short side.

(b) Treasurer (Fran)

See report at **Appendix B**, showing annual accounts for Mortimer's Morris and final accounts for the Morris Federation AGM.

Fran reiterated that if the club has paid on your behalf and you don't come then you must pay it back; as an example, at Folk East someone dropped out at last minute.

Subscriptions - everyone has paid (£20 if in full time education, £40 otherwise, first quarter free for new members).

Income only just covered expenditure in the last year but this includes new skirts and purchase of the gazebo.

It was agreed to ring fence the same *per capita* for kit for the band as was spent on kit this year for dancers.

It was agreed to give the Morris Federation AGM profit to charity - agreed 'Punk 4 the Homeless'.

Two collecting tins had gone missing at the AGM - we should in future put names on tins.

(c) Secretary (Liz)

See report at **Appendix C**.

(d) Practice Leaders (Vicky/Chris)

See report at **Appendix D**.

(e) Band (Claire/Chris L-J)

See reports from the Musical Director at **Appendix E** and the Band Leader at **Appendix F**.

Thanks were expressed to John Garner for stepping in at Braunston.

Concern was expressed about taking bookings when band numbers were low or of the wrong mix.

(f) Publicity Officer

Claire had taken over the Facebook account and set up a Twitter account - to share events with other Morris sides.

Keith had contacted TV, radio and papers for the Morris Federation AGM.

Liz had put material in the Tourist Information office.

It was agreed that leaflets and cards should be available in stick bags.

5. Election of Officers:

(a) Squire - Victoria for 2nd year (no nominations) YES

(b) Treasurer - Fran for 2nd year (no nominations) YES

(c) Secretary - Liz for 4th year (no nominations) AGREED

(d) Practice Leader - Vicky/Chris for 2nd year (no nominations) YES

(e) Band Leader - Claire/Chris L-J for 2nd year (no nominations) YES

(f) Publicity Officer – Keith/Claire (social media) YES

(g) Archive Officer - Yvonne YES - anyone with archive material please send to Yvonne

(h) Kit Officer - Gill YES

6. Bookings for 2017:

(a) Australia

It was agreed that the response should be no for 2017 and that external funding should be investigated for 2018 - Peter and Chris L-J to look at the possibilities.

(b) Invites received so far

See Secretary's report. It was suggested that Halesworth, Southwell, Stuff of Life, Sandwich, Folk East and Holmfirth should also be considered.

(c) How to achieve a more even spread

There was a need for greater spread of bookings, otherwise the side didn't get practice, the team should consider the team rather than personal preferences. Sarah agreed and asked if we could look specifically at early festivals e.g. Upton, Halesworth. Victoria suggested local dance outs. Hannah raised the need to practice on a variety of surfaces, also maybe the need to practice in clogs. There was wide agreement. Pat suggested that the first dance out should not be a festival - perhaps in Lowdham in early Dec? Liz said weekends rather than evenings were better. Lowdham maypole was on May Day bank holiday Monday. Gill suggested the Admiral Rodney on Sunday evening. Victoria would look at some suggestions. Victoria and Sarah would look at evenings, maybe combined with a social event.

7. Practices:

(a) Attendances at practice and dance outs

Chris and Vicky were concerned that attendance at several practices was only 8-9, including new dancers, so practice was limited to dances new people could do. A better attendance was necessary to be able to practice a wider repertoire. Celia stressed that this was especially important before a booking. It was important that dancers let practice leaders know if they couldn't come to practice. Dancers also needed to be flexible at practice re positions; it was no good if position changes were introduced at a dance out.

(b) Practice venues (Pat)

Noted that there was a new contact for the hall - Fran will circulate. It was suggested that practices should be held once a quarter in a mirrored studio; there was one at Bilborough college.

(c) Choice of dances at practice (Hazel)

This was covered in (a) and in (8).

(d) Practice schedule

It was agreed to keep to the same schedule - no practice first Sunday - day practice second Sunday, then evenings other Sundays. Members asked that changes should be decided and publicised early.

8. Repertoire

Linda suggested reviving Black Rod Bottom.

Sheila suggested learning Wylde Green at day practice or an alternative new dance. Chris was concerned that Wylde Green involved constant polka steps.

