

SCOTS MUSIC GROUP AGM 2pm Sunday 22nd January 2023

Draft minutes

In attendance (19 members + 2 staff)

Hellen MacPherson, Helen Quigley, Myles Lobjoie, Kenneth Dickson, Fiona Harrison, Christine McIntosh, Allan Sturrock, Edna Wilson, Paul McIntosh (PM), Bill Savage, Jamie Taylor, Jan Maxwell, Marie-Elaine Maguire, Joanna Cameron, John Ireson, Caroline Castle, John Lamont, Gill McDonald, Alison Morton.

Helen Reid (SMG Coordinator)

Sarah Northcott (SMG Interim Development Worker)

Apologies (13 members)

Celia Coulson, Cathy Davidson, George Davidson, Colin Graham, Elaine Appleby, Micola McNeill, David Roy, Iain Murray, David Francis, Susan Kirkwood, Mike Appleby, Mary McCann, Les Morss.

Welcome: members of Ceilidh Caleerie greeted attendees with great tunes, and Edna Wilson (EW) then welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting how nice it was to be back in person.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as an accurate record. Proposed: Jamie Taylor, seconded: Bill Savage.

2. Chair's report – Edna Wilson (EW)

EW reported on the year July 2021 – June 2022 and beyond.

Classes: classes during the reporting year had remained online, and by the end of the year numbers were falling. In September 2022, most classes restarted in person, with the exception of 5-string Banjo (the tutor had moved to Dundee and the students wanted to continue with him) and Slow Session (acting as a catch-all for online-only students). Evening classes began across two venues (Music Box and Tollcross) as high schools were not yet bookable, but they have now moved back to James Gillespie's High School.

Workshops: two online workshops and three in-person workshops were held in the reporting year. These included a Come & Play afternoon which was successful and repeated in June and December 2022.

Sessions: EW noted that students had organised new sessions and other musical gatherings.

Student numbers: these had stood up well in the circumstances but were dropping. SMG's student questionnaire showed a strong support for in-person classes.

Community groups: EW reported the activities of Sangstream, Ceilidh Caleerie, Balerno Buskers and Nigel's Allstars.

Ceilidhs: these did not restart during the reporting year, but began in July 2022 with a ceilidh in the Charteris Centre as St Bride's was not open for bookings. St Bride's is now open and SMG has a full programme of ceilidhs booked for 2023. EW noted the crucial support of the ceilidh volunteers in making SMG ceilidhs a success. The first batch of ceilidhs were supported in part by SMG's Creative Scotland Covid Recovery Grant. SMG ceilidhs are crucial to SMG's fundraising.

Café Ceilidh: run by a core of committed students, Café Ceilidh made a welcome return to the Scottish Storytelling Centre in May (TradFest) and June (Make Music Day).

Tutors, staff and members: EW paid tribute to the quality and commitment of the SMG tutors, the dedication of the SMG staff and the continued support of the SMG membership during these difficult years.

Thanks: EW thanked Liz Blair for many years of volunteer bookkeeping and welcomed Calum Galleitch as the new SMG bookkeeper. She also thanked Mary McCann for her support of SMG in organising workshops which raise funds for SMG. She thanked Mac Walker for his IT support. She thanked all volunteers who help with various aspects of the

organisation, including those who put on events for SMG's May Music Hooley fundraising month. She thanked everyone who has made donations to SMG, large and small, and noted the value of Gift Aid.

EW noted that Ken Fallas, SMG student and Fiddle Festival volunteer, had sadly passed away in 2022. She reminded the meeting that SMG has a Book of Remembrance on the website.

Finally EW stressed that the Board will be developing and reviewing its business strategy in dealing with the effects and aftermath of the pandemic. SMG was awarded a Creative Scotland Covid Recovery Grant which has helped to support the return of various activities including beginners' classes and ceilidhs. Student numbers still need to be built up to ensure the long-term viability for SMG but there is optimism moving forward.

Myles Lobjoie asked whether SMG had made savings because there were no class venue costs when classes were online. EW explained that lower numbers and lack of fundraising ceilidhs had meant that the financial position was still difficult.

EW mentioned a supportive email from Colin Graham, ukulele tutor.

3. Presentation of Accounts by Treasurer Paul McIntosh (PM)

PM gave his treasurer's report, explaining that the figures were from inspected accounts. He explained that part of the Creative Scotland Covid Recovery Grant was reported in the 2021-22 accounts, which has affected the bottom line.

He highlighted the lack of fundraising activities (ceilidhs and student groups) which is very important in helping to cover the core costs of the organisations. Bill Savage noted that, prior to Covid, SMG had a reputation for good ceilidhs and they were often sold out.

PM explained the reserves position, which shows a downward trend without the Covid Recovery Grant (part of which was intended to stabilise reserves). The trend is still worrying and SMG needs to keep working to ensure its long-term survival.

John Ireson noted that SMG had a strong and commendable reserves position. He asked for more detail in the expenses, such as venue costs. PM noted that these don't appear in the formal accounts. EW pointed out that SMG had halved its office costs during the pandemic.

PM explained that there had been a rise of approximately £8K in venue costs since we started being charged for evening class rooms by the council, and SMG has tried not to pass these costs on to the membership.

Jamie Taylor asked if venue costs at James Gillespie's High School have gone up. Sarah Northcott confirmed that they had not risen since pre-Covid times.

Caroline Castle said that it has been remarkable that SMG has kept going, and has managed the transition onto Zoom and back again. She said that SMG should not be discouraged.

Gill MacDonald suggested that SMG should look at class fees again, and that tutors should be paid appropriately. EW assured her that tutor fees were on the agenda.

Fiona Harrison said that going onto Zoom was a leap of faith, and that things looked much worse in summer 2020. Sarah Northcott stressed that tutors had worked hard to adapt to Zoom and keep students.

Joanna Cameron suggested that the international links which had been built on Zoom should be continued. EW explained that Nigel's Slow Session class had remained online for this very reason.

John Lamont suggested that SMG should develop YouTube presentations. The Scottish Music Academy does this. Bill Savage thought that the staff time involved in this would be prohibitive.

Jamie Taylor asked if there had been a drop in Gift Aid. PM explained that 2020-21's Gift Aid was an anomaly, as refunds were offered for cancelled classes but most were not taken. He explained that membership fees cannot be treated as Gift Aid because members receive a certain level of benefits. The Board will be looking at this. PM mentioned that Glasgow Folk-Music Workshop don't have a concession rate.

EW assured the meeting that any changes to the membership structure would be put to an Extraordinary General Meeting if SMG's constitution deems this to be necessary.

4. Election of Directors

The current Directors were re-elected, proposed: Jan Maxwell and seconded: Caroline Castle

Caroline Castle was elected to the Board, proposed: Jamie Taylor and seconded: Bill Savage.

5. Questions and motions from the floor

Jamie Taylor thanked Sarah Northcott and Helen Reid for their hard work during the year, and especially for getting SMG back into Gillespie's High School. He also thanked EW and PM for their work on the Board on SMG's behalf. Bill Savage echoed this, saying that the sourcing of venues had been particularly difficult.

EW thanked everyone for coming and formally closed the meeting.

Sarah Northcott

March 2023.