



# Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association

Established 1947

[www.edinburghfestivalguides.org](http://www.edinburghfestivalguides.org)

Patron: The Lord Provost  
of The City of Edinburgh

## MINUTES OF THE 67th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING The City Chambers, 25 March 2015

### 1 WELCOME FROM THE COMMITTEE

Kate Dick (Chairman) opened the AGM at 7.00pm and welcomed the attendees. She confirmed that the Lord Provost was scheduled to arrive at 8.15 and that usual buffet would be served at that time.

### 2 APOLOGIES

Thirty five (35) members and two (2) guests were present.

Apologies were received from twenty one (21) members, many of whom sent their good wishes:- Jack Aitken, Andrew Broom, Hamish Coghill, Dorothy Crisp, Pat Crombie, Andy Dawson, Gordon Drysdale, Dorothy Ellen, Barbara Gibbons, Joyce Granger, Robin McGregor, Peter Hamilton, Kate McMillan, Laura McMurdo, Sandy Macpherson, George Porteous, Richard Richardson, Neil Shaw, Winnie Scott, Derek Stryjski, Bill Thompson.

### 3 MINUTES OF AGM 2014

All attendees confirmed that they had received a copy of the 2014 Minutes by either email or post. There were no comments. Acceptance of the 2104 Minutes was proposed by John Thompson and seconded by Gordon Stewart.

### 4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Kate read her Annual report, a copy of which is given below.

*Welcome to the 67th AGM of the EFVGA.*

*Once again, this event is being held in the City Chambers.*

*We wish to thank the Lord Provost, Donald Wilson and his staff for their help and support for this event, the evening talks during the month of August and our use of the Pendolino Room during the Festival.*

*As you will see from George Laing's report the number of visitors who took walks with us was down in 2014.*

*The committee are trying to improve the situation i.e. new outlets for flyers, online with our listing on Trip Advisor.*

*Any other suggestions from our Guides would be gratefully considered.*

*Our Christmas Soiree, held at Riddle's Court, was a great chance for guides and friends to meet up and chat over some refreshments. Many thanks to those who attended.*

*Kathleen Hart's financial report shows our bank balance remaining very healthy.*

*Many thanks to Olive Morrison for auditing the accounts.*

*May I once again thank the committee for their help and suggestions offered at meetings during the past year.*

*Please note that the dates for the Fringe and Festival are running in tandem this year*

*7 to 31 August.*

Kate then expanded on what we are planning to do to increase our business during the Festival. Essentially the Committee is proposing to use Edinburgh Arts and Entertainment (EAE) to distribute flyers throughout, or in specific areas, of the city. She reminded the floor that one of the reasons for our drop in numbers was extra competition. This in itself, we can accept but what we can't accept is 'unqualified' guides giving the profession a bad name by relating inaccurate or just plain wrong information to visitors. We will consider speaking to the appropriate authorities to see what can be done about this.

Kate assured the floor that, although the Christmas 2014 Soirée was the last to be held in Riddle's Court for a few years, we will identify a new venue for 2015 and teasingly enquired if anyone had a house big enough to hold the event

## **5 TREASURER'S REPORT**

A copy of the Accounts is given at the end of this report.

There were no comments during the meeting. Treasurer Kathleen Hart reported that the accounts remained healthy with a surplus of £1.55 for the year ending 31 Dec 2014.

Kathleen then highlighted some of the entries. Riddle's Court had two payments because the 2013 invoice was late in arriving. The website payment is higher than last year because one of the items is biennial. It will drop again next year.

To conclude her report Kathleen thanked Olive Morrison for auditing the accounts and presented a gift to Olive to record our appreciation.

Acceptance of the 2014 Minutes was proposed by Kenny Law and seconded by Gill Davidson.

## **6 COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

Secretary George Laing intimated that two members of the Committee, Murray Carmichael and Gordon Stewart were retiring, Murray after 6 years' service and Gordon because of ill health.