Vicky and Chris suggested learning new single step dance as there was only one in the repertoire (Golborne). All agreed. Victoria agreed a single step dance was a priority. It was suggested that it would be best to start with a new dance that no-one knew and not to do what other sides do to maintain individuality. It was agreed to proceed with a variant of Keswick. Liz suggested an extra practice specifically to learn the new dance. It was agreed this was a good idea if people would come - say on a first weekend of month. Vicky suggested a taster session first then full day on it. One of dance practice leaders would go to band practice to sort out the new dance. Liz would email dates.

Gill asked about prioritising dances for six to cope with short numbers.

9. Dancing performance standards and etiquette

(Linda and Victoria raised the need to focus on polkas, lines, and uniformity of knees. Chris L-J suggested inviting in a choreographer - e.g. Emma.

Gill asked if individual coaching could be brought back. Victoria did not support this.

Hannah suggested practicing lines by setting up a cordon (chairs, benches) to keep lines straight - sets tended to spread and this needed to be prevented. Mirrors would help.

Etiquette - Victoria, Vicky and Chris raised points of etiquette for dancing out. In particular, dancers should not wander off without telling the squire and should arrive at the designated time before the dance spot ready to dance. This was their own responsibility. Hannah suggested phone chain for if people got lost. Sticks should be in position on entry to the spot and dancing should not stop before the call or whistle. It was also polite to other teams to support them while dancing. Group should convene after a dance to talk about the next dance, also at end of the spot to arrange meeting arrangements for the next spot. Celia stressed again value of whistles.

10. Recruitment

Gill asked if we were having open sessions.

Vicky said we should not close minds to a mixed side - especially as Morts started out mixed, although the constitution now stipulates a female side.

11. Kit

(a) Waistcoats (Chris) - suggested buttons gold colour plus new edging. Ask people to bring ideas next practice for back of waistcoat. Chris/Celia to have a look for suitable buttons.

(b) New fleeces (Cindy) - suggest hoodies like the Sheila hoodies - black - just with word Mortimers - band to discuss.

(c) New logo - Chris come up with ideas (Hannah/Chris L-J) by 23 October.

(d) What to do with old skirts (Gill) - members have a think.

(e) Gloves - Hannah to bring example to practice.

(f) Chris - noted we were losing sticks - down from 17 to 12 pairs Whitby slings - please take care to replace and look if members have any at home. Suggested caller collects sticks after each dance.

(g) Edges of clogs - agree edges should be all black - not everyone has done this yet.

(h) Musicians were talking about kit and would come up with suggestions.

12. Archives

Linda has a lot of stuff she needs to hand over to Yvonne.

13. Christmas party

Potentially 7 January at Sheila's.

14. Any other business

Vicky raised the point that we need to get better at audience participation.

Dance outs with musicians dancers had never met was not good idea and should be avoided. New musicians should come to at least one practice before participating in a dance out. Cindy raised the point that too much syncopation in the music made it hard to dance in time. Chris L-J said problems would be addressed at band practice.

Kath thanked the side for their friendliness and patience.

Thanks were expressed to Pat for chairing the meeting.

15. Date of next AGM

Agreed date of 8th October 2017.

APPENDIX A

Squire's report 2015-6

Overall, another good year for Mortimers. We had a bit of a slow start to the season with an empty calendar for May (!), but made up for it later on, dancing on bravely through some pretty horrible weather (my main memory of this summer is being wet!). Amongst the highlights were Southwell, Braunston which we shared with Sheffield City for the first time taking some of the pressure off Mortimer's and turning out to be great fun, Folk East (where it hardly rained at all!), Bunkfest, and Belles and Broomsticks weekend in beautiful Guernsey. We had a great finish to the season by hosting the Morris Federation AGM. We danced well, and the organisation (largely thanks to the huge efforts made by Liz Fraser and John Pomfret) went like clockwork. We got a lot of compliments both for our dancing and our organisation and I think raised the profile of Mortimer's. All in all, we've met a lot of new teams this year and I hope made a lot of new friends which will stand us in good stead for the future.

On the downside we had to pull out of Sandwich at short notice because of very late communication of quite important camping information from the organisers. Those of us unable to take time off on Friday found we were unable to get there in the time allowed before the campsite closed and as a result had to pull out. The booking had been accepted with a very short side anyway which is something we may want to consider in future.

Thanks to the committee, the team, and particularly to Chris and Vicky for setting all the dances. Without their help, I would have been completely unable to cope! I can't thank you enough.

