Mortimer's Morris AGM - 7th Sept 2014

Minutes

Held at St John's Church Hall, Bilborough. Meeting opened at 10.20am.

Chair – Pat, minute taker – Chris P.

Present: Celia, Chris P, Flora, Fran, Kathryn, Pat, Sarah F, Vicky, Victoria, Yvonne, Anthony, Chris L-J, Keith, Pete M.

Apologies: Gill, Linda, Mary, Sheila, Tanya, Liz, Hazel, Amelia, Ruth, Sarah-Beth, Trevor, and Claire.

Minutes of 2013 AGM: Accepted by all.

Matters arising from them:

Suggested Practice Photo in T-shirts didn't happen.

Skirts - All but two people have turned them up after being measured in practice. It was noted that Sarah Beth is losing baby weight before so doing.

Putting team photos on Flickr - No-one followed up. Sarah F said having them on Facebook seems to be working fine. Meeting agreed.

Beer mats – Kathryn had contact that could be followed up for this year – **Action Keith.**

Spray painting sticks – Chris L-J hasn't had and won't have time to follow up.

Key holders – Currently one person opens and another closes. Seems to work well.

Reports: Given by Squire, Secretary (e-mailed and read out by Pat), Treasurer, Practice Leaders (given by Yvonne) – all are attached. Chris L-J reported on behalf of Band.

Celia suggested no increase in subs, stay at £40 per annum, half price for all full time students, anyone in financial difficulty to approach Squire or committee for help. Also it was agreed to pay Martin the normal £120 per annum for website maintenance - **Action Celia.**

Gifts for retiring Squire (Vicky) and Treasurer (Celia) were presented by Pat after their reports.

Band report: Following a non-quorate meeting at Whitby, the band's current policy on past /resting band members was stated as: "former/lapsed band members should be welcome to re-join/support the band whenever they so wish". They agreed that if former/lapsed band members were unable to attend rehearsals, or turned up at performance/festival unexpectedly, they would still be welcomed, provided a majority of band members present felt that they (the former or lapsed member/s) were "up to date and competent with Mortimer's repertoire". They were happy with the current kit, though they needed to liaise with female band members about their kit (more later in AGM). They agreed that the kit would remain under constant review future alternatives to be considered by the side as a whole before decisions being made. Communication with dancers re speed of play remains problematic, they would prefer to communicate with one person only. Vicky pointed out that normally the dance caller or squire, or at practice the dance leaders would be best. The band would like to thank husbands wives and partners for all their help and support and would appreciate even more!

Pat thanked all the committee members for their hard work throughout the last 12 months.

Election of Officers:

SQUIRE: Sheila Garner – proposed by Celia, seconded by Gill and Linda - elected unopposed. Victoria and Sarah F were also nominated by Linda, but declined their nominations and Gill and Mary jointly volunteered, but withdrew in favour of Sheila. She will return from her travels at the end of October.

PRACTICE LEADERS: Pat and Yvonne jointly are happy to continue in post. No other nominations.

SECRETARY: Liz is happy to continue in post. No other nominations.

TREASURER: Victoria Day – proposed by Pat, seconded by Chris P. Accepted on the proviso that if her PhD takes over Chris P will stand in for her. Elected unopposed.

PUBLICITY: Flora volunteered to help with Twitter, and Sarah F volunteered to do Facebook– proposed by Kathryn , seconded by Vicky. Elected unopposed.

BAND LEADER: Anthony Dudson – proposed by Chris L-J, seconded by Yvonne. Elected unopposed.

Non Committee Officers:

ARCHIVE OFFICERS: Yvonne to continue with physical archives (programmes, wristbands, printed photos etc.) Please give her anything to collect! One or two photos of each event would be lovely – please pass a print of any good ones to Yvonne for archiving. **Action-all!** Celia suggested someone was nominated at each event we attend to write a report for the archives. John G currently has some of the old albums, Tanya has the digital archive. Chris L-J suggested John Pomfret is asked if he would keep an album of 3-4 best photos of each event he attends – **Action Liz?** - Sarah F would put these on Facebook.

KIT OFFICER: Gill happy to continue. Chris to help when needed. Vicky thanked Chris P for her time on maintaining the sticks. Celia presented her with a bottle of wine from the side as a thank you.

Vicky awarded squire's award to Keith - a roll of black gaffer tape for his tireless efforts setting up at campsites etc. Pat seconded these thanks.

Kit:

Yvonne – We trialled having our own pairs of sticks to be responsible for at Whitby. Seemed to work well, but someone still has to carry First aid kit and brollies. People could keep their own sets and be responsible for their refurbishment too!

