

# Open Morris

## Annual General Meeting 2020

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November  
Online Meeting via Zoom

### 1. Opening of AGM, notices & Introduction by Chairperson

The meeting was opened at 14.12.

JC welcomed everyone to the meeting and spoke about how we have sides from up and down the country in our first ever zoom AGM. JC welcomed our colleagues from the Morris Federation and Morris Ring. JC also appointed tellers, JE and JM, and minuting secretary LSi. JC covered zoom housekeeping for the online meeting, including the fact that the meeting is being recorded for the purpose of compiling minutes only. It was made clear that the recording will not be shared outside of the committee. Representatives were asked to contact LS, JS or MH to request to speak, and encouraged to do so. Representatives were asked to contact CS in the event of any technical issues.

JC also stated that the discussion rules as laid out in the Chair's Guide would be used for the discussion of motions.

### 2. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

#### Present were:

#### OM Committee and Officials:

Jen Cox – Chair and Central Area Rep (JC)

John Scholey – Membership Secretary (JS)

Lucy Simmonds – Secretary (LSi)

Liz Scholey – Treasurer (LSc)

Malcolm Hills – Web Officer and North East Area Rep (MH)

Conor Smith – Editor of Dancing On! (CSm)

Chris Lamb – South East Area Rep (CL)

Clare Mach – South Central Area Rep (CM)

Craig Simmonds – West Midlands Area Rep (CS)

Nicki Pickering – Wales and North West Area Rep and Life Member (NP)

Robin James – East Anglia Area Rep (RJ)

#### Guests:

Pauline Woods-Wilson – President, The Morris Federation

Fee Lock – Secretary, The Morris Federation

Jenny Everett – Treasurer, The Morris Federation (JE)

Jon Melville – Bagman, The Morris Ring (JM)

**OM Members (OM Officials are listed again if also representing a team):**

Chris Hall – Life/Honorary Member

Kim Woodward – Life Member

Wendy Bostock – Life Member

Sara Rose – Individual Member

Bedcote Morris – Sharon Dodd

Beltane Border – Ant Veal, Elizabeth Wozniack

Beorma – Tony Roberts

Billy No Mates – Eddie Carter

Borderline – Tammy Keighery

Brigantii Border Morris – David Carpenter, Linda Sever, Pete Howarth

Brixton Tatterjacks – Damaris Dodds, Johnny Broadbent, Rowan Friedman

Bunnies from Hell - Anne-Marie Coomber

Cadi Ha – Gemma Hurst, Jan Hurst

Devils Jumps – Clare Mach

Earl of Stamford – Mary Fortune

Fenstanton Morris – Robin James

Flagcrackers of Craven – Ruth Emery

Fowlers Molly – Natalie Lancaster, Sarah Crofts

Foxs Morris – Sid Hardy

Harlequin Morris – Rosie Butler-Hall, Ross Blair

Holt Ridge – Hilary Maidstone

Itchy Feet Appalachian – Stan Penman

Lepton Morris – Charlotte Pascoe

Meon Valley Morris – Pamela Eastwood, Mike Roberts

Mr Baker's Dozen – Steve Baker

Old School Rapper – Eammon Andrews

Phoenix Morris – Michael Stimpson, Sue Stimpson

Pig Dyke Molly – Helen Chew, Tony Forster

Ragged Oak – Sam Davey

Rattlejag Morris – Jayne Rose

Restless Soles – Judy Roberts

Shinfield Shambles – Hilary Tindall

Steps in Time – Penny-Jane Swift

Styx of Stroud – Jayne Kirkham, Rich Dainton

Tatters Morris – Hetty Bevington, Lally MacBeth

The Acid Morris – Alfie Hall, Naomi Standen, Tom Richards

The Far Side – Norm Warren

Theale Tattoo – Rachel Beck

Wharfedale Wayzgoose – Malcolm Hills

Whitethorn Morris – Fiona Giddons, Sue Pearse

Wicket Brood – Alison Heywood

**Apologies:**

**Individuals:**

Ann Baines  
Diana Barclay  
Mike Barclay  
Nickie Dailly  
Gordon Phillips  
Sophie Watson