Looking ahead

- New members – as ever, we need to keep trying to encourage new people to come along. Key factors to help with that include: dancing well, being visible, being approachable/welcoming, media presence... further ideas please!
- One of the things we've been unable to do for a variety of reasons is local dance-outs and it would be good to try and achieve this next year as it makes for local exposure and helps both with recruitment and getting paid bookings to add to our coffers.

Committee

I am prepared to stand again for 1 more year if there are no objections, but am equally happy to stand down if someone else wants to do it. It's been fun.

Victoria Day

7th October 2016

APPENDIX B

Treasurer's report 2015-6

MORTIMER'S MORRIS ACCOUNTS FOR 2015-6		
INCOME		
SUBS	1,005.00	(1020 less 10+5 overpaid and returned)
INTEREST ON DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	0.89	
Kit – new members, waistcoats	20.00	
Profit from Morris Fed AGM	213.88	
PAYING ENGAGEMENTS		
St. GEORGE'S DAY	100.00	
MF SPONSORSHIP at RETFORD	125.00	
BRAUNSTON	200.00	
Total General Income	**1,664.77**	
EXPENDITURE		
HALL HIRE	437.50	14 months
MF FEES & INSURANCE	111.00	
KIT – SKIRTS	457.72	£120 (prototype) £317.72 (fabric) £20 (zips)
BELLS	35.00	
GIFTS	70.10	
WEB SITE	157.50	£120 (Martin) + £25 (host) + £12.50 (web)
GAZEBO	208.98	
Deficit on Festivals	55.00	
Total General Expenditure	**1,532.80**	
Surplus (Deficit) for the Year	**131.97**	
FESTIVALS		
FOLK EAST	220.00	£55 x 4
GUERNSEY	1,000.00	
Total Festival Income	**1,220.00**	
FOLK EAST	275.00	
GUERNSEY	1,000.00	
Total Festival Expenditure	**1,275.00**	
Surplus (Deficit) on Festivals	**-55.00**	
BALANCE SHEET		
Opening Balances (27/8/15)		
Savings	1,133.83	
Current	3,033.50	
Cash	37.62	
Total Opening Balance	**4,204.95**	
Surplus (Deficit) for the Year	**131.97**	
Balance at end of year	**4,336.92**	
Closing Balances (27/9/16)		
Savings	1,134.42	
Current	3,202.50	The closing balance is actually 3252.50 but cheques totalling £50 have not been cashed
Cash	0.00	
Total Closing Balance	**4,336.92**	

ACCOUNTS FOR MORRIS FEDERATION AGM
on SATURDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2016
At the CANAL HOUSE, NOTTINGHAM

INCOME		
Ceilidh tickets:		
- in advance	£550.00	
- on door	£250.00	
Street collection	£437.23	
Total		**£1237.23**
EXPENDITURE		
Peeping Tom & Martyn Harvey	£800.00	
Hire of Canal House	£150.00	
Tea and Coffee	£25.00	
Out of pocket expenses for:		
- Chris, First Aid Kits	£23.35	
- Liz and John	£25.00	
Total		**£1023.35**
PROFIT		**£213.88**

Fran Moore
Treasurer
7th October 2016

APPENDIX C

Secretary's report 2015-6

During the last year the side received at least 33 invitations to dance out at festivals, morris weekends and at local events. Mortimer's attended 11 events (one fewer than last year). These included:

- 5 festivals (Whittlesea Straw Bear (one day only), IVDF (one day only), Southwell, Folk East and Bunkfest (Wallingford));
- 1 morris weekend (Belles and Broomsticks in Guernsey);
- 3 local dance outs (Sheffield Giants in Nottingham, Victoria at Beeston, St George's Day in Nottingham);
- Braunston Historic Boat Show (which provided an income of £200), attended with Sheffield City Morris;
- The Morris Federation AGM Day of Dance which we hosted.

The Morris Fed AGM DoD was a very successful event attended by 20 morris sides at which a collection was made amounting to £457.23. The ceilidh in the evening with Peeping Tom and Martyn Harvey was well attended (80 tickets were sold) and after deduction of costs we made a profit of over £200 which will be donated a charity of our choosing. We received many compliments from attending sides and also from the Morris Federation.

