

Folk Camps Society Limited

Minutes of the 40th Anniversary Annual General Meeting held at Cecil Sharp House, London 22nd November 2008

The Chairman, Paul Weir, began with a welcome to the 40th anniversary AGM, and drew attention to some special anniversary messages to the Society:

A letter of greeting from the Folk Camps Society Europe (Germany).

A letter from Phil Harnett in China

Greetings in the latest Extent magazine from Mains Unies in Belgium.

Faith Kemp was identified as someone who signed the original document of association. Several others in the room were identified as having been on a camp in 1968, and then more from 1978, 1988, and 1998.

The AGM was declared open at 14:50 hrs:

1. Present: 60 governing members, 6 associate members. Apologies received from 22 governing members
2. Minutes of meeting of 1nd December 2007 were approved.
Proposed Jacqueline Beatty. Seconded Jon McNamara. None against.
3. Matters Arising. None.
4. To appoint tellers for a ballot. No ballot needed, so no tellers required.
5. To appoint 3 members to the Council of management.
This year there were 3 nominations for 3 places so no election was needed. Mick Green, Karl Stevens and Ren Thompson were re-elected to the Council having stood down and offered themselves for re-election in order to bring the Council membership into line with the rotation policy specified in the Society's memorandum and articles of association.
6. To adopt the report and accounts for the year 2007/2008.
Proposed by Cecil French and seconded by Andy Malleson. Carried nem con. The chairman voted 'yes' on behalf of 7 proxies and there were 5 mandated postal votes of 'yes'.
7. To appoint James de Frias as auditors.
Mic Spenceley suggested that we should re-appoint the auditors as they are located close to the office, are reasonably priced and prepared this year's accounts in a record time of 2 weeks. Congratulations were offered to Mic for turning the accounts round quickly, which, together with the auditors' efficiency, made a November AGM possible this year.
Proposed: Malcolm Bright. Seconded: Dennis Conner. Passed nem con.

8. Resolutions proposed in advance by governing members. None.

9. Any Other Business.

Booking procedures and payments:

Jackie Mason raised a question regarding bookings. They had a mix up during 2008 where, due to a problem with their telephone connection they missed an important email and phone call regarding their camp bookings. This led to their missing a payment deadline and having to pay the increased price for late booking. Jackie asked if the Society could implement a backup notification system whereby people who have already reliably booked and paid for part of their holidays could be prompted if a payment appeared to be missing.

Mic Spenceley replied that with the number of bookings he deals with in a year this would be difficult to implement, but that the system has now been changed to be more flexible.

Paul Weir said that the Council aims to be flexible if it's obvious that in some way someone had made a mistake or missed a payment. Regine de Frettes said that we now have procedures whereby Council will consider individual cases rather than expecting the administration manager to exercise discretion.

Jacqueline Beattie acknowledged the commitment and flexibility of the administration manager and the Council in moving towards new systems. There have been lots of successes with new systems, and in general their consistency is much appreciated. Mick Green confirmed that what Jacqueline said was indeed what Council tries to do. Council holds the discretion, rather than devolving it to the administration manager, so if there are problems, members should contact Council, via any of the members, or a request to the administration manager to put their case before Council. This is to avoid any one person shouldering the burden.

Sue Malleson explained that over the last year Council has tried to look at all possible connotations and come up with a policy intended to cover all eventualities where discretion might be required. There is now one A4 sheet of basic guidelines for Council which will be published on the members-only website. Any questions not answered by this will be discussed by Council on a case-by-case basis.

Advertising of individual camps, and booking numbers:

Helen Self raised the point that this year her family missed out on booking for week 2 of the marquee camp as it filled up so quickly. She understood that campers on the "Club 13-80" Yahoo group were contacted by Paul Weir and advised that spaces were filling fast but as the Selfs were not members of that group they didn't get the notification and so didn't book in time. Helen felt that if notification was made it should either be to the entire membership, or not made at all.

Paul Weir said that it was in his capacity as leader of that particular camp, and not the Council of management, that he put out the message on Yahoo. It is common practice for staff to encourage campers to book for their particular camps.

Jacqueline Beattie acknowledged that again we're talking about a NEW problem which has arisen due to increased popularity of the camps, and increased efficiency in the advertising and booking processes. It's a great thing we're booked out; we just need to iron out these problems.

Sue Malleson suggested a bookings counter on the website, but Paul Weir said we've discussed this before and if not too many have booked for a camp this might discourage others from booking.

It was agreed that in future, members of Council should avoid any advertising communications going to limited sections of the membership if they were based on "inside" information.. All booking information from Council will be published in Extent. Exceptionally Council will continue to contact selected interest groups for specialist weekend events, Halsway, craft etc.

By popular request Mic gave out the camp booking statistics for all camps so far for 2009.

Continental Camps:

Karen Dell asked what Council are doing about continental camps. Paul Weir answered that Council need to hear a commitment from people that they'll go if Council run one after the last one had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. Council would love to run the continental camps again but needs to know there's support before organising another one.

Caroline Tracey proposed a show of hands. 18 people were counted from the audience who would go. Brian Pollard said there were 2 issues why last French camp didn't run: 1. Staffing issues and 2. the site was not settled in time. Brian suggested a form in Extent and a link on the website for expression of interest in a foreign camp. This will be implemented, and those particularly interested in a foreign camp for 2010 were encouraged to drum up support and come back to Council with a proposal and supporters, so that it can be organised.

More staff needed:

Council encouraged more people to staff on camps. Cat Moore commented that most workers are volunteers; that staffing a week are hard work; she tried it and isn't planning to do any more. She suggested that all people with the requisite skills should consider having a go, but that it's very important that the membership support each other in doing it.

First Aid:

Ray Garnett suggested we should supply WaspEze in first aid kits for camp. Barry Moule said standard equipment for first aid kits doesn't allow WaspEze. We can't do it because if we put it in the kit, someone uses it and has a reaction then FCS could be liable.

Jon McNamara said he could put something in Extent to remind people to take appropriate medication with them to camp for their family's use.

Development Fund:

Mic Spenceley said the development fund hasn't been used for any grants this year. It has been used for staff training & apprentice places. Mic hasn't had to contact the sub-committee as there had been no decisions to make.

Sue Malleson proposed the sub-committee continues with same members. Motion passed with general agreement. Barry Pollard said being on the sub-committee is a great opportunity to get an insight into what Council do and encouraged others to join.

Cecil French suggested we should put some more publicity about the development fund in Extent to get more applications for grants. Regine de Frettes pointed out that members are welcome to volunteer for other sub-committees as well. Mic Spenceley read out the current list of Sub-Committees.

Christine Munford suggested an Extent article on what money has been used for in the past, to remind people what they can apply for.

Contractors:

Paul Weir thanked the three contractors, Mic Spenceley, Brian Bull and Barry Moule, for their work and said that he was delighted that all three have agreed to sign up for another 3 years.

The meeting closed at 15:10