

North East Early Music Forum (registered charity No. 326282)

Annual General Meeting 10:30am on Saturday 1st November 2008 held at St Aelred's Community Centre, 216, Fifth Avenue, Tang Hall, York, YO31 0PN

1. Apologies

Richander Birkinshaw, Mary Cousen, Tim Down, Anna Shuttleworth

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were generally approved as correct, and signed by the Chair, Graham Coatman.

3. Matters arising

The camping weekend is apparently no longer under consideration.

4. Officers' Reports

Chair:

Graham Coatman's written report forms part of the material submitted to the Independent Examiner for the Charity, and ultimately to the Charity Commission. The next paragraph is a precis.

Graham thanked the retired Chair, Jillian Johnson, and the Committee for assisting with his first year in office. Graham has begun to lead the Committee, with a new aim to attract more members, particularly younger ones, and also to cover as many geographical and early musical areas as we can. He summarised the events of the past year. He noted that the Forum has a large geographical area, one of the smaller memberships, yet one of the most active programmes of events. He reported that the Committee had decided to plan events further ahead than before, and to produce either an annual or, more probably, a bi-annual leaflet detailing the workshops and events for the next period. He also noted that the need for an application deadline further in advance of an event (than the current one week) had become apparent to the Committee. Graham thanked Elisabeth Hedges for carrying out the duties of Arts Council Liaison Officer. She has been busy preparing the Forum's final report to the Arts Council, and making a case for the grant of the final amount of money. He has also attended meetings of the National Early Music Association on behalf of the Forum. He reported on their plans for a national early music newsletter or magazine which would serve to unify the Forums and the movement. Graham ended by thanking the members of the Committee who had stood down during the year for their service, or are to stand down at this meeting: William Marshall as Committee member earlier in the year, Gervais Frykman as ordinary Committee member, Elisabeth Hedges as Arts Council Liaison Officer and Thomas Green as Events Coordinator, though Thomas will continue as Webmaster. He looked forward to another busy and exciting year, with the expectation that we will see the effect of new initiatives, particularly the recruitment of new and younger members, and hoped that some of the membership would volunteer to serve on the Committee.

There was discussion about Graham's announcement of the prospect of an early music magazine. There was general enthusiasm, but Marion Bolton remembered that a commercial similar venture, 'Early Music Today', had folded. The meeting felt that to be successful such a magazine had to be accessible to the general membership, and not entirely targeted at academics.

Secretary:

John Murdie had nothing special to report.

Treasurer:

Bill Hunt had provided copies of the Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended the 30th June, and these were handed to those present. The total receipts for the year were £11,390 and the total payments were £10,909 – a surplus of £482.

Bill reported that a few workshops from the 2007-2008 year had made losses, but the Committee are trying to keep workshop costs down. The Gift Aid income is not yet known, but that we expect that approximately £485 will be given to us in one year's time.

Membership Secretary:

Marion Bolton said that we now had 213 members, with 13 two years in arrears. Alan Radford asked what happened to a member after they did not resubscribe for two years. Marion said that at that point they lost their membership – a scheme inherited from a previous membership secretary, Margaret Swann.

Arts Council Liaison:

Elisabeth Hedges presented a written report, specifically about the ending of the three-year grant from the Arts Council; i) to present nine workshops over three years in new locations in our region; ii) to give bursaries to young musicians to attend three annual residential workshops; and, iii) to create a web catalogue of our collection of printed music. Under i), completed feedback forms were collected from the participants of the workshops. All events but one attracted musicians new to NEEMF, and at all workshops everyone stated their intention to attend more NEEMF events. Where criticism was expressed, it was limited to non-musical aspects such as refreshments and the temperature of the rooms used. Under ii), eight of the nine students given bursaries submitted the requested reports. The students reported that they enjoyed the workshops and would recommend the experience to other students. For some, this was their first experience of early music. Under iii), the Forum paid for design and coding of the Library Catalogue, and subsequently paid a human-computer interface consultant, Richard Butterworth, a small amount to assess its usability, and also asked some ordinary users of the library about their experience. Mr Butterworth identified a number of problems – for instance, the greatest fault identified is inability of the search mechanism to do approximate matching; e.g. the user must spell a composer's name exactly to retrieve the required items. The ordinary users asked all reported that they were satisfied with the library. Elisabeth said that some matters should be addressed: i) the need to attract more young people to workshops; and ii) the need to correct certain aspects of the interface to the web-based Library Catalogue.

Elisabeth concluded by saying that the Committee believed that the Arts Council money had been well spent, and that there is scope for spending some money to improve matters further.

Bill Hunt asked whether the Arts Council were likely to give us the (smaller) bonus grant given where they recognise that the initial amount has been well spent. Elisabeth said that the Committee has produced estimates for the uses planned for this money, and could not see that it would not be granted.