**Teams:**

Allington Morris  
Anderida Morris  
AngleTwitch Morris  
Black Pig Border Morris  
Brooms Bricks and Bowlers  
Bury Fair Women's Morris  
Corby Conspiracy  
Crosskey Clog  
Heartsease & St Neots Sweeps & Milkmaids  
Kenninghall Morris  
Kitchen Taps  
Roses are Red  
Sowerby Bridge Rushbearing Association  
St Katharine's Morris  
Step This Way  
Tatterfoals Morris  
Tower Ravens  
Yorkshire Coast Morris

### **3. The Sue Dyke Award Presentation**

The Sue Dyke award is a competition for young people who are involved in Morris. This year we have had entrants from several young dancers who have spent the lockdown period writing their own dances. The membership were treated to video performances from both the runners up and the winner of this year's award.

Esme, Beatrice and Lawrence Becker from The Magnificent Seven are Highly Commended Runners Up, receiving a total of £75.

Liam Coomber of Bunnies from Hell was announced as the Winner, receiving £100, a year's custodianship of the Sue Dyke Tankard engraved with his name, and a certificate. Liam attended the meeting to tell us about the jig that he wrote, and we watched a video of the presentation of his prize.

The entries, information and judges feedback can be found on the Open Morris website, and we would like to encourage members to get in touch with ideas for next year's competition.

#### **4. Minutes of 2019 AGM (taken as read)**

These have been included with the AGM paperwork and are available on the Open Morris website documents page.

#### **5. Adoption of minutes of 2019 AGM**

The minutes from 2019 were accepted with 36 for, 0 against, 9 abstentions. JE and JM verified the number of votes.

#### **6. Matters arising from the minutes**

##### **i) 6.e – Presentation of subscription rates**

After an issue with some teams paying the wrong subscription rate due to the way rates were presented, this item had been actioned successfully before the 2020 renewal.

##### **ii) 7 – format of Dancing On!**

This year Conor Smith, our new editor of Dancing On!, has published his inaugural edition of Dancing On! JC congratulated Conor for this excellent work. This was an online edition due to the pandemic and we will look at doing this for the next issue as well. Whilst we will always publish a digital copy of the magazine we also feel that a physical publication is an asset to the organisation, although this will be continually reviewed especially in light of the current pandemic situation. It was also suggested that we could do one printed issue per year to make this more cost effective (Michael Stimpson).

The timing of our next issue will depend on the pandemic and any further lockdown restrictions.

Conor Smith will always welcome comments and content from sides and individuals!

##### **iii) 12.c – Nomenclature of Junior Sides**

This arose from the discussion around the age limit for our Junior Sides membership category. The suggestion was that student age/older children may not like to be called 'Juniors'. Following the last AGM, JC had discussed this with our Junior Member Sides and found that as the majority of these sides are comprised of school age children, there was no issue with the name that we are using for this membership category.

##### **iv) 15 – The Sue Dyke Award Evaluation**

and

**v) 16 – The Douglas Memorial Pickering Fund** were discussed later as separate agenda

items.

**vi) 17- AGM format**

This refers to our physical AGMs and the possibility of running a longer, weekend AGM with a workshop element. Whilst we are interested in this and would be keen to hold a longer AGM in future we cannot realistically make plans for this at the moment due to the Covid-19 situation. We will discuss this with teams who wish to host meetings in the future.

As a result of the improvements to online meeting software during the pandemic we will look into the possibility of offering virtual attendance at future AGM meetings.

**7. Officer's Reports (taken as read), Officer's comments, and queries from the floor:**

**a. Chair of OM (JC)**

**b. Membership Secretary (JS)**

**c. Secretary (LSi)**

**d. Web Officer (MH)**

There were no comments or questions regarding the first four officers reports.