Band has problems with female kit – Polka dot shirts don't fit curvy anatomy! Vicky stated it was agreed last year that the side would purchase Claire & Lauren's shirts from them to hold in store (no longer in production), they just need to bring them back! Band said kit very expensive, side needs to help subsidise cf. dancer's kit. Chris P suggested ladies wore black shirts and polka dot ties Anthony had found. Bow ties / cravats / hankies also available from same site which might be OK with black for kit. Vicky said an outlet at J28 of M1 did designs available in men's and women's sizes if that helps for future band kit. Celia said we would still have problem of discontinuation. Ruth had found a polka dot shirt that fitted her. Band needs to discuss issue and bring to the side - **Action Band.**

Dancer's Kit Linda has suggested new skirts – as she considered current ones too long and outdated. Most people liked the new standardised length, on a show of hands only 1 dancer wanted to change the skirt – Flora - who said it puts youngsters off joining us, she wanted knee length. Victoria said she hates Persephone's skirts. Both Chris P and Yvonne said how many compliments we'd had on the skirts with their flash of insert in the past dance season and we need to keep the inserts. Fran said inserts need to be central; side inserts make us look fat. Vicky said too much width in skirt bottom will detract from the insert flashing. Fran said we need a design to discuss – **Action all**. Vicky said it's a massive undertaking to make 20+ skirts. Celia asked Flora to illustrate her ideas and design. Flora agreed to this – **Action Flora.** Victoria has a pattern for Silkstone Green's new skirt which has a flounce, waistband and is knee length – will bring in to practice with skirt **- Action Victoria.**

Ruthie has the only outstanding kit from the side now. We have 4 skirts and 3 waistcoats in stock. Waistcoats starting to need attention. Some have very frayed bias edging which needs replacing. Gill has binding for this. Some waistcoats ill-fitting too and some backs very faded. Everyone to bring waistcoats to next practice we may be able to get Winnie who did the last re-vamp to replace the backs – **Action all dancers.** Gill to bring in the spares, spare bias ribbon and spare skirt buttons - **Action Gill.**

Dancing Standards:

Linda asked following points to be raised: Straight lines, looking up and down the set, uniform polka styles and high knees. Celia mentioned sticks- for all the work done in practice we're not improving. Sarah F suggested teacher calls out names at practice during the dance. Victoria said not to be done at dance outs as it puts you off! Kathryn said at Whitby ceilidh spot Rivington and Chilts members had commented on poor sticks. Pat said some members do not respond well to criticism in practice, naming is difficult. Victoria said repeated criticism can be seen as harassment. Yvonne said best way is to look at yourself on videos – there are plenty on YouTube! - **Action all dancers!** Vicky said

sticks and knees are finer points – attendance at practices is most important, we'll never dance as a team unless we practice together! If people are under practised they'll still be thinking about where to go in the figures and not be thinking about their sticks and lines. She was very disappointed at practice attendance this year as stated in her report. Yvonne re-iterated that the "pressure" of prestigious events makes us panic about where we're going etc. due to the nature of the audience. Kathryn said the pressure at Warwick ceilidh spot didn't show but at Whitby it was massive. Sticks should be instinctive muscle memory and this only comes from practice.

Chris P suggested we hire Bilborough dance studio for the start of each day practice through the practice season for the mirrors.

Chris L-J suggested "Dance 4" should be made aware of a prestigious women's morris side (Morts!) in Nottingham, they might mentor us. We could ask for a choreographer to visit or they might send a student with loads of experience to come along. Kathryn to investigate dance studios with mirrors - **Action Kathryn.**

Vicky suggested a short ranting practice at the start of each practice session to help uniformity - **Action Pat & Yvonne.**

Musicians – including relief musicians:

Policy re relief/ returning musicians explained in band report above. What if they're not in kit? Ask them to wear black and offer them loan of a tie? Keith said non kit wearing musicians to stand behind main band. Band needs a meeting to discuss the whole thing – **Action band.** Vicky suggested that it would be a good idea for band to seek dancers perspective on band decisions /changes which might impact on whole team, which would be in keeping with the fact that band is always represented when dance issues are discussed at committee.

Keith asked if the word "autonomous" can be officially dropped, Vicky said constitution needed to be changed for this – band to meet and discuss and feed back to committee - **Action band.**

Practices:

Tanya raised Punctuality. She arrives 7.30pm but often not enough there to dance till 8pm. Please be more punctual - **ACTION EVERYONE.** Sarah F said all must try to **attend** too!

Dates - Vicky said day practice on the 3rd Sunday of the month always loses Dec practice / Shepley festival/ often Easter, so could we move to 2nd Sunday please? Victoria said then we'd get a July practice in before Sidmouth too. No-one at meeting objected but need to check with other members as we're not quorate – **Action Liz.** If in agreement will change from November as beginners practice dates have been set for October. Vicky also suggested earlier starts may help those from further afield attend evening practice more easily. Meeting suggested 7.15 – 9.30pm practices, room fixed price so Celia booking from 7.15 till 10pm and we can decide with others when quorate.