Invitations received so far for the coming year include The Royal Oak, Knaphill, Woking (Wednesday 19 October 2016 at.7.30pm), Ceilidh spot in Derby (4 November 2016 evening), Newark Christmas Market (Sunday 11 December 2016 from 11.00am - 5.00pm), Victoria at Beeston (Saturday 17 December at 11.45am), Whittlesea Straw Bear (13-15 January 2017), Ossett Beer Cart weekend (2-4 June 2017), Victory Morris Day of Dance (Saturday 15 July 2017 in Portsmouth), Newark Morris Festival (22-23 July 2017) and Ripley Morris Men 90th anniversary (Saturday 9 September 2017 from 10.30am - 4.00pm in Derby)

Email notifications are still being used to advise members of invites with requests for responses by email and bookings maintained on a spreadsheet. As reported last year arrangements are being made for the spreadsheet to be available to members on the website however despite several reminders to Martin Wildig this has yet to happen. There are still some members who do not reply to confirm whether they can or cannot attend, resulting in the secretary having to chase up responses by telephone. Any ideas on how response rates could be improved would be welcome. There have also been a few cases where bookings have been accepted but we have had to cancel at the last minute because of changes in members' circumstances necessitating their withdrawal, namely Sandwich Folk and Ale and Stuff of Life.

Liz Fraser

Secretary

Mortimer's Morris

7 October 2016

APPENDIX D

Dance Practice Leaders' report 2015-6

First of all to acknowledge the fantastic boost to the side from Hazel's return and from new dancers Cindy, Claire and Kath, who have worked very hard to learn a good number of dances .

For those of you that like figures, practices had an average of 50% dancer attendance in the evenings (10.5 of 21) and 63% (13 of 21) at daytime practices. Every practice this year has been fruitful, and we hope fun, helped greatly by having constant support from our fabulous band. Attendance generally has been up so another big thank you to everyone, but often there were too few longstanding members to enable us to run through our whole repertoire as frequently as is necessary to keep every dance up to speed. On the plus side, this gave us more time to teach our new dancers. On the downside, the resulting lack of continuity with regard to dancers, and lack of opportunity to practise some dances created an air of uncertainty on occasion, which impacted on the confidence of the team as a whole.

That being said, we did give some consistently excellent performances, most notably at Bunkfest.

One solution that has been suggested is that we reduce the repertoire. However our current selection of dances does give us a good degree of flexibility. More consistent attendance at practice, especially the day practices, would reduce the need for formalised cuts and leave us free to work towards individual bookings and concentrate on dances that are shaping up well with the option to temporarily shelve those that are not.

We are very pleased that at long last we have been able to dance Marston at many of our bookings, but disappointed that everyone was not able to learn the new adaptions to Westhoughton in time for it to be ready for the dancing season. Another positive has been the ability to dance sets of 12 for four of our dances, giving confidence to the newer members of the side and looking pretty spectacular to the audience too. We have also tried to get as many people as possible practiced at calling which has been a great help at danceouts.

Looking ahead, our aim for the next practice season is for all established dancers to achieve confidence in existing dances, where possible increasing the number of positions they are comfortable with in each dance, and to consolidate Westhoughton by Christmas. We would also like to introduce another single step dance new to everyone in the side, to avoid stagnation.

We hope everyone has been happy with practices this past year and welcome suggestions anyone may have to try to improve them and the attendance levels. Thank you again for your support throughout the year and to Victoria and Sheila for stepping in where we have both been unable to attend. We are both happy to continue as joint practice leaders if you want us for the coming season.

Chris Plant & Vicky Johnson

1st October 2016

APPENDIX E

Musical Director's report 2015-6

I feared that, because of my erratic employment and family commitments, I would probably struggle to do justice to the new role of 'musical director', and my misgivings were, largely, vindicated. However, thanks to the commitment of the band members in general, and Band Leader Claire Halliday in particular (who has been well and truly 'on duty' at dance-outs this season), I feel we have acquitted ourselves well over the past year. We have welcomed new members into the band, we have enhanced our repertoire[1], we have arranged for and played a gig (first of many?), we have turned up in sufficient numbers to play at Sunday dance practices, we have maintained a schedule of rehearsals and we are about to embark on a new venture: as from November, we shall be facilitating open sessions at the Horse and Groom in Basford. These will be based around the Morts repertoire, but will enable other musicians to join in too and, as a consequence (it is to be hoped), swell our ranks!

