



Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association

Established 1947
www.edinburghfestivalguides.org

Patron: The Lord Provost
of The City of Edinburgh

MINUTES OF THE 69TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING The City Chambers, 22 March 2017

1 WELCOME FROM THE COMMITTEE

Kate Dick (Chairman) opened the AGM at 7.05 pm to allow any latecomers to arrive. On behalf of the Committee Kate welcomed the attendees to this her last AGM as Chairman and thanked them for coming despite the dreadful weather conditions.

She confirmed that the Lord Provost was scheduled to arrive at 8.15 and that the usual buffet would be served after his address.

2 APOLOGIES

Twenty-six (26) members were present.

Apologies were received from nineteen (19) members, many of whom sent their good wishes:-

Jack Aitken, Gladys Bain, Fiona Beveridge, Fiona Brownlee, Gill Davidson, Barbara Gibbons, John Gorrie, Seonaid Martin, Laura McMurdo, Eric Melvin, Betty Milton, George Porteous, Richard Richardson, John Robertson, Ann Runnals, Neil Shaw, Derek Stryski, Bill Thompson, Colin Young.

3 MINUTES OF AGM 2016

All attendees confirmed that they had received a copy of the 2016 AGM Minutes by email or post.

There were no comments.

Acceptance of the 2016 Minutes was proposed by Sandy Cameron and seconded by Kenny Law.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Kate read her Annual Report, a copy of which is given below:

As I and the other office bearers prepare to hand over the reins of the Committee to 'fresh blood' I would like to offer them my support and best wishes for the future of the Guides.

Financially, the Guides are in a very healthy position, however a considerable portion of this money is required annually to promote and advertise walks, talks etc. as competition from other organisations continues to increase on an annual basis.

We are fortunate that new Guides are joining us annually thanks to the training programme overseen by Seonaid Martin and voluntary mentors.

*Many thanks to Richard Richardson for auditing the accounts.
May I once again thank the Lord Provost Donald Wilson and the Staff at the City Chambers for their help and support during Festival events in August as well as the AGM in March.*

On a personal note, I would like to give my sincere thanks to George Laing, Secretary, and Kathleen Hart, Treasurer, for their unstinting support during my 7 years as Chairman of the EFVGA.

2017 is the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the EFVGA. Please come and join us at the Dinner being held in the Overseas Club on May 26th 2017 to celebrate this occasion. More information will be forthcoming from Sandy Cameron in the near future.

*Best wishes,
Kate Dick.*

5 TREASURER'S REPORT

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

Treasurer Kathleen Hart reported that the accounts remained healthy, with a surplus of £284.02 for the year. She then highlighted some of the entries.:
Receipts from Walks and Talks were up by £292.39. Payments for Netherbow Catering were down by approximately £200, largely due to the generosity of individual members. The Netherbow Centre was more expensive to hire than Riddles Court (currently unavailable for restoration work); but generally agreed to be a good substitute. The cost of leaflet printing and distribution was down by approximately £200.

The balance in our Bank of Scotland Account as at 31st December 2016 was £3106.30.

Kathleen thanked Richard Richardson for again auditing the accounts.

Acceptance of the 2016 Report was proposed by Christine Stevenson and seconded by John Thompson.

6 COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

7 Secretary George Laing intimated that, as no further nominations for the vacant seats on the Committee had been received by Friday 17th March, the situation outlined in the 2017 AGM notice was confirmed. That is:

8

Office Bearers

The following Office Bearers would be retiring in March 2017:

Chairman	Kate Dick	7 years
Treasurer	Kathleen Hart	7 years
Secretary	George Laing	6 years

These positions would be taken by the following, all of whom had given their agreement:

Christine Stevenson	currently Deputy Chairman, would become Chairman
Eric Melvin	would become Deputy Chairman
Richard Richardson	currently Auditor, would become Treasurer

George asked those present to encourage any friends who might like to train to be a guide, to contact Richard Richardson or any member of the Committee.

8 WEBSITE

Mike reported. He had recently been giving the website a 'facelift'. He had expanded the content and tried to make the wording more persuasive (but avoiding the "hard sell".) The pages now worked properly on mobile devices such as phones and tablets, important because around half of all internet access was now on such devices. He'd also tried to improve the site's rankings in search engines such as Google, which hopefully would bring us more website traffic and therefore more clients.

The "guides only" section was now up and running again. It included lots of useful information such as tips for giving tours. This part of the site is password-protected. Every guide should have received a password; but if not, he should be contacted.

Mike asked the guides to contact him with any problems or suggestions.

9 ILLUSTRATED TALKS PROGRAMME 2017

Maureen reported. The list of planned talks could be seen on the website and in our March Newsletter. It was as follows:

Friday 4 August	Hamish Coghill: "My Friend Pluffy" William Playfair, Architect (1790-1857)
Thursday 10 August	Eric Melvin: "John Kay, Caricaturist (1742-1826) A unique record of social life during the Scottish Enlightenment
Monday 16 August	Dr Walter Stephen: "A Dirty Swindle": Scotland and the Great War
Tuesday 22 August	Arran Johnston: "The Battle of Prestonpans, 1745"

10 FLYERS

EFVGA commissioned a competition for Napier University graphic design students to design a new flyer. There were 23 entries. The winner and three runners-up all received prizes. We now own the copyright and can update the flyer as necessary.

