

## Minutes of steerers' committee meeting 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Chair: Chris Mapp

1. Present: Liz Newman, Chris Mapp, Pauline Mapp, Heather Minnion, Lynda Jones, Fritjof Koerber, Heather Jenne

2. Matters arising from the minutes of 15 Jan 2025

2.1 no response from organisers of Bristol Folk Festival – **Liz will discuss with Alison** (who has contacts and might be able to find out if we can perform). Heather M might do a recce of Chippenham Folk Festival 2025 to see if it's a suitable venue for 2026.

2.2 Photo duly taken, but of course did not include Briggy or John M inter alia. **Liz/Heather J will informally ask John M to send photos to the steerers** for selection and then they can go on the website, and into a potential poster. Maybe Briggy can be photoshopped in!

2.3 Liz wrote to the band member about the difficulty at Redcatch gig along the lines suggested by the steerers. There has been no response.

2.4 Mick Mangan session – 8 (+ 2 possibles) booked in so far for 26<sup>th</sup> Feb. Judy Bridges would like to come to see how the band works (stage management). **Fritjof will send a general email about the workshop to the whole band**, in case there are people who would like to speak at gigs and come to the workshop but missed the announcement last rehearsal. Another 2 (perhaps more?) can be accommodated

AOB 1: Amplification and Use of microphones:

The band owns a PA system with inputs for 2 wireless handheld mikes (one of which is not working). We also use a hand held / stand mike which is sourced from the mains, which belongs to Lyn and is on permanent loan to BVB. Chris Chaloner got the PA system working at the Alveston gig (and gave Liz and Chris N notes about how to set it up), and said that our type of mikes were prone to breaking. It may be that we need to have a couple of volunteers from the band to be responsible for setting up the PA system before gigs. **Liz ask for advice about what is the best set up for us from Alison (and possibly Roland)** – eg whether to go for handheld or wireless headset mikes, bearing in mind that more than 2 mikes need a mixing desk (*[s that just for the handheld mikes or also the wireless headsets?]]*) **(presumably other steerers can do research of their own)**

When we have that advice, we also need advice and practice on how to use the microphones – we should ask Alison and Mick Mangan.

3. Treasurer's report.

Chris and Fritjof can now access the account. Ruth has come off the account. Current balance is £2415 with a couple of outstanding bills to pay.

Membership Subs: The accounting period is from Sept – Aug. Members will be asked to pay by standing order either annually on Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, or 4 monthly (if their bank will do this), or monthly – or by BACS. **Pauline is happy to collect cheque or cash at rehearsals** from members who don't have standing orders or do BACS transfers. If members join part way through the accounting period, they will be asked to pay the appropriate amount till end of August and then set up an annual arrangement.

**Chris + Fritjof will chat about switching banks.**

**Chris will create a proforma invoice** with the hat logo (obtainable from Roland)

4. Nature and Frequency of gigs

Fritjof was concerned about the unsatisfactory nature of some outdoors gigs (eg sound not carrying very far), and generally about having gigs where we could be sure about practical aspects of the organisation. He suggested we had a regular venue we could hire so we would know what to expect and it would make it easier to organise. We should be more selective and should do only high value gigs and our own gigs, not everything we're asked. This would mean that we would be able to plan longer term and thus ensure that more band members are able to commit, which would enable us to do more justice to our quite elaborate arrangements. Commenting from experience, Heather J said it was a thankless task to sell tickets to get an audience for a concert we are promoting ourselves and Lyn said that audiences get less and less if you are appearing to do the same thing.

Heather M said that she liked the flexibility and diversity of gigs that we get currently - which reflects the village band ethos – and the fact that we are taking this music to people who might not come across it otherwise, and she would not want to restrict this. However, she agreed it would be good to have a once a year gig in the same place (not necessarily at the same time of year every time) to get over the practical problems Fritjof identified. Liz Lyn and Heather J agreed with Heather M.

