

## Islington Folk Club

### Annual General Meeting

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023, 7:30pm

The Brewhouse and Kitchen, 2a Corsica Street, N5 1JJ

#### Agenda:

1. Minutes and matters arising
2. Treasurer's report and club accounts
3. Reports from club officers
4. Committee elections
5. Constitutional change
6. Changes to entrance fees
7. Any other business

#### Action Summary:

Item	Action	Who
2. Treasurer's report and club accounts	Send invoices for the web-site to Nick.	Martin

**Present:** Carol Burtt, Maggie Chadwick, Nick Moran, Martin Nail, John Orsulik, Bernard Puckett, Oliver Schick, Roger Trevitt, Rob Twisse.

**Apologies:** Maggie Eiseman-Renyard, Pete Eiseman-Renyard, Helen O'Malley, Syd Pochin, Alex Szyszkowski.

Martin in the chair.

#### 1. Minutes and matters arising

Oliver pointed out that the minutes of the 2022 AGM should say 'until the 2023 AGM' under point 8. All agreed this should be amended. With the change, the minutes of the 2022 AGM were approved as a true and accurate record.

**90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Bob Davenport:** Rob had contacted other folk clubs about a celebration for Bob Davenport's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, but this had not come together. Roger had sent a birthday card signed by many.

#### 2. Treasurer's report and club accounts

Nick gave his report. He said that running expenditure of the club should more or less break even. It was essentially covered by membership fees, bolstered by the small percentage of the door take that we took, which we were proposing to decrease from 10% to 5%, increasing the percentage given to guests. The club made a small profit if we consider that capital spending was from reserves. Selling Folk London made a loss last year, but some profit this year.

No invoices had again been received from Martin for the running of the web-site. Nick said that we had to be aware that this item hadn't been in the accounts for two years. There were two items—the

domain name, which was pretty cheap, and the web hosting, which was more expensive. Martin promised that he would send the invoices.

**Action:** Martin to send invoices for the web-site to Nick.

We had given £500 to the Sweet Thames Project and had also spent £205.28 on installing gig lighting. This had been very well received by the pub. The cost of the new banners had been part of running expenditure. They had been less than £100 each.

Oliver said that the Sweet Thames project was a very good project to support. There had been a very good final performance, which the project hoped to put on again. It had the potential to introduce more people to folk clubs.

We were grateful to the pub for being gracious in hosting us and enjoyed our good relationship with them. The club was advertised on the pub noticeboard and on social media, and staff were friendly and welcoming.

Oliver asked about the tablet computer that we used to process payment, as it had recently caused some difficulties, probably because of software updates. Nick said that he wasn't sure yet whether we needed to replace the tablet. It would be a cost of about £250, possibly £400. We might be able to continue using the old tablet if we were able to connect to another network than the pub's.

Payment to Zettle had been £66 for card payments, which was equivalent to .98% of payments. We didn't have an annual subscription and had to be careful that the cost of doing business didn't creep up too much.

Maggie said that on one night when card machine didn't work, only two people weren't carrying cash, so that this caused less of a problem than might have been expected. Nick said it was much easier to pay (guests and other bills) from bank account than in cash, and that it was getting harder to pay in cash. Also, Unity Bank had cut their relationships with high street banks, which caused additional difficulties.

Overall, we had had a raw profit of about £440 on weekly turnover.

Our reserves had gone down by about £4k. We discussed our reserves. Martin suggested being cautious and to have a reserves policy of at least two years' worth of expenditure. Nick said that right now we were not far off one year's turnover; the total 2022 take had been about £6,000.

Nick proposed, and Oliver seconded, that we wouldn't establish a formal reserves policy but to seek to maintain a level of one year's turnover. This was agreed unanimously.

### **3. Reports from club officers**

#### **Booking co-ordinator's report**

Roger had taken over from Brian Gardner as bookings co-ordinator in June 2022 and made bookings for every week from then, with one singaround (at the party at the end of summer 2022). Seven out of 14 guests had featured female performers, following the example set by Brian. There had been three Arsenal games that had coincided with club nights, but it had been less of a problem than feared, as two out of three guests on these nights came by train, while one had stayed with Roger and Maggie. Attendances had varied between 25 and 51, and a number of acts had reduced their usual fees to play at the club. We had had a disappointing turnout for Winter Wilson and surmised that this might have had

something to do with the fact that they usually played on bigger stages and that their audience was less able to access information about folk clubs.

Oliver said that the club's base audience had really increased in the past year, and Martin offered congratulations to Roger on the programme. We recorded a vote of thanks for Roger. We thought that there was a more diverse audience, with many new regulars as well as more long-standing members returning, than a year ago.

We discussed the format of club nights. Nick said that there were audience members who did not want to listen to floorspots. Maggie asked if the time for floorspots was too long, especially before the first guest slot. Carol asked whether momentum was lost owing to the big gap between the first and second guest set. Rob asked whether we should we extend the break, as he thought that it was often too short to get a drink. Carol said that it seemed very late to begin the second guest slot at 10pm.

Maggie pointed out that if we were to agree any changes to the format, this would have to be changed on the information and confirmation sheet sent to guests, and she and Roger would have to know.

