



RSPBA North West England Branch

AGM 1st December 2019 at Padgate Community Centre.

A quorum **was** attained within one half hour after the 13:00 start time of the meeting.

Present Officials

- P Brown Secretary
- C Eyre President, Treasurer & Webmaster
- K Thacker Vice- Chairman
- T Brown Music Board representative

Bands in attendance: -

- Warrington
- Wirral
- Manchester Phoenix

Apologies

- City of Manchester Pipe Band

A quorum was attained, and the meeting started with the AGM @ 13:15

Opening

The vice - chairman welcomed those attending the meeting and thanked them for the continued support they give to their bands and the branch throughout the year.

The secretary reported for the AGM records the passing of Owen Nash a long-standing member and supporter of the Branch, Francis Whitehead of Wirral Pipe Band and Bob Shacklady.

The minutes of the 2018 AGM had already been accepted by the branch members at the January 2019 GM. These approved minutes were used as a template for progressing the meeting.

Treasurers Report

As reported at the General Meetings throughout 2019 the branch is in a stable financial position. considering the events run throughout the year.

The accounts were accepted at the 3rd November General Meeting, showing a surplus for the year of £12.94 and a respectable closing balance of £2291.69. The branch secretary has forwarded a copy of the accounts to headquarters for their records.

A discussion took place regarding the branch Levy. It was unanimously decided that the Levy would remain set at the current £40 and this would be used to offset the competitions and workshops run by the branch.

It was also agreed there would be no change to the 2019 competition entry fees.

The hall rental is £8 / hour (£16 per meeting).

RSPBA Report

The work of the Board of Directors has been reported to the branch membership at each of the General Meetings held throughout the year. The quorum of the branch is surviving, but our attempt to grow the member bands within the branch has not achieved the desired numbers for us to remain a Branch with representation at Headquarters as per article 72.1.

The association has decided there is a need for a North of England Branch, with the current branches (NWE and NEE) becoming sections retaining their identity under this umbrella structure. The initial Director of the Branch will be Kevin Reilly (the current director of the (NEE Branch)).

It was agreed that we would support the North England Branch, and become the NWE Section:

Proposed:- Warrington

Seconded:- Manchester Phoenix

Unanimous.

Chris agreed to update the Web Site, and work with Paul to progress the move to a Section as seamlessly as possible.

The branch Indoor Solo competitions were successful and went off as planned, many thanks to those who participated, with special thanks to the Competition and Trophy Secretary for all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes.

Major Championships 2019

This past season we were a little less fortunate with the weather for our major championships, with rain affecting all events at some point in the day. This was the first year at both Lurgan for the UK and Inverness for the European. Both very different venues with good and bad points at both.

The British at Paisley continues to develop as an event, and we are working closely with the promoter to look at ways of improving further.

There are no plans as yet to move to the King George V park, as the groundwork is

not yet complete. However, we will be keeping this in mind for future years.

At Lurgan, we have met a number of times with the organisers since the event and have had a full review of the positioning of the arenas and the highland dancing. It looks like we will have two arenas on the top area beside the fountain where Grade 1 was, and the others will be moved to areas where we noticed there was less flooding. There were some issues with coach parking, but these have been picked up with the Council's H&S officer.

The Europeans at Inverness ran very well despite the poor weather in the afternoon. We identified a couple of issues with the arena placements and these will be reviewed before next year's event.

The Scottish at Dumbarton ran well, but the march past had to be cancelled due to the weather and the prize giving done in the hospitality tent. There is development planned for the site, but at this point it is unclear whether we will still be able to utilise the main area for the arenas as they are planning to build an all-weather running track and pavilion on the red blaze surface that we currently use for car parking.

The World Championships were again held in Glasgow Green over the Friday and Saturday with mostly positive feedback. The use of the large screen adjacent to RSPBA offices to declare the qualifiers for all grades has become a key component of delivering what is an extremely challenging event for all involved. This year we had two extra arena which allowed us to complete the event more than an hour earlier than in recent years.

The World Solo Drumming and International Tenor Drumming was again successfully held in Caledonian University, Glasgow. The adult final was moved back to the Carnegie Theatre at the request of last year's finalists. The dates of the five regional qualifiers for 2020 were included in the programme.

We have reviewed the timetable for entry forms and official's allocation for this event, as this year was very late in getting the information out. We have pulled the process forward in the calendar to give the officials more advance confirmation.

Premises Update

Since March last year we have been operating out of the Pentagon Centre in Washington Street while the full refurbishment of Headquarters was undertaken.

We are very pleased with the work that has been completed, but there is some finishing that remains to be done before we can start moving our offices and all our equipment back into our main premises.

We hope we can coincide the official opening with the start of the new season. It is a very exciting time for the Association, and we were fortunate in being able to build up our finances over the last 20 years to such an extent that the redevelopment work could go ahead.

We have had tremendous support from throughout the Association with branches even offering to help out if cash flow ever becomes an issue, and fortunately we haven't

yet had to take up their kind offer.

Our Directors and some of our officials, including some adjudicators, donated their contest allowance from the WSD to help furnish the new education and training centre. This was a purely voluntary act by these officials as there was no expectation on behalf of the Board of Directors that anyone other than themselves would contribute.