**e. Treasurer (LSc)**

LSc talked through the Treasurer's report in detail. LSc also showed the membership the bank statements and confirmed that these have been seen by our Independent Reviewer.

**f. Adoption of Treasurer's report**

The treasurer's report was adopted with 40 votes for, 0 against, 5 abstentions. JE and JM verified the number of votes. OM Officers will fulfil the constitutional requirement regarding signed copies of the accounts by post.

**8. Other Official's Reports (taken as read), and queries from the floor:**

**a. Editor of Dancing On! – Conor Smith**

**b. Area Representatives:**

**North East – Malcolm Hills**

**West Midlands – Craig Simmonds**

**South West – Sam Davey**

**Wales & North West – Nicki Pickering**

**East Anglia – Robin James**

**South East – Chris Lamb**

**Central – Jenny Cox**

**South Central – Clare Mach**

There were no questions or comments regarding these reports.

## **9. Motions**

JC again gave out the rules for discussing motions. We will have no more than 30 minutes to discuss each motion. Those introducing a motion will have 3 minutes to speak whilst those speaking for/against will have 2 minutes, the proposer has a right of reply after all other speakers, but no other individual may speak twice on the same motion. Timing was provided visually by CSm. Voting on the individual Ordinary motions was closed at the end of each discussion.

### **a. Ordinary Motion 1 – Face Paint Use (proposed by the Committee)**

LSc introduced the motion to the membership and referred to JC's letter from the chair which sets out our intent as a committee. We have been working behind the scenes on this issue for 4 years. LSc made it clear that this motion does not represent a ban on blackface and referred to the JMO statement of intent. The OM committee supports the JMO statement in its entirety. OM have omitted mention of other skin tone makeup in our motion as a result of public discussions following the publication of the JMO statement. We also support sides who wish to continue traditions of guising though without using full face, solid black makeup. LSc urges that we accept this motion.

Speakers:

Tony Roberts – Beorma Morris: Said that he felt that the motion was unconstitutional, and potentially divisive, and felt that teams should be allowed to make their own decision. Urged the membership to vote for motion 2 if members wanted to do something about racism.

Tom Richards – The Acid Morris: Said that The Acid Morris had joined the Open Morris as we are "open". Said that team's use of facepaint is regularly discussed and voted upon. Felt that this is an irrelevant gesture towards inclusion, and said that Acid Morris are considering leaving OM.

Naomi Standen – The Acid Morris: Said she hopes that we really do want an end to racism and thanks JMO/OM for starting to think about racism and white privilege. Felt that sides have not been consulted regarding this motion and that this statement is only to protect the "good name of morris" and that it is a quick fix. Urges that we look instead to the nationalist background of morris and argued that we cannot say who will enjoy morris based on their

cultural background.

Tony Forster – Pig Dyke Molly: Has had experience of being challenged by the public about wearing full face black makeup. Argues that the world has changed and that we also have to change, regardless of the origin. Asked “why would we want to offend people?” especially when there are available alternatives which work well. Pig Dyke use black and white and allow the members to be very creative with their designs. He argues that in Molly the teams have changed costume, dances and music so why should blackface remain as the only tradition we keep. He argues that we are seen as “ostriches” if we continue to avoid the issue.

Eammon Andrews – Old School Rapper: Stated that he is speaking on his own accord and not for the views of his side. Argues that we live in a diverse and multicultural country, a free country where we can do what we like. Said we should be sharing positive visions for the future and building bridges rather than persecuting those who choose to use full face black makeup. Argues that blackface is a positive embracement of other cultures and should not be construed in a negative way. Concerned that Open Morris will no longer be open.

David Carpenter – Brigantii: Brigantii use green and purple makeup to go with their kit, however, has danced in full face black makeup and never had an issue with any person of colour reacting in a negative way. Has experienced onlookers wanting to join in. Feels that this is an issue created by white people. Asks that we allow the teams effected by this to be the ones making their own decisions.

