

Minutes of Quarterly Meeting

Tuesday 17th April 2007 6.30pm

At The Cluny, Ouseburn Valley

Apologies: Kate Beasley, Janet Overton, Lorna Moore

Present: Paul White, Ben Blatherwick, Chris Maines, Mick Curran, Erica Halliday, Ema Wright, Anne Flood, Judith Rust



The minutes of the last meeting were not available for review, so Chris started with news of the Arts Council funding application.

ARTS COUNCIL GRANT

We had applied for £6,000/year for three years, but were awarded £6.3K for this year only – 90% now and the remaining 10% upon completion of a monitoring for at the end of the year. Still quite pleasing, as it gives breathing space to continue activities and look at other revenue options – especially as Arts Council funding has been cut back substantially this year.

Other possibilities were noted:

- LloydsTSB foundation
- Neighbourhood fund
- Youth Music

The Northern Rock Foundation unfortunately does not support amateur groups.

As part of the funding application, it was proposed that groups run over a 48 week year, which would include most of the summer holiday period. Numbers may go down at this time, but it is important to keep regular groups going, as there are many more performance possibilities over the summer. The realistic target for numbers was thought to be 45 during term time and 25 during holiday time, which would provide enough income to justify the extra sessions. Ben, in his role as Treasurer, reported the average 'take' in the three weeks before the Easter break had been £118 which is acceptable in terms of medium term revenue, but we need to take every opportunity to get new people along and encourage existing members to come regularly.

ARTS AWARDS SCHEME

The offering of the 'Arts Awards' scheme was vital in securing the Arts Council funding, but there were costs attached:

- Pack costs
- Exam fees
- Administration

These were expected to amount to £750 in the coming year. Chris noted that the Arts Awards website had a map of providers and he would follow this up to make sure it linked to group website. It was

noted that even after these additional costs, and tutor fees, there was enough money in the bank now to set aside £250 for repairs and maintenance to kit, and some £300 to secure Public Liability insurance for the group. Paul White offered to get a quotation for this.

HEARING DAMAGE

Mick once again raised the importance of hearing protection, and the possibility of committee liability in the event of a group member suffering hearing damage. After a vote, it was agreed that the wearing of ear defenders should be compulsory for all children, and that adult members would be canvassed as to their opinions, so we could revisit the issue for a more informed discussion at the next meeting. In the meantime, it was suggested a mailing list post advising group members of the potential dangers, and that in future all new members would sign a disclaimer on the membership form, saying they understood the risks and would not hold the group or committee liable.

CASH FLOW AND CONCESSIONARY PRICING

It was felt that some group members were not paying the full rate, when perhaps they should be. Of course, all need to be aware of concessions, and we don't want to price people out of attending, but what proof should be required? NUS and Priority City Card were suggested as the easiest unambiguous way to demonstrate low income, without being too intrusive. Erica suggested providing PCC application forms at sessions, so no-one need miss out if they were eligible – Ema to send out a mailshot advising people that in future proof would be required, as revenues were suffering. It was further agreed that the concessionary price would be held at £2/session, while those who could afford it would be asked to pay £4 – a rise of 50p – which would raise an extra £500 or so over the year. It was also suggested by Chris that a 'family ticket' be introduced, so that no one family would have to pay more than £10 per session. This was agreed.

SUMMER PERFORMANCES

The Stockton Festival was definitely on for this year, and a booking in Alnwick in August. We are also awaiting confirmation of date in July – Chris to supply dates and times when confirmed to Ema, to update the website. It had been proposed that 3 gigs and 6 busking events per year would be a target, both for fund raising purposes, and to fire the enthusiasm of members for live performance.

Any other business :

Chris reported a disappointing outcome from the various school visits undertaken by the tutors. Although the sessions had gone down well, only one additional drummer had joined!

A number of enquiries had been made about T-shirts. It was doubted very much that any funding or sponsorship could be had to produce these, but felt that the members would be able and keen to purchase them, if offered at cost price. Chris offered to look into pricing, with a suggestion that £4 each was realistic on a run of 100 shirts. Paul offered to mock up some colour schemes for the group members to look at and decide their favourite colour combination.

The date for the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 17th July at the Bluebell in Sandyford.

The chair declared the meeting closed at approx 8.15pm