On behalf of the Association, George thanked Murray for his contribution and work particularly that concerning the Fringe, mentioning that Murray was the man who ensured that our entries were successfully inserted into the Fringe programme and on its website.

Similarly George thanked Gordon for his work and contribution, particularly as training co-ordinator. Most importantly, and on behalf of the Association, George wished Gordon the best of health in the future.

In so far as the elections are concerned there were no intimations of nominees for the two vacant positions. Therefore Maureen McMillan and Richard Richardson, both of whom agreed to be nominees, were elected unanimously.

George then took the opportunity of advising the floor that in 2016, the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Treasurer would be retiring after 6 years and in 2017 likewise the Secretary.

## **7 GUIDES**

George reported that we have approximately 60 active and 30 honorary guides. Additions to the active membership are just matching transfers to the honorary list and it is becoming more and more difficult to schedule our August tours with this number of guides. Occasionally we have had to run with fewer than we want hoping that we can cope on the day. Although the Committee member on duty will step in if required that is not always possible.

George then made a plea for attendees to persuade family, friends and colleagues to become trainee guides. It is a fact that most of our guides are retired professional people and, from experience, these are the ideal candidates.

From the floor, Ann Dewar suggested that contacting historical societies might be a useful source. This will be taken up. Gill Davidson suggested cancelling Saturday and Sunday tours but this will not solve the problem. Another suggestion was that of advertising in libraries and we will consider this.

## **8 CITY CHAMBERS**

Although already included in her Chairman's report, Kate again recorded her thanks to the Lord Provost for allowing us to use the Pendolino Room in the City Chambers, for attending our AGM and for his general support throughout the year.

## **9 TOURS**

George intimated that the Committee has decided to increase the charge for our out-of-season tours from £3.00 (£1.00 under 17) to £5.00 and £2.00 respectively. This met with universal approval. Some discussion was then entered into regarding the suggestion of splitting the Royal Mile tour into two – Castle to Netherbow and Netherbow to Palace. John Gorrie promoted many of the advantages of this, not least that of encouraging customers to return for the 'other half'.

For 2015 we will advertise split Royal Mile tours for out-of season business but retain our current Royal Mile tour for free Fringe business.

We will continue to offer tours of the Grassmarket, Greyfriars and the New Town for out-of-season business only.

For any guides who would like to lead these tours, sample walks will be arranged over the next month or two.

## **10 ILLUSTRATED TALKS PROGRAMME 2015**

George intimated that the 2015 programme of free illustrated talks to be held in the City Chambers is now fixed. The details are as follows:-

### **Thursday 13 August Eric Melvin 'Edinburgh and the Act of Union 1707'**

The story of Edinburgh at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the events which led up to the historic 1707 Act of Union of Parliaments and how the Act was received in Scotland and in England.

### **Wednesday 19 August Iain McIntyre 'Morbid Curiosities'**

A look inside the Surgeons' Hall Museum, its past, present and future. Since its foundation in 1697, visitors to Surgeons' Hall Museum have ranged from those wishing to learn about the human body or the history of surgery to those simply curious about the morbid displays. After a multi-million pound upgrading the museum reopens in September 2015

### **Tuesday 25 August Hamish Coghill 'My Edinburgh'**

A personal odyssey of Auld Reekie, its beauty, its history, its characters, its literature, its nooks and crannies and its life-time attraction.

### **Monday 31 August Derek Wilson 'Edinburgh in the Movies'**

An illustrated exploration of the city as a location for film and television. The setting and architecture of Edinburgh have long appealed to film-makers. Derek examines the relationship between film and the city and goes on a geographical, historical and cinematic tour, taking in the sights and sites with occasional diversions into literature, finance and politics.

## **11 HISTORY FESTIVAL**

Kate outlined our poor experience with the 2014 History Festival essentially due to poor management and publicity on the part of the organisers. The very small profit of just a few pounds was not worth the effort of organising guides and the effort of guides turning out to find, at best, just 2 or 3 customers and often none. It is unlikely that we will take part in 2015.

## **12 AOCB**

There was no 'AOCB' from the floor.