Michael Stimpson – Phoenix Morris: Michael Stimpson notes that insurance liability policies, all using the same wording, can be interpreted as stating that we should not dance with full face black makeup. He says that this only refers to full face black face paint and not to mottled/smudged looks.

Eddie Carter – Billy No Mates: Billy No Mates are a Cotswold side who used to dance border. Argues that morris is a very inclusive activity. Has a multicultural family which informs his view point. The border side that he danced with had one black dancer who was keen to use full face black makeup. Asks if anyone has any first hand knowledge of how the black communities feel about this situation.

JC: drew attention to the My Albion podcast, where a young black woman referred to the use of full face black face point as offensive and exclusive. JC feels that, whilst there are undoubtedly some black people who are not offended by this, even one person being offended is enough to say that it is morally wrong. JC also referred to the legality of the issue and stated that racial harassment is legally actionable. She argues that teams who continue to use full face black face paint may put themselves at risk of this as the experience of the offended person is taken strongly into account. JC stated that the current political climate makes such legal action increasingly likely.

Norm Warren – The Far Side: Supports the motion and the principles behind it. Questioned the omission of the wording ‘other skin tone’ from the OM paperwork which was part of the JMO statement, and said he was disappointed not to see this wording. Asks how we might deal with teams who use other colours which could cause offence.

Johnny Broadbent – Brixton Tatterjacks: Brixton Tatterjacks are a border side based in an area with a large Afro-Caribbean population. Says that all of the Afro-Caribbean people that he has spoken to have not understood black face and have found it deeply offensive. He says that the side would dearly like to recruit from all cultures and communities but have found that black face is a barrier to this. Supports full face black makeup himself but thinks this is the correct time to make this move.

Malcolm Hills – Wharfedale Wayzegeese: Shared an anecdote regarding a dance out where a member’s black daughter was seriously offended by the use of full face black face paint. The side then decided to go half black and half white and have never looked back. Has previously used full face black makeup but does not do so anymore. Says that links with Minstrelsy are undeniable and should be taken into consideration.

LSc, responding as proposer of the Motion: Refuted statements about the motion being unconstitutional, with reference to our equality policy, which makes clear that adherence to Equality law is expected of our membership. Echoed the need for change, and argued that if even one person is made to feel offended or upset by us then we should feel shame. Argued that the current situation in the world, including the Black Lives Matter movement, should be an issue for everyone throughout the world and that we need to respond to this and that we will be judged as a community for our response to this.

JC brought the discussion to a close and briefly responded to a point which had been made about the OM Committee being un-representative of teams affected by this motion, by stating that 4 out of 5 of the current OM Committee are in teams using face paint, and 2 have used full face black make up in the past.

A 5 minute break was called to allow anyone still wishing to vote time to do so. The motion was carried with 35 votes for, 6 against, and 8 abstentions. JE and JM verified the number of votes.

JC thanked all members for maintaining a civil and informed discussion around this sensitive issue.

### **b. Ordinary motion 2 – Proactive Diversification (proposed by The Acid Morris and seconded by Beorma Morris)**

Naomi Standen – The Acid Morris (proposing): Black Lives Matter gave white people in particular a chance to learn more about racism and to work against it and the unconscious bias that is present in society. This affects any non-white people and the responsibility to



work against racism is that of all people should feel. Argued that it is not enough to merely not be unwelcoming and stated that we need to be consciously and proactively welcoming. Argues that it is not enough to say that equality and diversity are important, but we need to work actively towards diversification. Expressed a concern that this motion would fail because people are not prepared to make changes in themselves.

Tony Roberts – Beorma (seconding): Stated that Beorma has been a victim of racism but has also been accused of racism. Beorma has had a lot of experience of racist remarks directed towards non-white team members. Beorma have black, Taiwanese and mixed raced members and wish to protect these people. Argued that if we want greater inclusion then we need to act on more than just full face black makeup, including addressing issues such as drinking culture within morris.

