

## **MINUTES OF THE 70<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**The City Chambers, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018**

### **WELCOME FROM THE COMMITTEE**

Christine Stevenson (Chair) opened the AGM at 7.05 and welcomed the attendees on behalf of the Committee. She intimated that Lord Provost Frank Ross would not be able to attend but that he would be represented by the Deputy Lord Provost Joan Griffiths. She would be joining the meeting at 8.15pm and the usual buffet would be served.

### **APOLOGIES**

Twenty- seven (27) members were present.

Apologies were received from 14 members many of whom had sent their best wishes.-

Val Baker, Sandy Cameron, Ann Dewar, Herbert Dryden, Gordon Drysdale, Dorothy Ellen, Bernard Heavie, Dee Hunter, Robert McGregor, George Porteous, John Robertson, Neil Shaw, Bill Thompson, Colin Young.

### **MINUTES OF AGM 2017**

There were no comments made regarding the 2017 AGM Minutes.

Acceptance of the 2017 Minutes was proposed by Maureen McMillan and seconded by John Thompson.

### **CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

Christine started her report by commenting that our previous Chair, Kate Dick, was a hard act to follow. It had been an interesting year with one of the highlights being the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner held in the Royal Overseas League on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May. This had been a most enjoyable occasion. August was 'business as usual'. Christine expressed her thanks to all of the Guides who had helped with the Walks' programme. There had though been a further drop in numbers which was a concern for the Committee. However this drop had been compensated in part by the increasing numbers, (some 400) taking pre-booked tours or out-of-season walks. Christine expressed her thanks to Maureen McMillan, the 'out-of-season' co-ordinator. She also thanked those Guides who had volunteered to take these walks. Christine encouraged attendees to have a look at the very positive remarks recorded by some of our visitors on TripAdvisor. These were all very complimentary and had earned us a '5 star' rating. Mike Lewis reminded attendees that there was a link to

TripAdvisor on the EFVGA web site. Christine expressed her thanks to Mike for producing the popular EFVGA Newsletter (3 issues had been distributed to members). She also thanked Val Baker for organising the programme of educational visits for Guides. The programme had included visits to the Magdalen Chapel and the Mansfield Traquair Centre. Christine concluded her remarks by mentioning a useful meeting that had been held last week by herself and Eric Melvin with the Lord Provost. The Lord Provost had been very supportive of the work of the EFVGA. Amongst matters discussed was the issue of our base during August. There was a problem for this August as the Pendolino Room had now been converted to house the Registrar's Office and so was no longer available to us. We are waiting for a solution to this from the Council. As regards improved publicity, the Lord Provost offered to add a link to the EFVGA on his personal web site. In response we had offered a Royal Mile walk to the Lord Provost and to his colleagues. The Lord Provost thought that this was a good idea which hopefully will be taken up. Christine concluded her remarks by thanking her fellow Committee members.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT 2018**

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

Treasurer Richard Richardson reported on "a sound state of affairs" with an increased surplus of £507. This was due in part to money being left over from the Anniversary Dinner. The Association's balance now stood at £3615. The Accounts had been examined by Stuart Ainslie.

There were no questions or comments from attendees on the tabled Accounts. Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Seonaid Martin and seconded by Martin McMenigall.

### **COMMITTEE & OFFICE BEARERS**

Christine reported that with so many retirees from the previous Committee, the year had been very much a learning experience for Committee members. There were at present 11 members of Committee. (The Constitution allowed for 14 members). There had been no nominations from Guides for new Committee members and it was felt that the Committee was managing with 11 members. It was though open to the Committee to co-opt additional members if this was felt to be necessary. Existing office bearers would continue in post.

### **GUIDES**

Christine reported the sad loss of two of our members - Elizabeth McLeod and Gordon Stewart. Condolences had been sent to their families.

There were at present 46 active Guides. Two new Guides, Elspeth McLean and Jim Eunson, had successfully completed training and would be presented with their badges by the Deputy Lord Provost at the end of the meeting. There were three new Honorary Guides – Bill Richardson, Dorothy Ellen and Jan Wallace who between them had given many years of service to the Association.

