SCOTS MUSIC GROUP AGM 2pm Sunday 4th February 2024

In attendance (23 members + 1 staff)

Hellen MacPherson, Christine McIntosh, Edna Wilson (EW), Paul McIntosh (PM), Bill Savage, Jamie Taylor, Marie-Elaine Maguire, Caroline Castle, Gill McDonald, Alison Morton, Bryan Anderson, John Culbert, Alison Shannon, Derek Shannon, Ian Elder, Madeleine Brand, Chris Mahony, Helen Wright, Alison Drever, Alex Stuart, Angus Forsyth, Isla Browning, David Roy.

Sarah Northcott (SMG Interim Development Worker)

Apologies (11 members + 1 staff)

Cathy Davidson, George Davidson, Elaine Appleby, Nicola McNeill, David Francis, Tony Kinghorn, Vicky Pearson, David Begg, John Ireson, Fiona Harrison, Catherine Crawford, Helen Reid (SMG Coordinator)

Welcome: members of Nigel's Allstars greeted attendees with a great selection of tunes, and Edna Wilson (EW) then welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting**

Two spelling changes were pointed out, and subject to these, the minutes of the last meeting were accepted as an accurate record. Proposed: Bill Savage, seconded: Hellen MacPherson.

2. **Chair's report – Edna Wilson (EW)**

EW reported on the year July 2022 – June 2023 and beyond.

Classes: nearly all classes returned to in-person teaching from September 2022, though the first term's evening classes had to be held across two more expensive venues (Music Box and Tollcross) before returning to Gillespie's High School in January 2024 after significant lobbying of Edinburgh Council. Student numbers were significantly lower than pre-Covid levels. Two classes remained online (Banjo and Slow Session) due to the location of students and tutors. As part of our Creative Scotland Covid Recovery Grant we were able to prioritise support for beginners' classes.

Workshops: three in-person workshops were held in the reporting year. These included two Come & Play workshops and a Come and Sing workshop. SMG supported Mary McCann and a team of volunteers to run two further Song Gatherings.

SMG in the Community: EW noted that students had organised new sessions and other musical gatherings, such as George & Cathy Davidson's Carlops events.

Performance groups: EW reported the activities of Sangstream, Ceilidh Caleerie, Nigel's Allstars, and noted SMG's intention to look at restarting a busking group.

Café Ceilidh: run by a core of committed students, Café Ceilidh was held at the Scottish Storytelling Centre in January (Burns), May (TradFest) and June (Make Music Day). Karen Beattie has taken over as band co-ordinator from Trish Santer – thanks were expressed to both for their hard work.

Ceilidhs: these restarted in July 2022 with a ceilidh in the Charteris Centre as St Bride's was not open for bookings. St Bride's reopened in Autumn 2022 and SMG had 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.

Board, office and organisation: EW noted that the office had downsized to one room. Computers had been upgraded. Sarah Northcott had attended a legacy fundraising course. Tutor fees had been reviewed and improved, as the previous fee level was leading to a reluctance to work with us.

Funded by our Covid Recovery Grant, SMG recruited Dr Jo Miller to evaluate SMG and suggest new approaches, and a Planning Day was held with Dr Miller on 15 April 2023 which generated new ideas. Following this, several Board members visited Glasgow Folk Music Workshop.

Tutors, staff and members: EW noted the quality of SMG's tutors and the hard work of staff. She welcomes Helen Wright who had joined the Board in the summer, and thanked Hellen Macpherson and Helen Quigley who were stepping down from the Board. She thanked Paul McIntosh for his work as Treasurer, and encouraged members to join the Board.

Thanks: EW expressed SMG's thanks to Mary McCann, the Café Ceilidh team, Ceilidh Caleerie and Nigel's Allstars, George and Cathy Davidson, the volunteers at the evening class hub, and Iain Wells and Mike Turpie for giving SMG a donation from sales of cards and calendars. She thanked Liz Blair for her bookkeeping work over many years and welcomed Monika Galek as our new volunteer bookkeeper.

Departed friends: EW highlighted the sad loss of three great friends of SMG during this year – Ian Young, Duncan Sutherland and Sally Dick, who will all be greatly missed.

Planning for the future: EW noted the intention of SMG to continue to develop while carefully reviewing operations in order to continue the recovery from Covid and regain financial stability going forward.

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

PM talked through the key data, and said that he was not worried by a small deficit of roughly £2,000.

He explained that the Covid Recovery Grant was split across two accounting years, and that any money from that not specifically spent on projects stated in the application could and would be used to bolster reserves.

He noted the restart of fundraising ceilidhs, though this was initially with reduced numbers.

He highlighted that Gift Aid received was slightly higher.

In response to a question from the floor, he confirmed that all reserves in the reported year were unrestricted.

It was noted that as of January 2024, the new membership figure was 367.

He thanked office staff and the new bookkeeper Monika Galek for their work with the financial system.

4. **Election of Directors**

The current Directors were re-elected, with the exception of Hellen Macpherson and Helen Quigley who were not standing. Proposed: Alison Morton and seconded: Gill McDonald.

5. **Proposal to remove the position of Company Secretary**

This was passed by the meeting with 22 in favour and one abstention.

6. **Questions and motions from the floor**

Staff salaries: Gill McDonald asked if there were procedures in place to review staff salaries. EW said that this had not been done as regularly as it should have been, but the Board was forming a Human Resources sub-group. Gill said that it was not a good idea to forget about staff, both legally and in terms of good practice. Jamie Taylor highlighted the lack of human resources experience on the Board. EW said that Magenta (human resources company) had been approached for advice and possible SMG support. Caroline Castle noted that SCVO has a lot of information like this for smaller charities. It was suggested that SMG look for a volunteer to advise the Board, potentially via the Volunteer Centre. Alison Morton suggested that SMG should find out what other charities pay their staff.

Alex Stuart asked about other aspects of Dr Miller's report, such as an SMG common repertoire. Jamie Taylor suggested that this could be summarised on the website.

Bill Savage noted that a number of initiatives would require time-consuming work such as fundraising.

Caroline Castle highlighted the need to recruit more members.

Marie-Elaine Maguire said that there should be more opportunities for people to get together which weren't sessions, and said that she was running a monthly meet-up of Sarah Northcott's class members to go through class tunes.

Other suggestions included having a session at evening classes in the SMG hub, the restarting of the Slow Session and a busking group.

Hellen MacPherson explained that she was retiring from the Board for personal reasons and encouraged people to serve on the Board.

EW thanked Hellen MacPherson and Helen Quigley for their service on the Board.

EW thanked everyone for coming and formally closed the meeting.

Sarah Northcott

February 2024.