Maggie suggested that we make the first floorspots 40 minutes instead of 45. Nick said that when he was MCing in the early half of the year, he was doing this as the pub stopped serving earlier then. He was putting on the guests for their first set at 8:40pm. Oliver suggested that we put the format on the agenda at the next committee meeting (in August) for a fuller discussion. We could also discuss it by e-mail and ideally have a proposal ready for decision.

### **Publicity officer's report**

Roger also acted as publicity officer, although other committee members did other jobs around publicity, and gave his report. He thought, firstly, that the opening rate of our e-mails, while usually given at around a third by our provider, seemed to be more like 50%, as the provider also seemed to count unsubscribed accounts.

He had made an effort to enter events on the Folk and Honey web-site, but unfortunately it might close, as it seemed to be run by the owner of the Harrison, who was being pursued for back rent by the landlord. Leaflets had been done by Alex and printed by Nick.

The question that we had included on the member signing-up slip as to how new members had heard about the club had shown that people mainly heard through the artists, followed by friends or word of mouth.

### **Venue Co-ordinator's report**

Nick said that he would be making new signs for the summer, including one for downstairs to point people upstairs. He asked if we should buy some stools for the back. There had been an increased worry around fire safety since the first audience of 70 people (which had occurred in 2023, not 2022). We had adapted to this by leaving clear standing room at the back, as with the larger audiences any attempt at evacuation would have been very difficult if we had kept chairs there. However, he thought that we could have a row of stools at the back without compromising safety.

There had been a small issue with seats for people who had difficulty standing. Some younger people had got up and had given up their seats, but some older people had left when they had been unable to get a seat.

We had had to hold one event at the Alpaca in Essex Road, venue of the Cellar Upstairs, because we had been unable to use the Tap Room at very short notice. Oliver and Maggie said that it was very good to have the Alpaca as a fallback venue.

#### 4. Committee elections

We elected a new committee.

Post	Candidate	Proposer	Seconded
<b>Bookings Co-ordinator</b>	Roger	Carol	Rob
<b>Venue Co-ordinator</b>	Nick	Bernard	Maggie
<b>Booking and Venue Associates</b>	Rob	Carol	Bernard
	Carol	Nick	Rob
	Maggie	Roger	Nick
	John	Oliver	Nick
	Martin	Bernard	Rob
	Bernard	Martin	Rob
<b>Secretary</b>	Oliver	Carol	Rob
<b>Treasurer</b>	Nick	Roger	Rob
<b>Publicity and Website</b>	Roger	Oliver	Nick

All were elected unopposed.

#### 5. Constitutional change

Oliver proposed the following small change to the constitution, to enable the committee to co-opt new members to specific committee posts. This required the following insertion (between \*) in point 11 under 'Management':

11. The Committee shall have the power to co-opt new members to the Committee between Annual General Meetings as it identifies a need to maintain the numbers of the committee at or above the required minimum or as it identifies the need for new members to adequately cover all the roles. Co-opted members **\*may be co-opted to specific roles and\*** are co-opted until the next general meeting, when they can stand for election, unless they resign their co-opted Committee membership.

Nick seconded this, and it was approved unopposed.

#### 6. Changes to entrance fees

We discussed, and voted on, changes to entrance fees. (No change was proposed to the annual membership fee (January to December), which was to stay at £2.) There were three separate decisions to be made:

**a. Standard entrance fees:** Since the resumption of activities following the pandemic, the club had been charging reduced rates for entry. It was proposed to raise the entrance fees back to the following 2020 pricing structure:

Member entrance fee to increase from £6 to £7

Non-member entrance fee to increase from £8 to £9

Student/unwaged member entrance fee to increase to £5

Student/unwaged non-member entrance fee to increase from £6 to £7

These changes were to be put in place in September 2023.

Proposer: Nick  
Seconder: Oliver

Nick explained that the reason for the change was always to pay artists more, and never to make more money for the club, which was financially secure. The vote was 8-1 in favour.

**b. Increased percentage for guests:** The club had long given 90% of the money taken on the door to its guests. It was proposed that this be increased to 95%.

Proposer: Nick  
Seconder: Roger

This proposal was carried unanimously.

**c. Increased entrance fees for popular guests:** It was proposed that the committee have discretion to occasionally increase the entrance fee for popular guests, by consultation between the treasurer and the bookings officer. The purpose was to be able to attract high-profile names who would require a higher fee than the club was normally able to guarantee.

Proposer: Nick  
Seconder: Roger

This proposal was carried unanimously.

## 7. Any other business

**Trad2Mad:** Maggie asked whether there was going to be a Trad2Mad competition this summer. Bernard said that it would have to be in Folk London soon if it was to have a closing date of October 31<sup>st</sup>, with the winners announced at the Christmas party. We thought we could get an advert together for Folk London in time. We voted in favour, with one abstention.

**Action:** Bernard to organise and to ensure an ad went into the August/September Folk London.

**MCing:** Bernard noted that he was going to be away a lot in September, so other MCs should take over. Nick and Carol said they would be away the first week in September. Maggie said that Richard Allen had previously volunteered to MC, so he could MC the first meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and suggested that Carol could also MC.

We noted that the next committee meeting would be in August, and the next AGM in January.

The meeting closed at 9:51pm.