MH: The committee agree that active diversification is encouraged but worries that the mechanisms that would be needed to support the motion cannot realistically be implemented. We as a committee look to encourage sides to recruit in a more diverse manner and would like to welcome support and ideas for this from the proposers of this motion, but the OM Committee does not support this motion, and recommends voting against.

Damaris Dodds – Brixton Tatterjacks: Asks for people to abstain as the motion is asking for the right thing but in the wrong way. Argues that the logistics of the motion are not realistically workable for the majority of sides and stated that it is couched in a negative way rather than looking forward positively. Brixton Tatterjacks are from a diverse, inner city area, but have issues with recruiting from diverse cultures. Feels that the motion would be very difficult for sides in different communities. Would like to see this worked on at a wider level than just individual sides, including efforts from festivals and the JMO.

Tony Forster – Pig Dyke Molly: Stated that this motion has a lot that we should be thinking about and that it challenges us to no longer be inward looking or ethnically closed. Stated that Pig Dyke will abstain on the motion as it is not realistic at the moment and questioned the motives of those proposing the motion, however, stated he would like to see positive action as a result of the debate.

David Carpenter – Brigantii: Brigantii Morris meet and practice at one of the largest universities in the country and widely publicise their activities in a culture booklet. Out of the thousands of students, the side have only ever managed to recruit 4. Argues that this is an excellent idea but not practical for many sides. Knows of other sides who also have the same issues when recruiting students from any and every ethnic background, despite large turnouts to events.

Tom Richards – Acid Morris: Stated concerns that the action taken to stop the practice of full face black make up is an easy option that doesn't affect the majority of people in the organisation. Argued that active change is what is needed, not further delays to positive

action, and that the Black Lives Matter movement try to counteract such delays which are seen as failure to address issues head on.

JC: Jen draws attention to the supporting document produced by Beorma and Acid Morris which is available on the OM website for all sides to see and that the suggestions are excellent. Jen hopes that we can look at this and produce more of these excellent ideas in the future. She hopes that those proposing the motion will assist with this as we move forward.

Natalie Lancaster – Fowlers Molly: Stated that Fowlers Molly is a diverse team. Stated that the best way to recruit and attract people is to show them, something which is difficult at the current time. Mentioned that there are also socio-economic issues which can disproportionately affect those that we are trying to attract (kit costs, commitment to dance sessions), and asked that we think about how we can make morris an easier commitment and a more accessible hobby for people.

Penny-Jane Swift – Steps in Time: Asked how we could ever quantify efforts in recruiting diversely. Steps in Time are from a very rural area in North Dorset.

Naomi Standen – Acid Morris (responding as proposer of the motion): Expressed concern that obstacles raised in the discussion constitute excuses and that she was disappointed that people seem unprepared to make changes themselves.

A 5 minute break was called to allow anyone still wishing to vote time to do so. The motion was not carried, with 13 votes for, 26 against, and 13 abstentions. JE and JM verified the number of votes.

JC stated that the committee are in support of the sentiments of the motion, if not of the structure and wish to make positive steps towards diversification in the future.

**Action: The committee will discuss the ideas that form the basis of this motion and plan positive action towards encouraging diversity.**

### **c. Constitution Motion 1 – Aims and Principles (proposed by the Committee)**

JC introduced this motion, which is a small wording change to clarify the accepted practice that membership of Open Morris is not automatically granted to all applicants, and discussed the precedent surrounding decisions made by the JMO to admit or exclude groups dancing in different styles. Michael Stimpson stated that we need to protect the insurance cover, which cannot be available to groups outside of morris, as the cover is negotiated around specific styles of dance.

### **d. Constitution Motion 2 – Membership (proposed by the Committee)**

JC introduced this motion, another small wording change to clarify accepted practice in renewal paperwork. Teams are required to agree to following the constitution when they complete renewal paperwork, this wording change makes that requirement more clearly constitutional.

