



Board Matters

Number 44. Our update for members about the activities of the Board and governance of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Issued with EDS magazine, Spring 2021.

From the Chair

First, apologies for the slightly delayed appearance of EDS this month. Our designer has been laid low with the virus, and was not able to work for several weeks. We are pleased to hear that he is now on the slow path to recovery.

Our survey back in the summer revealed just how difficult many of us have been finding it to relinquish some of our very favourite activities. Online activities have compensated – and no doubt many of these will continue well after Covid restrictions have been lifted, to the benefit of the many people who for a variety of reasons are not able to attend live events. But they are not quite the same.

After twelve long months of living with Covid, finally we have some more positive news. We can tentatively look forward to the return of activities over the next few months. We must remember that the government's 'road map' is provisional, and merely gives the earliest possible dates when easing will be lifted. But if all goes well we can hope to enjoy live music (with restrictions) from around 17 May. No earlier than 21 June should see Step 4 and the removal of all legal limits on social contact. We should then be able to dance again, as well as attending gigs without distancing between households. Fingers crossed!

At the English Folk Dance and Song Society we continue to plan for the future of the organisation and of the folk arts as a whole – in the immediate, middle-term and long-term.

Most immediately, we have been working with Orchestras for All in support of their vision is 'to break down barriers to the life-changing experience of ensemble music-making for 11–18 year olds'. Together we have published a comprehensive (no fewer than 43 films and supporting materials!) training resource on Learning by Ear. It is online now at efdss.org and is free for everyone to use, in any educational context. These skills are central to folk music, of course, and they are also highly relevant in many other music-making contexts – so this is a great way to bring folk music to a new groups of teachers and young people who may well not have considered it before now.

Also online, our Chief Executive and Artistic Director Katy Spicer has recorded two popular *Folk Folk* conversations – 'with folk, talking about folk', and more are planned. These discussions are building into a fascinating picture of folk music and dance in England today. You can find them at efdss.org/folk-folk and on YouTube.

Our Folk Educators Group has celebrated its first ten years, over which time it has expanded from 30 to over 350 members. We have relaunched as the Folk Education Network, in reflection of its increasing reach and relevance for anyone who is involved or interested in folk education, in any capacity.

Looking ahead a bit further, we have secured a grant of £196,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation's Weston Culture Fund which will help us to restart work, to refresh activities and to re-engage audiences following Covid-19 closures. We'll be investing some of this on critical adaptations and improvements to digital infrastructure, most notably the installation of a sophisticated multi-camera video streaming set-up in Cecil Sharp House that will mean that we can share selected activities to audiences around the world. It will also fund the commission of a new performance work from our Associate Company, Folk Dance Remixed, and other support to artists.

Thanks to the ongoing commitment of our members, we can continue to plan and to embark upon new projects. As always, your support is greatly appreciated.

Lorna Aizlewood Chair

Board Meeting, November 2020

The Board met by Zoom on 14 November 2020 following the Annual General Meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Roud. All other Board members were present.

Lorna Aizlewood was unanimously re-elected as Board Chair and Alan Davey was unanimously re-elected as Vice-Chair. Ed Fishwick was unanimously reappointed as Hon Treasurer.

The composition of the General Purposes Committee was reviewed. Lorna Aizlewood, Ed Fishwick, and Sherry Neyhus were appointed as Board members on the GPC. Mike Heaney and Mike Wilson-Jones were appointed as non-Board Members of the GPC. The Board did not delegate any powers to the GPC.

The Chief Executive updated the Board on fundraising and live performance. It is hoped to be able to present live performance at CSH from February. All education, library and training activities will remain online but it is hoped that the youth education ensembles will begin meeting in person from February also.

The Treasurer reported that the effects of the covid restrictions have not been as bad as feared earlier. The reserves, cashflow and cash balance all remain healthy and the Society is a going concern.

The Chief Executive had previously circulated her report of activities since the last meeting and added only that at the Folk Education Development Day there had been live captioning. There were no questions on the report.

The Board discussed the diversity of EFDSS – activities, artists/tutors, staff and board; this is now a standard item on the agenda. It was agreed that Unconscious Bias training for the Board and staff would be useful. The Board composition will be discussed as part of the annual skills audit in March.

The appointment of a new President following the resignation of Shirley Collins was discussed. The Chair will draw up terms of reference to clarify the role of the president and it was suggested that the appointment of a President should be for a fixed term.

The Secretary reported that the different arrangements for the AGM because of Covid restrictions had worked out well and thanked the staff involved.

The next meeting will be on Saturday 20 March 2021.

Choose to receive Folk Music Journal by post

A reminder 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)

You will soon 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 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 go towards counterbalancing significant increases in printing and distribution costs over past years: for example the price of a standard second-class stamp has gone up by 83% since 2011, whereas the rate for individual membership has increased by only 36%. It will also mean that we will be able to change over from plastic to recyclable paper envelopes in more of our mailings.

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