Rehearsals and dance-outs were enhanced this season by new members and new instruments. Instrumentation over the past few months has included: Anglo Concertina and chromatic button accordion (Anthony), diatonic button accordion (Claire), piano accordion (Chris), melodeon (Vicky), hurdy gurdies (Keith, Charles and Russel), fiddle (Peter), whistles (Charles and Trevor), recorder (Roo), bouzouki and pipes (Trevor), sax and flute (Ed), and, following a cracking performance at Stuff of Life, bass drum and timba (Tobi). I feel that the addition of sax and pipes, and the reintroduction of percussion, has very much enhanced the quality of our offer. However, I also acknowledge that we struggle to get a full band together (for practices, rehearsals and dance-outs) and this needs to be addressed.

A highlight for me personally this year was performing on the acoustic stage at the Stuff of Life Festival, where, following two rehearsals, we were able to arrange and perform dynamically adventurous set that went down a storm…and then use our arrangements as the basis of a 'facilitated jam' that replaced the parade (that had been cancelled because of rain) and involved many musicians, most of whom we'd never played with (or even met) before! It was also a privilege to be able to support the Morris Fed AGM and, in addition to doing a grand job on the streets of Nottingham, we also did a grand job at Folk East, along with a near full complement of confident dancers (also doing a grand job). I'm reliably informed we did grand jobs at both Bunkfest and Guernsey too (I was sad not to be able to join you all in Guernsey, but that's an inevitable consequence of my precarious and unpredictable life style I'm afraid)!

As with previous seasons, the entire band is profoundly indebted to Keith Baker. Not only is his reputation as 'the human metronome' well earned, but I personally couldn't have coped without his confidence with regard to the order and number of the A and B parts, the intros and changes. I should also like to acknowledge Claire's part too, in maintaining the quality sound for which Morts has become famous. Like Keith, her tempo is always reliable and her familiarity with our repertoire is impressive (not to mention useful)!

So, notwithstanding my reservations regrading my own performance as musical director, I feel the band has worked hard to maintain its standards, enhance its repertoire and recruit new members. We have enjoyed jamming and improvising in our practice sessions…swapping instruments and changing keys in order to both accommodate new instruments and enhance our arrangements, and I feel, despite some patchy performances, we are in a better place than we were a year ago.

Chris Lewis-Jones

7th October 2016

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[1] At last, we are working on a local Luddite tune, a march entitled 'Welcome Ned Ludd'. This may or may not be adopted as a dance tune, but it was agreed that it should enter the band's repertoire. Ant has also shared several lovely tunes, including a very popular Russian tune, which I hope will be entering the band's repertoire this autumn. And Keith's foray into the world of thrash folk has given us one of the most popular tunes of the season: The Corsair. We have also arranged three atmospheric tunes to accompany Marsden. Following a few shaky renditions, we finally seem to have cracked it. Though difficult to play, the new arrangement (of three English Hornpipes) is popular with the band, popular with the dancers and (evidently) popular with the public too. So, more of the same please!

APPENDIX F

Band Leader's report 2015-6

Thank you to all the band for playing in some very miserable weather this year! It's been mainly wet, occasionally freezing, and dry and sunny only once or twice! Thank you to anyone who has covered our instruments (and us) with an umbrella. It was very much appreciated!

The band also got quite a few compliments this year! Both for the tunes played and generally for the sound of the band itself. We've had a great band out to most of the events. On a few occasions, we have had 3 or less, which does make it hard work. Bunkfest was both a brilliant and difficult one, as one particular dance spot had awful acoustics, which meant that the dancers could not hear us at all! But, there were some equally great spots! I'd also like to say a special thanks to John Garner for stepping in to play so that I might dance.

Unfortunately, I have only been to make it to one band practice this year due to other commitments with Anstey Morris Men. I will endeavour to be more organised this year and try and make a few more. It always helps when I know what I'm doing!

Looking to the next year, when recruiting more musicians, I think we could do with attracting more box players. This would give us the full Mortimer's band sound, which we miss on occasion, and take the pressure off Chris and myself.

Regarding speed. It might be helpful if the dancers could have a spokesperson rather than individuals letting me know what they thought of the speed. On occasion I have had a few people tell me their thoughts regarding the speed of the last dance – "too fast" "too slow" "great speed" etc. Having all these different opinions does not help me. Please consider this in future.

Finally, a MASSIVE thank you to Keith for all that he does for the band! It is very much appreciated.

Claire Halliday

9th October 2016