Emails and post-mortems:

Vicky said emailing blanket critiques and post-morteming at public performances impacts adversely on others. She knows of 2 good dancers from a few years back that were put off joining the side as they saw this happening and weren't going to join a side where that happens. (Sarah F said squire and dance leaders should make notes and bring up later at practice.) Group emails were not helpful unless positive. They put the committee under pressure, it's difficult to know whether to answer to the group or to the individual – there's no easy answer. The constitution says in case of grievance in the first instance approach the committee, or a committee member, so the issue can be dealt with without alarming the side and things getting out of proportion. Vicky has had a very unhappy time this year trying to sort things out. Emails can be very dangerous and very unhelpful. They're not a good idea for the first action, but could still be used if unhappy with the committee's response. Yvonne said being squire can be a very lonely and difficult job. The committee aren't judge and jury; they don't have all the answers. They try to keep the peace but things can become very personal. Vicky thanked everyone for responding so well and stopping emails when asked. Victoria said "reply to all" is a terrible thing. Vicky mentioned that other teams do become aware of group emails and they're not good for our image.

Recruitment:

Tanya: The best publicity is to be seen. Victoria: Preferably smiling and enjoying ourselves! Yvonne: We need more local bookings. Chris P: Let's use Beeston next weekend.

Keith: When we have interest in the summer we should invite them to next practice to watch / make tea to encourage them immediately. Give them a phone no. on the back of a card and collect their details. We need to chase up the 4 potential new members we know of – **Action Chris, Amelia, Pat.**

Practices for new recruits: 12th Oct 7.30pm, 19th Oct 12 noon, 26th Oct 7.30pm.

Sarah F to add "Event Poster" to Facebook - **Action Sarah F.**

Chris P to ask Mike to hand out posters next week at Beeston event - **Action Chris P.**

MORTIMER'S WEEKEND of DANCE 2015: Sarah F reported actions so far. 21st birthday to be celebrated **12th-14th June 2015.** They suggest a Sat dance out around Lincoln, after our experiences dancing at Lincoln last June. Newark Council are keen for us to dance there on the Sunday. The hall at North Muskham is booked. We have had acceptances from several sides and the event is happening.

We now need volunteers for a committee – Sarah F will email out for volunteers - **Action Sarah F.**

Sarah F said we need caterers and buses to Lincoln will be expensive. Chris P to enquire re Rachael (previous caterer)'s health - **Action Chris P.** Vicky – we need ideas for promotional gifts to give our guests (like the mugs we were given at Crook). Please forward suggestions – **Action all.**

Pat suggested subsidising members now our account is so healthy. Sarah F said we may need this to pay for caterers, buses, gifts etc. **Action - Day of dance committee to discuss.**

Any Other Business:

Keith – His brother in law is terminally ill so he may have to drop out of next few bookings at short notice if called to his bedside.

Keith – They reviewed the band trying to follow dancers off set as tried at Whitby. It didn't always work. The band felt it was best if they stayed on stage. Vicky said it had sometimes worked really well eg. at Warwick at the end of the ceilidh spot.

Keith – Next practice is on website as 14th Sept after Beeston. Are we holding one? Side consulted, no-one expecting it. **Action Chris P** to change date on website.

Celia – Could we start using whistles in practice to note readiness to dance and time out please? Victoria seconded this - **Action Pat and Yvonne.**

Chris P – Mentioned Persephone's idea of hiring a Dutch barge for a holiday round Friesland, Anthony has contacts for festivals to dance at. There was interest from many to be considered for 2016 - **Action Chris P** to follow up.

Pat thanked everyone for their input to such a productive meeting.

Pat was thanked for chairing the meeting.

Meeting closed 1.20pm(ish).

Squire's Report, September 2014

The past year has been quite an eventful one with many challenges. I cannot thank the rest of the committee enough for the hard work and support that they have given to me and more importantly to the team. Last year the focus was on cohesion and I believe we have built on this by trying to make all members feel equally valued, irrespective of who they are or what they can do.

I have tried to set the dances as fairly as possible, with an emphasis on dancers dancing where they are confident and comfortable, which enables them to develop the finer points of the dance. I feel that this has had a beneficial effect on performances, which have been very well received, especially where we could field sixteens and twelves , resulting in some high profile invitations for 2015.

However, none of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of Pat and Yvonne who have managed to teach most people an extra four dances to performance standard. Their special attention to lines and sticks has paid enormous dividends in these areas.

Disappointingly, their job was rendered more difficult from about April onwards by lower than usual numbers at practice, resulting in slower progress. I hope we can look at the reasons for this today, with a view to a solution.

