



Patron: The Lord Provost
of The City of Edinburgh

Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association

Established 1947

www.edinburghfestivalguides.org

Minutes of the 75th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 14th February 2024

The City Chambers 7.00pm

1. Welcome

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair Bernard Heavie, welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were following Guides were in attendance.

Olwyn Alexander, Jock Anderson, Gladys Bain, Val Baker, Fiona Beveridge, Gill Davidson, Jim Eunson, Bernard Heavie, Mike Lewis, Colin Mckerchar, Elspeth McLean, Gordon MacLeod, Sandy Macpherson, John Masson, Eric Melvin, Elizabeth Robertson, Christine Stevenson, John Thompson, Fiona Watt.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from 7 Guides.

3. Approval of the 2023 AGM Minutes.

These were approved by Val Baker and seconded by John Thompson.

4. The Chair's Report

Bernard expressed his thanks to CEC for allowing the EFVGA use of the European Room for the 2024 AGM. He tabled an apology from the Lord Provost who would be represented by Baillie Pauline Flannery. The 2023 Festival Tours' programme had been very gratifying with some 1000 people taking one of our walks. This was due in no small part to the previous decision to register with the Fringe. The vast majority of walkers had pre-booked. On occasions the maximum number of slots available (40) had been exceeded which required the committee organiser to take a walk. There were some walkers recruited on the day at the City Chambers but the numbers were very small. An analysis of the walkers showed that there was a far greater uptake for the morning walks (now starting at 10.30) compared to the afternoon. As a consequence, the rota for 2024 would be adjusted to reflect this. An agreement had been reached with St Giles which gave us short slots for both the morning and afternoon walks. A donation of £100 had been made to St Giles in recognition of their co-operation. There had also been an increase in the number of requests for 'out of season' walks.

The highlight was an evening walk in late November for a conference group of over 100 delegates who requested a 90 minutes' walk starting at the Caley Hotel and finishing at the George Hotel. Fortunately, the weather had been cold but dry. Feedback had been very positive. A payment of £500 for this walk was received.

An informal social was held at Morningside Parish Church in November. Some helpful suggestions concerning future walks and talks were noted by the Committee. Given the drop – off in numbers attending the traditional August talks held in the City Chambers, it was decided to pilot a programme for 2023 with the City Arts Centre. A programme of four talks were delivered at Lauriston Castle. The venue was not ideal but the CAC were keen to promote the Castle. The talks were advertised on the CAC web site with a reference made to the work of the EFVGA, so helpful publicity. A programme for 2024 is being constructed. To date four talks have been agreed with two at Lauriston Castle and two at the CAC in Market Street. Details will be circulated in due course in a Newsletter planned for March.

Finally, Bernard intimated a vacancy on the Committee and invited expressions of interest. He concluded by reminding Guides of the Lord Provost's reception to be held at the City Chambers on 19th March. A few places were still available.

5. Treasurers' Report.

Jim Eunson tabled his report. It had been a very successful year financially with a healthy balance of £4690. This was more than double the 2021 balance. The increased income was due to the rise in donations for both Festival and out – of – season walks. Bernard thanked Jim for his report.

6. Committee & Office Bearers

Bernard reported that the current office bearers and Committee members had indicated their willingness to serve for another year. He reminded the meeting that there was a Committee vacancy.

7. Festival 2023 Report

On behalf of Frances McDevitt who had tabled her apologies, Bernard confirmed the healthy numbers for 2023. It was encouraging that every Guide who was part of the rota was given a walk. We had registered for the 2024 Festival with the Fringe and bookings would open on 22nd February. Frances anticipated that, as in 2023, there would be early bookings for our walks made.

8. Guides Update

Val Baker reported that two recently – qualified Guides Fiona Watt and Jock Anderson would receive their badges and ties later in the meeting. There were currently four potential Guides waiting for assessment with further encouraging expressions of interest.

The Morningside social had thrown up some interesting ideas, some of which were being taken forward. The first outing had taken place at the SNPG. Further outings were planned for the NLS, the Holyrood Parliament, Dundas

House in St Andrew's Square and possibly the Abbey Strand. Val confirmed that the 2024 talks' programme with CAC was being prepared.

9. Honorary Guides

Bernard proposed that Christine Stevenson and Richard Richardson who together had given many years of service to the EFVGA, including time on the Committee, should be recognised as Honorary Guides. This was unanimously approved by the meeting.

10. AOCB

- (i) Olwyn Alexander asked for items for the forthcoming March Newsletter
- (ii) John Masson encouraged Guides to volunteer for the out - of - season walks.

That ended the formal part of the AGM. Bernard thanked Guides for their attendance.

Presentation of Badges

Bernard welcomed Baillie Pauline Flannery to the meeting and invited her to present badges to Fiona Watt and Jock Anderson as recently - qualified Guides. Baillie Flannery gave her very best wishes to Fiona and Jock.

Baillie Flannery then thanked the EFVGA on behalf of the Lord Provost. She said that we are fortunate to live in such a wonderful city and commended the EFVGA for doing such an excellent job. The Guides had been sharing the sights, sounds and history of Edinburgh since 1947. She complimented the EFVGA on the numbers of visitors who were given a walk in 2023. She remarked on the consistently positive reviews received by the EFVGA from TripAdvisor. She commended the EVGA for the continuing commitment to the recruitment and training provided for new Guides.

Bernard expressed his sincere thanks to Baillie Flannery and closed the meeting.