

Board Matters

Number 48. 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 2022**.

From the Chair

It is so good to see so many adverts for summer festivals in the Spring edition of English Dance & Song! It provides yet more evidence that activities are continuing to return, as we get more used to living with Covid in the 'new normal'. What a joy it is to face the conundrum again of working out which festivals to attend. At EFDSS, our National Youth Folk Ensemble will be performing in August at Purbeck Valley Folk Festival in Dorset and Folk East in Suffolk, and the Society expects also to curate its regular concert series for up-and-coming artists at Sidmouth Folk Festival.

But before then, more and more dancing activities are being submitted for listings in The Folk Dance Calendar. Wherever you live around England you should now have an excellent chance of finding a dance that suits your requirements on our new crowd-sourced resource. If you are looking for online dances, you will also find plenty of options. The Folk Dance Calendar invites events listings from everyone who organises dances, and was developed in collaboration with the good people who for many years managed the Set and Turn Single listings.

If you organise dances and are looking to reach new people, I strongly encourage you to register (without charge) at efdss.org/account and to submit all of your events to The Folk Dance Calendar. As a member of the English Folk Dance

and Song Society, you have an added incentive to create an online account, as the same log-in process can be used to access our members-only content – including digital access to EDS and many decades of articles in Folk Music Journal.

Perhaps you are one of the many people who have got out of the habit of regular dancing since the pandemic? Do please put your postcode into The Folk Dance Calendar and specify how far you are prepared to travel – you may be pleasantly surprised to discover what is on offer.

The new edition of EDS also includes a feature on the importance of safeguarding in the folk arts. If you organise activities, or if you volunteer or work at any events, you have important obligations towards looking after all participants. Safeguarding is not only about children, or about adults who are obviously vulnerable – for example, accounts are appearing right now in the media about female folk musicians in Scotland who have been subjected to disgraceful sexual harassment. We know that no area of society is immune to behaviour of this sort. We are pleased that EFDSS members can now take advantage of a special reduced rate for the excellent safeguarding resources which Brass Bands England have produced for their own members. The multi-generational and informal teaching and learning environment of brass banding has many similarities with the folk world.

In other news, the National Youth Folk Ensemble will again be bringing the joy of folk to young instrumentalists through Open Days in Manchester, Exeter and London in May. We are also presenting a new series of Folk Experience Days with education hub partners, in which expert tutors will introduce student musicians to English folk music. For many of these young people, this will be their first meaningful experience of folk. Over the past year or so we have published several new free online resources which help teachers to use playing by ear, and other central elements of folk music, in their day-to-day teaching. All of these initiatives are bringing folk to new and receptive audiences.

Thank you to all members who have contributed to the consultation about a possible name change. You can read more overleaf about the next steps in these ongoing discussions: and do please be assured that all views are being very seriously considered.

Finally, a reminder that the Society relies on generous donations to fund many of its activities (only around 9% of our income in the past financial year came from membership fees). If you could consider joining me in making a regular monthly donation, you would be making a huge investment in the future of folk.

Lorna Aizlewood Chair

Board Meeting, November 2021

The Board met at Cecil Sharp House at the conclusion of the AGM. Apologies were received from Ayub Khan and Martin Parker.

Lorna Aizlewood was re-elected as Chair. Alan Davey was re-elected as Vice-Chair. Ed Fishwick was re-appointed as Hon Treasurer.

The General Purposes Committee for the next year was appointed and will consist of Lorna Aizlewood, Ed Fishwick, Mike Heaney, Nicola Kearey, Sherry Neyhus and Martin Parker plus the Chief Executive and Finance Director.

The Treasurer reported that the auditors have confirmed that EFDSS is a going concern. He reported that the figures to October 2021 were on track and income from venue hire was higher than had been predicted.

There has been some expenditure on the boilers at Cecil Sharp House which will reduce NOx emissions significantly and is part of our continuing plans to improve our green footprint.

The development of the Gold Badge awards were discussed. The terms of reference of the Gold Badge panel have been revised to widen the range of people who could be nominated and to widen the expertise in judging the nominations.

There was discussion on the consultation on the possible name change. An article had been published in the September edition of EDS magazine and a survey of the members has been begun.

Gold Badge Nominations

Each year a special committee considers whether – and, if so, to whom – Gold Badges should be awarded by the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

The Gold Badge is awarded to people who have made unique or outstanding contributions to the folk arts (dance, music or song), and/or who have given exceptional support in furthering the aims of the Society.

This year we are celebrating the centenary of the first Gold Badges, which were awarded to Lady Mary Trefusis and Mrs Dudley Hervey. In 1923 awards were made to Cecil Sharp and William Kimber.

Nominations can be made by anyone and at any time, but are normally considered in the spring, with awards announced in the autumn. **This year's closing date for nominations is 1 April 2022.**

Any nominations should be sent either by email to secretary@efdss.org or by post to EFDSS, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 7AY. Nominations should have a proposer and a seconder, along with reasons and evidence for the suitability of award.

More details about the awards and the nominations process can be found at efdss.org/gold-badges

Continuing consultations about our name

Thank you to every member who has contributed to the ongoing consultation about the name of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. The consultation period was extended after problems with the Royal Mail's delivery of the printed version, and the eventual deadline has only just passed as we are preparing this edition of Board Matters.

We received a total of 646 responses. Around 33% of members who hold a personal membership (Individual,

Joint, etc) have contributed, and 17% of Associate (group) members. It will take some time to analyse the results in detail, and a full breakdown will appear in the June edition of Board Matters. If you would like to receive the report as soon as it is available, please make sure that we have an email address recorded for you on our systems.

The consultation with members is by no means the end of this process. It is important that we seek as wide a range of

views as possible, from everyone who has a stake in the future of our organisation. By the time you are reading this, a wider consultation will be underway. Crucially, this will include asking the views of people who are not currently interacting with the Society as much as we would wish.

This is an important matter and no decisions have been made yet. We look forward to sharing future discussions with our members.