#### **e. Constitution Motion 3 – Equality (proposed by the Committee)**

JC introduced this motion, a slightly more substantial wording change addressing how the OM Equality Policy is managed. In the proposed text, the responsibilities of the OM Committee regarding the Equality Policy have been clarified, as have the responsibilities of members to abide by the Equality Policy. The fact that the Equality Policy forms part of the constitution is also clarified.

Norm Warren – The Far Side: Suggested that OM should task an officer or seek a co-opted member to deal with all issues of equality, and that this should be taken very seriously as it is a heavy responsibility. Felt that Ordinary Motion 2 was not workable as it could not be monitored however, would like the issue of OM diversity addressed. Asked whether the authors of Ordinary Motion 2 would be able to assist the committee with equality issues within Open Morris.

Tony Roberts – Beorma Morris: Stated that Beorma have a number of plans for widening morris in the future. He says that Beorma and The Acid Morris will do this on their own, either within or outside of morris organisations as decided by his side.

Naomi Standen – Acid Morris: Stated that it's common for white people to say they don't know what to do about structural racism, but that black communities want these issues addressed without having to be involved.

Sam Davey – Ragged Oak/SW Area: Sought clarification about OM Members performing other styles of dance than morris. Michael Stimpson replied that, when the insurance policy was originally set up there were only three given styles of dance covered, and that any styles outside of the 'norm' who apply for JMO membership are discussed with him as JMO Insurance Officer.

Judy Roberts - Restless Soles: Restless Soles are an Appalachian side and said that they are members of Open Morris as they would not have been accepted by the Morris Federation at the time of their formation. However, a lot of morris dancers often cross over to Appalachian and wishes to reinforce that Appalachian dance is part of the morris world.

Tom Richards – Acid Morris: Acid Morris dance a traditional morris style but only joined Open Morris to get insurance. He asks what else sides join for as they are only in the organisation for the insurance. He says that the JMO day of dance is irrelevant and that morris is a local tradition.

Sid Hardy – Foxs Morris: Foxs are definitely a morris side but they often join in with other groups who are not morris dancers eg: a belly dance side. Asked if teams would be insured when joining in with performances of another type of dancing. Michael Stimpson says that we would not be insured but that groups such as Belly dance teams would have their own insurance. Charlotte Pascoe - Lepton Morris is also a musician for a Belly dance team, and stated that they have their own insurance through EFDSS.

A 5 minute break was called to allow anyone still wishing to vote time to do so.

Constitution Motion 1 was carried with 50 votes for and 0 against.

Constitution Motion 2 was carried with 45 votes for and 1 against.

Constitution Motion 3 was carried with 47 votes for and 2 against.

JE and JM verified the number of votes.

## **10. Election of Officers:**

a. Chair – Jen Cox, proposed by Lepton Morris and seconded by Cadi Ha

b. Membership Secretary – John Scholey, proposed by The Far Side and seconded by Roses are Red

c. Secretary – Hetty Bevington , proposed by Tatters Morris and seconded by Theale Tattoo

d. Treasurer – Liz Scholey, proposed by Brooms Bricks and Bowlers and seconded by The Far Side

e. Web Officer – Malcolm Hills, proposed by Wharfedale Wayzgoose and seconded by Nicki Pickering (Life Member)

All those standing were elected.

Jen Cox was elected as Chair with 46 votes for, 0 against, 4 abstentions.

John Scholey was elected as Membership Secretary with 46 votes for, 0 against, 4 abstentions.

Hetty Bevington was elected as Secretary with 46 votes for, 0 against, 4 abstentions.

Liz Scholey was elected as Treasurer with 46 votes for, 0 against, 4 abstentions.

Malcolm Hills was elected as Web Officer with 46 votes for, 0 against, 4 abstentions.

JE and JM verified the number of votes.

