

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Gardens Dancers

Held on 13th September 2010 at 7.30pm in the hall of St. Peters, Lutton Place.

29 persons were present for all or part of the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from 8 persons.

Opening remarks from the Chair

In her opening remarks Margaret Burns (chairperson) briefly reviewed the programme which had just come to an end. As in previous years, the committee had decided on financial grounds to organise a mixture of indoor and outdoor events. Accordingly dancing in the Gardens had been planned for 9 Monday evenings from 31 May to 26 July. Three of these were cancelled on the day because of bad weather. One of these was an evening when we were to have had a young demonstration team from Dreghorn. Fortunately we were able to incorporate them into the August indoor programme to everyone's delight. A highlight of the occasions in the Gardens was the recording by the BBC of the dancing of 21 June for the popular *Take the Floor* programme broadcast on the following weekend.

In addition there had been 9 Tuesday evenings of dancing at St. Peters, Lutton Place between 1 June and 27 July and 5 Monday evenings at the hall of the United Reform Church in Duke Street from 2 to 30th August. The average attendance at all our venues (on nights when dancing had taken place) was higher than in 2009. The choice of venue probably contributed to this increase, though it is difficult to be sure of the full reasons. The entrance fee had remained at £3.50 as in the previous year. As the treasurer would explain we ended the year in a better financial position than last year, so we can embark on planning next year's programme with confidence. She paid tribute to those of the committee who had worked hard to organise a successful season and negotiating with the Council for favourable rates for using the Ross Bandstand.

Minutes of Previous Annual Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Monday 7 September 2009 were circulated and reviewed (having previously also appeared on the website). Margo Lyall proposed and Helen Cook seconded that they be accepted as a correct record. This was agreed.

Matters Arising from the minutes

All would be brought up as agenda items.

Treasurer's report

John Nuttall gave his treasurer's report.

He noted firstly that the report he gave last year was an interim report with a forecast for the position at the year's end. In the event the final position at the year's end was almost exactly the same as the interim. The report he was about to give was similarly an estimate as there is a minor dispute with the council over their invoice. The final figures, however, are not expected to be markedly different from those circulated at the beginning of the meeting. (See attached)

Of the 9 events planned at the Ross Bandstand, three were cancelled due to rain, and for one we hosted *Take the Floor*, so we had no attendance figures for it. The average attendance per event at the remaining events was 13% higher than it was in 2009 for the events which were not cancelled in that year. Attendance per event at Lutton Place for 2010 was 32% higher than in St. George's West in 2009, suggesting that the change of venue was appreciated. August attendance figures per event were also increased (by 29%) despite the fact that the Duke Street Hall was somewhat cramped given these increased numbers.

The charging pattern for several evenings at the Ross Bandstand were unusual in that we had no costs (but correspondingly zero income) for the *Take the Floor* night, we will have reduced costs for one evening when the dancing area had been inadequately cleaned following flooded conditions and we did not have to pay rental for the final evening when the Assembly Group had erected a structure in preparation for the Festival fringe (but we expect to pay £120 for the movement of chairs). In total the events at the Ross Bandstand made a loss of close to £300 in 2010 compared with a loss of £492 in 2009. Overall the nett of income minus expenditure for the indoor events in 2010 was close to £1870 compared with £771 in 2009. This resulted in a nett income minus expenditure for 2010 (excluding donations) of £1,288 in 2010 compared with £38 in 2009.

When donations are taken into account, and all anticipated bills for 2010 paid, the balance in the account is expected to be close to £8000. This may be compared with a final figure for 2009 of £6465.

This gives the required financial confidence to begin planning the 2011 season.

There were two questions from the floor in relation to the the accounts and attendance figures which John had circulated: the first sought clarification about some details of the August takings and donations; the second concerned why the *Take the Floor* event was free. John replied that it had not been intended to charge the parents who brought the young demonstration team for one evening in Duke Street, but some had paid anyway, so their contribution had been treated as a donation. It was a standard rule of the BBC that all *Take the Floor* events must be free (but they are ticketed), but by the same process the other costs are borne by the BBC, so we did not lose on this event.

It was proposed by Agnes Reed and seconded by Peter Hyssett that the financial report be accepted. This was passed by the meeting.

Election of New Committee Members

Margaret Burns thanked and paid tribute to the committee members who had indicated their wish to stand down. Agnes Macmichael has been our secretary for 8 years and felt it was time to move on. She had done sterling work in negotiating with the Council concerning bookings, with the clubs concerning

the programmes, stewards and demonstration teams, and with potential donors. She had been supported by Derrick Macmichael, who had also frequently looked after the cash desk, and who is also now wishing to stand down. In addition Jenny MacDonald had asked to be replaced. She was still very committed to the aims of the Princes Street Gardens Dancers, but unable to be sure of being available at crucial stages of the next season as she is now in the final year of her course and is therefore unsure where she will be based or what she will be doing next year. She had brought a valuable young perspective to the committee.

After some discussion the following new committee members were elected.

Secretary: James Summers, proposed by Margaret Harris, seconded by Agnes Reed

Ordinary committee member: Sandra Wallace, proposed by Margaret Harris seconded by Helen Cook.

It was agreed we would try and co-opt a third new committee member during the year.

General Discussion

A general discussion was held concerning the season just past, and looking forward to 2011. Proposed dates are

- Princes Street Gardens: Mondays from 30 May to 25 July (9 nights)
- Hall in June-July: Tuesdays from 31 May to 26 July (9 nights)
- Hall in August: Mondays 1 August to 29 August (5 nights)
- Annual Meeting: 5 September 2011 ? This date may be changed as it was this year.

The move for the Tuesday dances this year to St Peters, Luton Place, from St Georges West, met with general approval and the committee were encouraged to try to book the same venue for 2011.

The meeting found that the URC Hall in Duke Street, was a pleasant bright venue, but somewhat too small for the numbers we attracted, so the committee was encouraged to seek different premises for our August events. there was a suggestion that golf clubs and similar organisations might have suitable premises.

The meeting urged that the Council be solicited to improve the dancing surface and the bandstand facilities generally.

The meeting was enthusiastic about the idea that we should have a period of dancing after the Annual Meeting next year, perhaps one hour to recorded music.

Margaret Burns closed the meeting at 8.35pm, thanking all who had attended the meeting for their interest and support.

Archive material consisting of photographs and newspaper articles concerning dancing at the Ross Bandstand was displayed by Dorothy Leurs after the meeting, and evoked much interest from those who had attended.