Association Finances

It has been well publicised that we have invested the surplus built up over the last 20 years in the refurbishment of Headquarters. Contracts are already in place for our championships for the next two years and will be working hard to secure new contracts for the 2022 season and beyond.

During the year we have managed to secure a small amount of external funding, just over £90k, despite making more than 40 applications to various trusts and organisations.

There were no changes to the fees and allowances announced to the Board of Directors at the October meeting.

Pipe Band College

As mentioned last year, we have re-established the Pipe Band College, and the Principals have been appointed.

Principal of Piping – Jim Campbell
Principal of Drumming – Paul Brown
Principal of Pipe Band Musicianship – Tom Brown
Summer School Principal – John Nevans

These posts are responsible for developing strategies, in conjunction with other members of the Pipe Band College, for raising standards in piping, drumming, and pipe band musicianship. A key function being to support the geographical representatives to develop local strategies for supporting local bands to achieve greater success.

Summer School

Another successful Summer School was held here in the Gaelic School in July with over 30 students attended from all over the UK. My congratulations to our Education Officer Pat Whelan, and Summer School Principal John Nevans and his highly professional team of Instructors.

The next Summer School date will be 27th July 2020.

Music Board

The Music Board (MB) has again met four times (January, April, September and October) throughout 2019 since the branches last Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Each Branch is entitled to nominate two representatives (subject to holding the necessary qualification).

The North of England Branches is/are represented by Theresa Brown (North West England) and Colin Smith (North East England).

The Standards Group has worked hard throughout the year actioning grade requests, appeals as well as monitoring transfer. Grading decisions are ratified by the Board of Directors sitting on the Music Board, with the decisions being posted to the RSPBA Web immediately following the meeting.

Band registrations have been checked by the BoD at both major and minor contests, there has been a marked increase in anomalies found. Bands please check your registration documents.

The Tunes Group is a sub-committee of the Music Board that maintains the Prescribed Tunes List(s), there have been a number of additions added this year in response to requests from Bands.

There has been no further movement on the addition of Sample Drum scores this year, as resources have been busy with the World Solo Drumming review.

The Board of Directors asked the Music Board to progress two new pieces of work.

- One related to Grade Realignment and ensuring the current structure is fit for purpose, and work is still progressing on this.
- The second is a review of the competition format of the World Pipe Band Championships which completed earlier in the year. The main alteration was the agreement to have all Grade 1 bands play on both days where the entry is 17 bands or less. Where the entry is 18 bands or more, then the Friday will remain a qualifier with 12 bands going through to the final on Saturday.

Conclusion

The Board of Directors commend the standing committees of the association for their contribution to a hugely successful year and look forward to their continued support in 2020.

Branch Officials

The Music Board posts were due for renewal this year, having become a section we are contributing one representative. The current post holders were asked if they were willing to continue in post.

Theresa was elected to continue as Music Board representative.

Proposed: Manchester Phoenix

Seconded: Warrington

All others were like minded.

Chris agreed to remain in post as Trophy Steward, Web Site Design and Competition Secretary, and Ken agreed to take on the position as Chairman of the NEW Section. All other Section Officials were ratified in post.

Proposed: Manchester Phoenix

Seconded: Warrington

All others were like minded.

The secretary is to forward details of the officials to headquarters for their records.

| North England Branch Post | | In Post until | |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------------|---|
| Music Board | T Brown | Dec 2022 | Appointment rolled over from NWE Section on establishing the NE Branch Nov/Dec 2019; 1 st Dec 2019 Last NWE Branch AGM Prop: Manchester Phoenix Sec: Warrington |
| Music Board | C Smith | Nov 2021 | Appointment rolled over from NEE Section on establishing the NE Branch Nov/Dec 2019 |
| Regional Representative | C Smith | Nov 2021 | Appointment rolled over from NEE Section on establishing the NE Branch Nov/Dec 2019 |
| Director | K Reilly | Nov 2021 | becomes North England Branch director. |

| North West England Section Post | | In Post until | |
|--|-----------|---------------|---|
| President | C Eyre | Dec 2020 | 26 th Nov 2017 NWE Branch AGM Prop: Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Sec: Manchester Phoenix |
| Chairman | K Thacker | Dec 2022 | 1 st Dec 2019 Last NWE Branch AGM Prop: Manchester Phoenix Sec: Warrington |
| Secretary | P Brown | Dec 2020 | 26 th Nov 2017 NWE Branch AGM Prop: Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Sec: Manchester Phoenix |
| Treasurer | C Eyre | Dec 2020 | 26 th Nov 2017 NWE Branch AGM Prop: Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Sec: Manchester Phoenix |
| Trophy Steward, Web Site Design and Competition Secretary | C Eyre | Dec 2022 | 1 st Dec 2019 Last NWE Branch AGM Prop: Manchester Phoenix Sec: Warrington |

AOCB

A query was raised on the RSPBA website and its updates. Could more frequent news / information be reported. For example, an update on the premises, and how it will be used going forwards.

A related query was made regarding the online forms. Could they be made so they can be edited; to be completed they need to be printed and copied for return to Headquarters. In what form does headquarters require the forms returned? It was reported that mailed returns were taking some time to be completed.

AGM closed at 14:15 and the meeting progressed into the Section GM at 14:130 after a short break.

P L Brown
Branch Secretary
and
Secretary NWE Section