JC thanked LSi for her time as Secretary over the past year, and welcomed and congratulated Hetty Bevington on her new appointment.

## **11. Appointment of Officials:**

JC thanked Sam Davey – South West Area Rep and Conor Smith – Editor of Dancing On! for their first year within the organisation and said that both are great assets to the organisation.

JC announced that Lally McBeth of Tatters Morris has come forward as our new Archivist. Lally was welcomed by the meeting.

JC said that we still have some vacancies for an East Midlands Area Rep and a Publicity Co-Ordinator, and that any interested parties are welcome to come forward.

## **12. Appointment of Independent Reviewer:**

Steven Archer has acted as our Independent Reviewer, and has looked at our accounts for the last few years. He is pleased to continue for the 2020-21 year and the OM Committee are happy to maintain his appointment.

LSc thanked Steven Archer for his work this year.

## **13. Nominations for Honorary/Life Membership:**

Mike Salter was proposed for Life Membership by Liz Scholey

LSc: Life membership is particularly for those who have been involved in Open Morris for a significant period of time. LSc felt that this was the time to suggest this honour for Mike as the Madcap events have now drawn to a close after 34 years. He has also been editor of the magazine, and was Secretary during the 80's/90's.

Norm Warren – The Far Side also endorsed all of these comments and says that Mike and his workshops have been an inspiration for many dancers over the years.

Mike Salter was accepted as a Life Member with 42 votes for, 0 against, and 7 abstentions. JE and JM verified the number of votes. JC thanked our tellers and congratulated Mike Salter.

## **14. The Covid-19 Pandemic:**

JC had hoped that we would have more guidance available pertinent to the coming period, but that the performing arts section of the government guidance has not yet been updated in advance of lockdown ending on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December and is it therefore difficult to have a meaningful discussion about the position.

JC also gave a moment to reflect on the members that have been lost this year. JC feels that there are too many names to read out all of them, and wouldn't wish to omit anyone she is unaware of, but that most people sadly know of Morris folk who have lost their lives this year. We wish to acknowledge and pay respect to all of those that have been lost. Though not related to Covid-19, John Clifford also sadly passed away this year. John was involved

with OM for many years as a Publicity officer, and contributed a great deal, including working to successfully get morris into the Olympic closing ceremony.

JC discussed the JMO's recent contact with DCMS and the government, which unfortunately had been a clarification seeking exercise that was rendered inconsequential by the second lockdown. However, we have now opened channels of communication and are well placed to deal with any issues that might arise in future.

There has also been a lot of conversation on social media around morris being potentially classified as a sport to allow greater scope for activities under covid guidance, however, JC wished to clarify that this is not the case, and even if it were appropriate for morris to be classified as a sport, the mechanisms to pursue this in any useful way are beyond the financial and logistical means of the volunteer run JMO.

JC thanked Sally Wearing, the Morris Federation's Health and Safety Advisor, for the tireless work she has done this year in interpreting guidance to keep JMO members informed of relevant information. JC asks that all members ensure that they are happy that any activities they undertake are safe and legal. The officers of OM cannot give legal guidance to teams and can only signpost sides to relevant government documents.

**Action: The committee will issue an update to signpost member teams to new legislation as soon as possible.**

JC said that while we are all desperate to return to dancing, she strongly believes that the community and camaraderie and love for what we do in the morris world are strong enough to withstand what is happening in the world, that when we can dance together again normally the joy will be worth the sacrifices we are making now, and the renewed enthusiasm will bolster the morris community for years to come.

JC asked for sides to share any ideas they have for activities in current situation which might help teams to remain viable when we are able to return to dancing.

## **15. Joint Morris Organisations Business**

The JMO Day of Dance, hosted by the Morris Ring, was supposed to take place in Liverpool in April this year, but was cancelled due to the pandemic. The current agreement is that the Morris Ring will host in Liverpool in 2021 and Open Morris will host the following year, however as time moves on the viability of a Day of Dance in early 2021 looks more tenuous. We're pleased to announce that Beltane have kindly offered to host the day in Exeter when our turn comes around, and we will keep members updated as plans develop.