Another big thank you is due to the band and band leaders. Becoming collectively smaller, its members had to become individually bigger. The majority of them have also practised regularly with the team which has been of great benefit. It is noticeable that the dances which have been done a lot with the band present have become on the whole, more reliable as to speed. I am particularly impressed with the strategies the band has put into place to keep the music together during processions.

Thank you to Liz who spends a lot of time forwarding mails, liaising with organisers and chasing people up. She has devoted an enormous amount of energy in making sure we all know what is happening. Similarly to Celia without whom we would neither have a hall booked, nor money to pay for it.

Finally thanks to all the rest of you. I can't recall a single time when I have had to look for anyone, punctuality has been outstanding and cooperation between you brilliant.

Everybody has done their best. No-one can ask for more. I am sure you will do the same for the next incumbent.

Vicky.

SECRETARY'S REPORT 2013/4

Possible bookings - 33

Accepted:

4 festivals - Bedworth, Southwell, Warwick and Whitby

5 local dance outs/weekends - Black Pig, Victoria Beeston, Plough Sunday, St George's Day and Harthill Well Dressing

1 Braunston Boat Show - £300

1 Hannah's 18th party

1 Dance out in Lincoln (in lieu of our weekend which was cancelled)

Bookings for 2014/5:

Beeston heritage/canal event

Beeston ceilidh

Derby Folk Festival

Sheffield City 40th

Southwell FF

Mortimer's weekend

Sidmouth FF

Committee meetings held 6

Contact list updated

Open day practices in October

TREASURERS REPORT

There has been a comparatively quiet year in terms of financial activity. As you will see subscriptions are down probably due to a fall in members and certain members not yet having paid.

I need some clarification re subscriptions for younger members please.

We are still in a healthy financial state possibly due to the generosity of St. John's low cost hall. I see no reason to increase subs at present. I am afraid to admit that I forgot to renew the P.I. insurance this year, so thank goodness all has been well!.

There is a £50 hall cheque to be cashed and Martin has to be paid. Also 2 members have outstanding expenses to be reimbursed.

May I wish the new treasurer well and I will help if needed.

Ellie Mahon.

Sept 7th 2014.

MORTIMERS MORRIS ACCOUNTS 2013-2014.

INCOME	2014 £	2013 £
SUBSCRITIONS	900.00	1055.00
KIT	10.00	25.62
WEEKENDS	400.50	661.50
XMAS CARDS	46.00	—
PAID BOOKINGS	440.00	550.00
INCOME	1796.50	2295.12
EXPENDITURE	1588.70	1490.04
	+207.80	+805.08

EXPENDITURE	2014	2013
HALL HIRE (INCL BILBOROUGH NEWARK)	420.00	385.00
M.F. SUBS.	45.00	97.00
WEBSITE	295.00	30.00
KIT	—	50.94
GIFTS, PARTY FOODS. MISC.	240.70	214.60
PUBLICITY LEAFLETS	186.00	—
UMBRELLAS	72.00	—
WEEKENDS	330.00	712.50
	1588.70	1490.04

BALANCE 2013

OPENING BALANCE	1868.19.
DEP. A/C.	1131.59.
PETTY CASH.	12.12
	3011.90

BALANCE AT 7th SEPTEMBER 2014

CLOSING BALANCE	2097.01
DEP. A/C (AT MARCH '14)	1132.58.
PETTY CASH.	17.12
	3246.71

A.G.M Sunday September 7th 2014

Practice leaders report.

First of all thanks to everyone for cooperating with 2 practice leaders this last season. We were confident that it could work, and your support and enthusiasm has made our task pleasurable and much easier. Thanks also to all who have taken on the role in our absence.

All the hard work spent on drills for improving lines and stick technique has paid off with plenty of compliments from spectators and other dance teams.

Understandibly sometimes the pressure of performing a prestigious spot can affect the performance, as people are often thinking about the next move and it's then that making eye contact with your partner or checking your position in the set can be forgotten.

As always we need to strive for high knees, precision and an energetic confident display together with evidence of our own enjoyment.

It's been rewarding to see some dances ie. Miners Retreat and Morvan being danced out quite frequently, although some others like West Houghton and Mortimers have fallen by the wayside. Hopefully this can be redressed next season.

We spent a lot of time on Marston and it would be good to see it perfected to performance standard this coming year. This didn't happen due to lack of effort, but because of the unpredictability of attendances at practices.

This next year we need to work on flexibility in moving positions and having a go at calling a dance, there's no better way to memorise the moves than telling others where to go!

Congratulations to Lys for reaching dance out stage with us and also thanks to the band for dealing with the constant challenges we present them with musically.

One last plea, if you've committed to dancing at an event, especially if it's a particularly important one please try to come to the practices leading up to it, as it helps with everyones confidence, team building and good performance.

We've had some cracking dance-outs this year with superb dancing, here's to even more next year.