

# Board Matters

Number 43. Our update for members about the activities of the Board and governance of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Issued with EDS magazine, Winter 2020.

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## From the Chair

Well what a year 2020 has been – and not for the right reasons. As I write this, the media brings news of another potential vaccine. It seems reasonable to hope that by next summer, and certainly within 12 months, we will again be dancing and attending live music events in our thousands. But for now, our options are still very limited.

Many club organisers fear that they may not be able to start up again. Professional musicians and dancers, and everyone who works with them, have lost income and have often not been eligible for government support. Most of our individual members do not rely on folk for their livelihood, but – like all of us – are affected in many ways.

We continue to lobby; to campaign; to urge everyone to mobilise for the folk arts.

We are completely dedicated to preserving and developing our shared heritage. If important parts of our cultural life were to be mislaid, purely through lack of use, so much would be lost.

So, thank you to all of you who have contributed to our crisis fundraising campaign. Thanks to your generosity, along with a grant from the National Lottery, we expect to start 2021 in pretty good shape. The next financial year will bring challenges to many organisations, including ours, but we are well prepared for them.

Meanwhile, we do have some things to look forward to. Our adult education will be online again in the spring, meaning that you can join us from your home wherever you live – all you need is an internet connection. We are planning to bring some limited-capacity gigs back to

Cecil Sharp House early in the New Year. We are publishing more teaching and learning resources, free on our website. We are applying for funding to get the necessary equipment and resources to take even more activities online – the switch to digital will be with us for good. Our Folk Educators Group is bigger than ever, and keeping people more connected than ever. And, at every opportunity, we are pressing the decision-makers to think about folk.

We all know many members and friends who have been affected by this awful disease and at this time of year it is time to remember everyone and do all we can to continue to support each other. As a folk community that is what we do.

Wishing you all the best for 2021.

**Lorna Aizlewood Chair**

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## Folk Music Journal online

A notice for Individual, Joint and Group members: Folk Music Journal will soon be available online, with the option to continue receiving it by post. *(Please note, this does NOT apply to Libraries and Institutional members, who will continue to receive all materials by post and not online)*

From early 2021 you will be able to read current and past editions of Folk Music Journal (FMJ) at a dedicated membership-only area on the efdss.org website.

After the introduction of online access, you can continue to receive paper copies of FMJ – but we will no longer post it to members as a matter of course.

**Please let us know if you would like to continue to receive FMJ by post by emailing [info@efdss.org](mailto:info@efdss.org) or by writing to us at the usual address.**

When we introduced an ‘opt out’ option for FMJ last year, many members told us that they would prefer not to receive it.

This further change to make FMJ ‘opt in’ will save more paper, as well as significant printing and distribution costs. It will also mean that we can send more mailings in recyclable paper envelopes, rather than the plastic wrapper which remains by far the most cost-effective way to package a heavy publication with sharp corners.

Your username and password will also give online access to EDS magazine, which will continue to be mailed every quarter.

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## Board Meeting, September

The Board met by Zoom on 19 September 2020. Apologies were received from Alan Davey, Fi Fraser and Lucy Hooberman. The remainder of the Board was present together with the Chief Executive and Company Secretary. Prospective members Robyn Chicot, Martin Parker and Eleanor Telfer had been invited to attend.

The revised minutes of the meeting of 14 March and the minutes of the meeting of 19 June were accepted. There were no matters arising.

The Treasurer reported on the financial situation. Because of the pandemic the Society has lost significant earned income (mainly hires for Cecil Sharp House). The organisation has made good use of the Government's Job Retention Scheme and

has been supported by individual giving through the Crisis Fund and an emergency grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. EFDSS ended the previous financial year (2019/20) with useable reserves of £530k (subject to audit) but because of the aforementioned income, we do not expect to draw down on this reserve significantly in 2020/21.

The prospects for 2021/2 are less certain. The Government Job Retention Scheme is not expected to continue into the next year and earned income is still likely to be significantly lower than in pre-Covid times. Financial scenarios are currently being developed.

The minutes of the GPC meetings on 9 July and 30 July were accepted.

In an effort to bring younger members onto the Board, it was resolved to appoint Martin Parker; and Robyn Chicot and Eleanor Telfer were nominated for election at the AGM.

The Board discussed the Creative Case for Diversity and progress towards achieving a "strong" rating from Arts Council England. The work to do this includes diversifying activities, Trustees and workforce.

It was agreed that the AGM would be held as an abbreviated meeting. It was agreed that changing the articles to allow virtual AGMs should be examined for 2021.

The next meeting will be on Zoom on Saturday 14 November, immediately following the AGM.

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## Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held by Zoom on 14 November 2020.

The meeting accepted the Annual Report and Accounts.

The results of the Board elections were reported. Lorna Aizlewood, Fi Fraser and Andy Wooles had completed a three year term but were eligible to stand again and had done so. In addition Eleanor Telfer and Robyn Chicot had stood for election. As there were five candidates for five vacancies, all were elected unopposed.

Additionally, the Board had made two appointments to the Board. Lucy Hooberman was appointed in March: a motion to confirm her appointment was approved at the AGM. Martin Parker had been appointed in September: as the AGM papers had already been posted out, a motion to confirm his appointment will come to the 2021 AGM. Notes about the new Board members are included below.

The AGM approved motions to set the annual subscriptions and to re-appoint the Society's auditors.

The draft minutes of the AGM will be available on the EFDSS website shortly.

At a Board meeting following the AGM, Lorna Aizlewood was re-appointed as Chair, Alan Davey was re-appointed as Vice-Chair and Ed Fishwick was re-appointed as Hon Treasurer. The members of the General Purposes Committee were appointed: they will be Lorna Aizlewood, Ed Fishwick, Mike Heaney, Sherry Neyhus and Mike Wilson-Jones. A full report of the meeting will be included in the next Board Matters.

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## Welcome to new Board members



**Eleanor Telfer** studied music at City, University of London, graduating in 2014. Since then, she has been performing folk music with particular interests in female representation and clawhammer banjo. She graduated last year with a Masters in Ethnology and Folklore from the University of Aberdeen and is currently working for English Heritage.



**Robyn Chicot** has danced and played around the country for almost 10 years. She began aged 12 as a clog dancer and percussionist, but has since branched out, taking up rapper sword dancing, northwest and border morris. She plays the melodeon in the Bellamira Ceilidh Band and teaches music with Soundpost, as well as studying full-time for a degree in Physics.



**Martin Parker** has been involved in folk music since he was a teenager. He has played in the Leeds-based Roots Alive, the National Youth Folk Ensemble, ceilidh bands and fusion projects. He studies Maths at Oxford University and is interested in introducing the folk arts to new people through teaching and organising events.