Christine introduced our two new Guides – Elspeth McLeod and Jim Eunson. Attendees were encouraged to try to recruit new Guides for the Association.

### **PROPOSED CHANGES to ARRANGEMENTS for TOURS**

Mike Lewis reported on the follow-up by the Committee to the questionnaire issued to Guides in January. Mike thanks those Guides who had made returns. Many helpful comments had been made. In the light of these returns, the Committee had agreed five changes to procedure:-

- (i) There would in future be less emphasis on the 'free' aspect of our tours in our publicity. It was felt that this had perhaps 'cheapened' the tours in the eyes of some prospective customers.
- (ii) The start times would now be 10.00am and 2.00pm. This would allow for a more equitable distribution of numbers and hopefully reduce the number of times that Guides were not getting a walk. This would also reduce the time that Guides spent on the High Street trying to persuade people to join a walk. Guides would be expected to report 15 minutes before the commencement of the walks.
- (iii) The length of walks would now be advertised/intimated as lasting two hours. It would of course be open to Guides to spend more time with a group but this would be determined by their interest.
- (iv) We would no longer use the expensive EAE system of distributing our leaflets for display in public places. Rather we would increase our advertising in the Fringe Brochure.
- (v) Some Guides were of the opinion that leafleting outside the City Chambers was not very effective. Mike commented that 90% of our walkers had decided in advance that they were coming for one of our walks. Those on 'poll duty' should concentrate instead on identifying those already committed and direct them to our starting point.

Christine thanked Mike for his useful report.

## ILLUSTRATED TALKS' PROGRAMME 2018

Maureen McMillan gave details of the Talks' Programme agreed for this August. The details were as follows:-

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> August – *Robert Burns in Edinburgh* – Professor David Purdie

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August – *The Battle of Pinkie 1547* – Dr Arran Johnstone

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August – *The Edinburgh of Burke & Hare* – Eric Melvin

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> August – *Lord Provost George Drummond* – Hamish Coghill

The first meeting will be held in the Business Centre of the City Chambers; the remainder in the European Room.

Christine thanked Maureen for her good work in assembling such an interesting programme.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

Richard intimated that there was to be a summer soiree this year. This will be held in the Botanic Cottage, (also known as the Gardener's Cottage), in the Botanic Gardens on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June starting at 6.30pm. Entrance will be by the North Gate, Inverleith Place. It is hoped that there will be a short talk about the life and work of Professor John Hope.

Christine thanked Richard and, (in his absence), Bernard Heavie for their work in arranging the soiree.

## AOCB

There were several comments/suggestions made by attendees. The most significant were as follows:

- Martin McMenigall suggested a 'Reserve List' as back-up for the Committee members on duty during August.
- Fiona Brownlee suggested that there could be a souvenir photo of groups on a walk
- Vic Aitken reported on the construction of a Facebook page for the Association.
- Jack Aitken suggested some means of identification for walk leaders such as a small tartan flag.

- Vic Aitken asked about the possibility of a permanent board for the Association on the High Street.
- Betty Milton intimated a very good RLS exhibition at the Colinton Road Campus of Napier University.

## **CLOSE**

Christine again thanked the Committee office bearers and those Guides who had attended the AGM. She closed the meeting at 8.05.

## **CIVIC RECEPTION**

Christine welcomed the Deputy Lord Provost Joan Griffiths to the meeting. In her address to the attendees, she remarked on the history on display in the paintings that decorated the European Room. Mrs. Griffiths spoke of how privileged she felt to be working in such a beautiful building and to live in such a beautiful city so rich in history. She thanked the Guides for their dedication and hard-work in sharing that history with so many visitors over the 70 years of the Association's existence.

The Deputy Lord Provost then presented badges to our two new Guides - Elspeth McLeod and Jim Eunson.

Christine thanked Mrs Griffiths for her kind words of encouragement and thanks. She then thanked the City of Edinburgh Council for allowing us the use of the European Room and for providing us with such generous hospitality. The Deputy Lord Provost then joined the Guides to enjoy the buffet provided.

Eric Melvin

Acting Secretary

Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides association

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018.