Regarding sorting out practical organisation, Liz said that she and Lyn visited venues before gigs and were getting better at identifying what's needed. Lyn produced the gig organiser's sheet (which is on the website) - a useful checklist for practical aspects. Our fees will depend on a variety of factors, not least an assessment of the ability of the client to pay. However provision of refreshments is generally non-negotiable.

Fritjof also said that at present there does not seem to be enough consideration given to alternative arrangements when we have to play with reduced instrumentation in less than ideal environments. This led to a discussion about people signing up for gigs. We have lovely full rehearsals but gigs are not usually the full band and perhaps we don't perform as well. We have had default occasions when we just play tune + bass, and at one time, instead of the arrangement, we played tunes 3 times: f, p, f. We cannot control the timing of gigs so sometimes they are closer together than is optimal. This has the positive benefit of being able to use the same programme more than once but the negative is that people are not available so often. We should ask people to sign up by a certain time (eg 2 weeks from notification, and ideally 3 months in advance of a gig so that if we don't get enough people, the gig organiser has an opportunity to find another group).

**Pauline volunteered to chase up people who hadn't filled in the gig sign up sheet.**

We considered gigs coming up and potential gigs

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May – Bristol Folk festival (hopefully)

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May – St Stephens (which will have been adapted from the Priddy programme) – someone needs to ask David Mowat or Marc in the office about amplification facilities there.

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June – Strawberry lunch Long Ashton

Newark Park (possibly) – **Lyn to ask Gill Kendall if we are needed again**

Portishead Seniors (postponed from 2024) – **Lyn to follow this up**

3 Greens Festival – **Lyn will enquire about this.**

Treefest Holy Trinity Clevedon – **Fritjof to ask about this probably in September.** We agreed we would decline St Mary Redcliffe Treefest if asked, as this sounded preferable.

We will not follow up Trendlewood.

**We agreed Liz will ask Alison to play with us at Bristol Folk Festival and St Stephens**

5. Postponed to next meeting

6. Steerers Absences

Lyn is away 22 May – 28 July. During that time, **Heather M will take over the 2 jobs of booking Pill for kitchen rehearsals, and setting up for rehearsals and gigs** (deciding a seating plan and putting out chairs + names on chairs), assuming Angela is able to go earlier. The rest of us will help with chair moving. Liz will continue to check out venues and had **3 volunteers to assist: Heather J Fritjof, Heather M.** Lyn will be online to forward gig requests. **Heather J will ask Helen Price to amend the website** so that secretary type enquiries go to her, not Colin Hendy. It was agreed that Heather J should officially take over as secretary.

**Fritjof will research setting up an online calendar** to which we can all add our holiday dates.

#### 7. Keeping Band Together in Bobby's Absence

**Liz will ask Alison if she has any ideas about this.** Tony is good at keeping the beat for everyone but is not as audible as drums. Heather M has a set of nakers (small drums that go round the waist, different pitches, one with a snare). **She would like to ask Bobby for some drum lessons and to do drumming if Bobby's not there - agreed.**

#### AOB 2 Dancing

This led to consideration of expanding what band members do. In particular dancing! For St Stephens, Liz is considering (probably) two of the following a) a processional dance to Helston (4 people), b) a waltz to Mellow Tipsiness (2 people), c) a country dance to Enrico (see The Lucies), d) a clog dance to Clog Branle. **Lyn will ask Katie Kennedy about clogging**, possibly with Cathy, and doing the other dances. **Liz/Fritjof will ask Ann Koerber.** Liz thought audience participation in a bit of Pat-a-cake polka from their seats might work. Heather M said that if we learnt pieces by heart, BVB could lead a procession (cp Luna's wedding, St Paul's gig) which would be really village-bandy.

#### AOB 3

This led to the thought that maybe Alison would be keen on leading a workshop with band members dancing alternately with playing so they understand the feel behind the music. All the better if this could be combined with learning some pieces from memory. **Liz will approach her about this** – obviously baby considerations will dictate date / timing.

8,9 held over to next meeting

10. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 2pm in person at 23 The Crescent