Events Coordinator:

Thomas Green said that he was standing down from this post and, because it is not a Constitutionally-mandated one, the Committee do not propose to refill it. The job had passed to an Events Subcommittee.

Newsletter Editor:

Alison Down thanked everyone who had contributed to the Newsletter. She wishes to give one year's notice of her intended retirement from the post – at the next AGM. She hopes that someone will take over this job. Marion Bolton proposed a vote of thanks to Alison, which John Murdie seconded. All thanked Alison for her work.

Webmaster:

Thomas Green described the website he designed and maintains. It contains a diary of NEEMF and other events, and is the central repository for information about NEEMF. It could be made more glossy now it is established. It has had 465 unique visitors in the last year, with 5,361 hits in total, and 216 people appear to have bookmarked it. The most popular search phrases which find it are: “photo”, “NEEMF”, “music forums”, “how to run a workshop”. He has a graph of the most popular pages – the event diary, the page of other events. Thomas also described NEEMF's Google Discussions mailing list – asking that people wishing to be added should contact him. He has also created a Facebook entry for NEEMF. He has sent Alison an article for publication in the Winter 2008 newsletter describing the online facilities.

5. Election of Officers

John Murdie said that Gervais Frykman, Elisabeth Hedges and Thomas Green were stepping down as ordinary Committee Member, Arts Council Liaison Officer and Events Coordinator, respectively. Gervais' resignation meant that all four ordinary Committee posts were now vacant. Elisabeth's and Thomas's posts were Committee appointments, and would not be refilled. Thomas is to remain as Webmaster. The post of Development Officer remains unfilled, and there have been no nominations.

John had proposed Alan Radford as ordinary Committee member, seconded by Marion Bolton. Alan was voted unanimously to the post.

John Bryan proposed the motion that the rest of the Committee, who were all willing to serve for another year, be re-elected en bloc. Simon Hicks seconded this motion, and the meeting voted unanimously in favour.

6. Proposed Constitutional Change – Professional Fees

The Committee had noted that as it stands, item 6g of the Constitution does not explicitly permit professional fees to be paid to a member of the Committee. The Committee had suggested that the sub-clause “, including professional fees,” be inserted to yield the clause “except in payment of legitimate expenses, including professional fees, incurred on behalf of the Society.” There was discussion which raised the concern that this might not be reconcilable with the rules of the Charity Commission. The Secretary was asked to check if the Commission permitted professional fees to be paid. Janice Coates suggested that, if so, the word “customary” be used to recognise this. Joanna Rowling proposed the motion that the sentence in point 6g of the Constitution should now read “except in payment of legitimate expenses, including customary professional fees, incurred on behalf of the Society.” Henry Woledge seconded the motion, and the vote in favour was carried unanimously.

7. Past and Future Events

Graham noted that the Committee is to move to a calendar of events planned further in advance than has previously been the case for NEEMF. This will permit the production of regularly-appearing printed promotional material, six months rather than one year at a time. Graham also said that the workshop application deadline has also traditionally been one week ahead of the date. This apparently gives rise to a flurry of applications in the last week. Some workshops need more notice than one week in order that the correct number of copies of music be obtained. The Committee suggested that the deadline should become three weeks in advance of the day. Pam Radford opined that this was a little too much, and that a deadline two weeks in advance would be better. Peter Gallant asked if applications after the deadline would be rejected? Graham said, no, they could be accepted at the organiser's discretion. Jo Green proposed that the standard deadline be set at two weeks. Peter Gallant seconded this motion. The meeting carried the motion without dissent.

Patrick Phillips asked the Committee if they would take action to avoid NEEMF workshops clashing with other events he wished to attend: concerts, meetings of the Society of Recorder Players etc. John said that he could not see how it was possible to avoid NEEMF workshops clashing with all events that all NEEMF members might like to attend. John said that if Patrick were to propose a solution to this problem, he thought that the Committee would consider it. Marion Bolton said that we had tried Sunday workshops – some had worked, but we tended to lose applications from singers. Graham said that the Committee does consider the dates of other known early music events to avoid clashes where this is possible, but that it was up to each individual member to choose for themselves what events, NEEMF and non-NEEMF, they most wished to attend.

Thomas drew the meeting's attention to a proposed NEEMF Public Festival Day in June 2009 at which NEEMF members will play for the public at Crook Hall, Durham. NEEMF will not charge an extra entrance fee. He welcomed suggestions for performers.

8. Date of Next Meeting

John Murdie said that the Constitution required us to hold the meeting in October as far as practical. The Committee would announce the date when it could be determined.

9. Any other business

No items had been submitted for consideration under 'Any other business'.

The meeting closed at 12:27.

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting:

Graham Coatman, Chair