Kate raised the following topics:-

### **12.1 RMBA subscription £50.00**

The Royal Mile Business Association (RMBA) has been in existence for two years and we have been members since its inception. Until now membership has been free but RMBA now feel it's time to impose an annual charge of £50.00. The Committee feel that this a good organisation of which to be a

member mainly due to its networking opportunities and our ability to be involved in whatever is happening in the Royal Mile. The Committee recommended acceptance and this was agreed by the floor.

## **12.2 Sandeman Tours**

Seonaid reported that Sandeman have rebranded themselves as 'New Edinburgh Tours' and have produce snazzy new brochures. The fact remains that their guides are not well trained and still give 'professional;' guides a bad name. We plan to enquire if anything can be done to prevent untrained or badly trained guides from leading tours.

## **13 CLOSE AGM**

Kate closed the AGM at 7.45 asking the attendees to relax until the Lord Provost arrived at 8.15. To pass a few minutes George mentioned that he and Kate had attended the RMBA AGM the previous evening.

After the AGM, which was even quicker than ours, we were given a (free) lesson on whisky blending and allowed to name and take home our efforts. Now this only happened because the AGM was held in the Whisky Heritage Centre but George tried to use it to encourage guides to join the Committee and take advantage of those little extras

## **14 CIVIC RECEPTION**

The Lord Provost arrived at 8.15 prompt and was welcomed by George, Kate and Kathleen.

In his address from the lectern the Lord Provost said, as always, how grateful he was, on behalf of the City, for the time and effort given by our guides in promoting Edinburgh to visitors from all over the world. "Without the Festival Guides, the Festival would not be the same."

On this occasion the Lord Provost brought along another Town Flag, which he had found in one of the many rooms in the City Chambers and told us a little about it.

Colin replied, on behalf of the guides, by thanking the Lord Provost for attending and for granting us use of the room with a generous buffet. As usual Colin, knowing the the Lord Provost was training to run a marathon teased him, by saying he though he looked a little trimmer." Two stones trimmer" replied the Lord Provost.

Colin then asked the Lord Provost to present guide badges to our new guides Val Baker, John Gorrie, Bernard Heavie and Mike Lewis. Regrettably, Lyndsey Rae, and Toby Williams were unable to attend. Congratulations were given to all in the usual way.

Photographs were taken by our resident photographer Seonaid Martin and these will be published in due course.

The Lord Provost then joined the guides to enjoy the wine and buffet and people left for home at various times during the evening.

George Laing

Honorary Secretary  
Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association  
29 March 2015

# EDINBURGH FESTIVAL VOLUNTARY GUIDES ASSOCIATION

## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st December 2014

2013

RECEIPTS	£	£	£
Walks and talks		1,679 84	1,570 13
PAYMENTS			
Rent	100 00		80 00
Postage	78 27		138 20
Stationery	13 50		54 91
Advertising	301 20		295 20
Leaflets	175 00		344 00
Gift tokens	100 00		100 00
Riddles Court 2013	250 40		159 00
Riddles Court 2014	338 40		00 00
Catering 2014	83 81		185 10
Donation World Heritage	100 00		100 00
Sundries	28 87		00 00
History Festival Edinburgh	40 00		00 00
Signs	00 00		45 60
Website	71 84		43 06
		1,678 29	1,545 07
Surplus for the year		1 55	25 06

## STATEMENT OF FUNDS

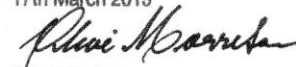
Bank of Scotland		
as at 31st December 2013	3,226 63	3,201 57
Surplus for the year	1 55	25 06
	<u>3,228 18</u>	<u>3,226 63</u>

Represented by balance		
at bank 31st December 2014	<u>3,228 18</u>	<u>3,226 63</u>

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have examined the books and records of the Association and have to report that the Receipts and Payments Account gives a true and fair view of the year's transactions and that the statement of funds is correct

EDINBURGH  
17th March 2015

  
Olive Morrison  
S.L.A