11 FUTURE BASE

The Council elections in May may produce a new Lord Provost and there is no guarantee that he or she will be sympathetic to our cause.

If we are forced into finding a new base, this will have to be done by the end of the calendar year, as we are committed to stating our base in the Fringe brochure; this has to be done by February each year.

Committee

9 Gladys Bain
Seonaid Martin
Betty Milton

had completed 6 years and were retiring.

4 of the 6 vacant posts would be taken by the following:

Vic Aitken, Bernard Heavie, Kenny Law and Jan Wallace.

This left the Committee 2 short of its maximum of 14. The office Bearers could, at their discretion, co-opt up to 2 additional members.

Thanks

On behalf of the Association George wished to thank Kate and Kathleen who had served long beyond their terms;

Christine, Eric, Richard, Sandy, Mike and Maureen for agreeing to take on the Office Bearing roles.

He also wished to thank Gladys, Seonaid and Betty, all of whom had served several terms on the Committee, for their hard work and commitment over the past years, and especially Seonaid, who had also served as Deputy Chairman and training officer.

Finally he wished to welcome Vic, Bernard, Kenny and Jan to the Committee. He was sure they would enjoy, as we all did, working for the Association. He was sorry he wouldn't be able to work with them.

7 GUIDES

Deaths

George was sorry to announce the deaths within the last year of Joyce Wallace and John Smith. John was known for having written books on local history. At one point he had carried the torch for the Commonwealth Games. All present observed a minute's silence in honour of Joyce and John.

Resignations

Sid Caplan, Graham Morton and Toby Williams.

This left 52 active and 31 Honorary guides.

With around 50 guides it was proving difficult, if not impossible, to schedule our August tours programme fully. At present we had around 10 under training.

We were delighted to welcome four new guides to our ranks: Caroline Castle, Brian Currie, Darrin Green and John Robertson. If present at this meeting, they would receive their badges from the Lord Provost at the Civic Reception to follow; otherwise they would receive them privately at a convenient time.

We've tried everywhere in the Royal Mile, especially the Castlehill area.: Cannonball House, Weaving Centre, Hub, Quaker Meeting Room, Church, pubs, and Gladstone's Land. A possibility is to change our procedures and work without a base.

12 70TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER: FRIDAY 26TH MAY

Christine who was in overall charge of the arrangements, reported.

Sandy, the incoming General Secretary, had prepared drafts of an invitation letter and application form. These were duly discussed and amended. They would be sent out to all members by Friday 14th April, with replies and payment to reach Richard by Friday 5th May.

13 AOCB

Sandy Macpherson thanked the volunteers who had turned out at short notice to guide a large group recently in the Royal Mile.

Olive Morrison informed us that EFVGA owns a bench which recently stood in Princes Street, but had now disappeared. Kate offered to investigate this.

Christine presented on our behalf bouquets of flowers to Kate and Kathleen in appreciation of their great work for the Association. Kate herself presented George with a token of our thanks for all his work.

The date of the 2018 AGM would be decided by Sandy in conjunction with the Lord Provost's office.

14 CLOSE

Kate closed the Meeting at 7.55 p.m.

CIVIC RECEPTION

The Lord Provost, Donald Wilson, arrived at 8.15 prompt and was welcomed by George, Kate and Kathleen, and was introduced to our new Office Bearers. He was accompanied by a City Officer carrying two large Chinese ornamental cockerels!

In his address from the lectern he said that it was a great pleasure, as always, to be invited to our AGM. Like us, he was keen to keep the history of our city alive, and thanked the guides for their key part in doing this. 2017 was a special year, as it marked the 70th anniversary of the Edinburgh International Festival, the Fringe, the Tattoo and, of course, the Festival Volunteer Guides Association. He recalled how, in 1947, when much of Europe was in ruins, John Falconer and others had created the Festival with the vision of using culture as an international language of peace. It was to be a celebration of diversity through culture. Now the EIF had become the largest cultural festival in the world., bringing visitors from around the globe. The celebratory atmosphere in the city every August was most noticeable. The Festival Guides Association played a great part in this, for which the city was most grateful.

THE COCKERELS

As he had done on all previous occasions, the Lord Provost had brought along one of the many gifts presented to the city in the past, and which he had unearthed in a basement room of the City Chambers. This time he presented two ornamental cockerels, of Chinese origin ,

of around 18 inches tall. It wasn't known who had presented them, or when. However they had been examined by experts, who placed them as being from the Ching Dynasty. They were very rare, and had been valued at three to five thousand pounds each. The Provost had brought them to show how interested he was in history, an interest which he shared with us.

The Provost said that he would be running this year for the third time in the London Marathon, and five weeks later in the Edinburgh Marathon, in support of charity. He recalled that throughout his five years in office, EFVGA had supported him, and he had always been keen to support the Association..

George replied on behalf of the guides, thanking the Lord Provost for his kind words and for the use of the City Chambers. He was glad that the Provost had brought along two birds and not a spear, as last year! He had researched Donald's performances in his marathons, and had been trying to encourage him to train harder and run faster... His training would not be helped by having to judge a pie contest, when he would no doubt sample quite a number. George intimated that this had been his, Kate's and Kathleen's last AGM on the Committee. The Lord Provost then joined the guides to enjoy the wine and buffet.

Sandy Cameron
General Secretary
Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association
3rd April 2017