## **16. The Sue Dyke Award**

The Sue Dyke Award is OM's annual competition for OM members under the age of 25. At last year's AGM it was discussed that the SDA fund would only be sufficient to run the competition for 2020 before either adding funds from the main OM fund, or seeking to close the competition. A report from the SDA Subcommittee had been prepared detailing the activities of the competition, and that the fund had in the past year received two generous donations - £1000 from the Lobster Potties festival and £500 from Shinfield Shambles – which will allow the competition to continue. The report also discusses the benefits that have been seen as a result of the SDA over previous years. All entries and details of the competition can be found on the Open Morris Website. The committee would welcome any ideas for future competition themes.

Norm Warren – The Far Side said that following the sad death of his wife, Cath Mew, he had donated £100 towards the hospice that supported her and mentioned Open Morris.

## **17. The Douglas Pickering Memorial Fund**

This is a fund set up after Douglas Pickering (a longtime Individual member of Open Morris) died last year. The family wished to donate money to Open Morris to support with the purchase of equipment for new teams as Doug had always enjoyed making sticks and items of morris equipment.

JC reports that one newly established side, The Village Morris, had received £50 (the maximum donation amount from the fund) for the purchase of their bells.

Any new teams can still benefit from this fund and all details are available on the website.

## **18. Any Other Business (Item's at Chair's discretion, subject to time)**

1) Chris Hall – Life/Honorary Member: The Morris Federation have been running a series of zoom events (talks/workshops) and Chris wondered if anyone within Open Morris could do something similar for us as an organisation. She hopes that people will volunteer to share and officers could organise the logistics. JC said that she felt unsure about poaching the Federation's idea, but Fee Lock (Federation Secretary) said that they would not see a problem.

2) Chris Hall – Life/Honorary Member: Chris wanted to thank Malcolm and Craig personally for organising all of the technical details for this zoom meeting.

3) Robin James – Fenstanton Morris asked why the JMO couldn't organise online events for members of all morris organisations. Pauline Woods-Wilson (President of the Morris Federation) confirmed that the events that the Federation are running are open to all, and that they would also welcome volunteers to help with the running of these events. JC said that she would share details of any events that might be of interest with OM members.

4) Robin James – Fenstanton Morris asked what the insurance implications are for audience participation dances. Michael Stimpson replied that the side is insured and that the audience are seen as temporary members of the side whilst they dance with the side.

## **19. Date and Venue of next AGM**

It is impossible at the moment to predict what type of AGM we will be able to have next year. Earl of Stamford, who had originally offered to host this year's AGM, have kindly agreed to host next year's AGM in Warrington, Cheshire if a physical meeting is possible.

Regardless of format, the next OM AGM will be held on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021.

Michael Stimpson asks whether we could look into including a virtual presence for next year's AGM as well in order to be more inclusive. JC echoes that it is wonderful to see so many teams represented this year, and had already stated earlier in the meeting that a virtual option for AGM attendance would be something we are keen to look into. NP said that we need to be aware that Earl of Stamford's current hall does not have Wifi, but this should not be an insurmountable problem with modern technology.

Malcolm Hills asks for any feedback, both positive and negative, regarding the set-up of the AGM this year.

## **20. Close of AGM**

JC thanked all attendees for coming and staying in the meeting!

JC also thanked all of our JMO delegates, especially JM and JE for acting as tellers.

JC thanked the Committee and Officials for their hard work, input and camaraderie during this year.

JS thanked JC for her hard work as Chair this year.

The meeting closed at 17:36

## **Appendices (published as separate document)**

- 1) Officer Reports**
- 2) Officials' Reports**
- 3) Motions**
- 4) Letter from the Chair**
- 5) Sue Dyke Award Report**