

North of England Branch
Report of a Meeting held by video conference
on the 18th February 2021 at 7pm

Attendees

North West England Bands: -

None.

North East England Bands: -

Malcolm Robertson – Houghton le Spring

Les Chadwick – Houghton le Spring

Frank Bonnar – Houghton le Spring (Auditor)

Les Chadwick Section – Houghton le Spring (Section President)

Lez Parsons – Houghton le Spring (Trophy Convenor)

Paul Wright - Beverly and District

Bryan Robinson - City of Newcastle

Officials

Kevin Reilly – Branch Chairman

Paul Brown – NWE Branch Secretary.

Colin Smith – NEE Music Board Rep.

Theresa Brown – NEW Music Board Rep.

Apologies

Alan Jamieson City of Newcastle

The Report covers the key discussion items covered at the meeting.

Welcome

The Branch Chairman welcomed all those attending this the 2nd meeting of the North of England Branch. The meeting had been communicated to the members of both the NWE and NEE Section members.

Previous Meeting

The Report of the Previous Branch Meeting held on the 5th July 2020 had been made available for circulation. It had been posted on the NWE Section Web Site; however, it may not have been fully circulated to the NEE Section members.

The Branch AGM which was scheduled to take place on the 22nd November 2020, was only attended by two individuals who left the call after 20 minutes.

There were no questions or matters arising from the previous meeting or the lack of holding an AGM

Finances

The NWE Section had sent its Balance sheet to headquarters, there had been limited expenditure in the year and the balance of the funds was £2444.34. The NEE Section reported there had been minimal impact on their accounts and the fund was approximately £4000.00.

BoD Update

Precis Minutes of the BoD meetings are available to all on the association Web Site. The last meeting was held on the 30th January, the precis minute of that meeting will be added to the web site over the coming weekend.

A grant application has been made to the “Pivotal Event Businesses Fund”, along with our request for help with Covid19 assistance and adaptation to use online and the Web to “Adapt and Thrive” following their change in the turnover limit.

The association has just received its 2021 Insurance cover. This is the umbrella policy for headquarters. The branches are to advise the Insurers on the contest cover they require once the events are confirmed.

The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association through the Pipe Band College in 2020 set out the framework for a Composition Competition focusing on a 6/8 March of 4 parts. The competition invitation stated "Identified Entries will be included in a formatted publication that will be available to be downloaded." News Item to be placed on the Web

We are all waiting for the Government Guidance for the events sector and how this is influenced by the exit strategy, the Covid19 Levels, as well as the scientific concerns regarding ongoing transmission.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-events-sector-guidance/>

With the current situation, the contests in May and June are probably most at risk at this time. The association is working with the promoters and it is anticipated that a joint decision on at least the first three Majors could be announced jointly (and through Marketing and Media Committee) in early March prior to the association's AGM.

Music Board Update

Precis Minutes of the BoD meetings also contain an update on Music Board business.

The Branch representatives have been attending the MB, which has met almost monthly throughout 2020, but is returning to its regular schedule of meetings in 2021.

The baseline version of the “Reference Information on Competition Format” is to be made available on the RSPBA Web Site.

The tunes group have been asked to look at adding additional drum scores to go with the prescribed tunes on the RSPBA Website.

Grade 4B bands need to be aware that it is intended the intention is to hold the pilot across one major championship preceded by a selection of minor competitions. Following the pilot phase, feedback would then be sought from; the Bands, Tutors (where appropriate), Directors, Adjudicators and Stewards. This feedback would then inform next steps. An open discussion took place with valuable points for consideration being debated, such as the success criteria, marching and musical dimensions as well as the need to obtain Adjudicator feedback.

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Version: Final

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The Grade 1 project is progressing to a next phase with smaller group working where Pipe Majors and Leading Drummers will meet members of the Format Group on a follow up Conference calls Scheduled to take place in February. This will enable extended conversations to take place to clarify the outcomes from the initial meeting and help shape the next step.

The MB at their January meeting, allowing for the Branch AGMs late the previous year, look at the appointment/ ratification of members in their sub-groups.

- **Convenor** – Kevin Reilly
- **Administrator** – Theresa Brown
- **Standards & Grading Group** - Julie Brinklow, Gordon McDermid, Colin Smith, Jill McHaffie, Matt Wilson, Alan Ferguson, Robert Andrew, Iain Simpson, Theresa Brown. Kevin Reilly to remain as convenor.
- **Tunes Group** – James Wark (co-opted), Iain Simpson, Theresa Brown
- **Format Group** – Stephen McQuillan, Julie Brinklow, Alastair Duthie, Theresa Brown, Stuart Paterson, Matt Wilson, Mark Hasson, Iain Simpson
- **WSD Review Group** – Stephen McQuillan, Mick O’Neill (co-opted), Paul Turner (co-opted)
- **Tenor Drumming Judges** confirmed as; Trevor Buckley, Sharleen Donaldson, John McFetridge, Stephen McQuillan, Gary Smith, Neil West.

MB Members were asked to obtain feedback from their Bands / Branches on a suggestion that due to COVID 19 and the limited practice time that may be available between the ending of lockdown restrictions and a contest should there be an easement of the competition format for 2021.

The subject was discussed from a number of perspectives, the key message was that most would be using their 2020 sets as these have not been played in a contest, hence the Band would likely have learnt the tunes. The issue is likely to be the time between ending lockdown and taking part in an event, combined with physical playing as a Band would likely be less than many desired. The format is not likely to be the issue, it is likely to be the lack of entries.

The MB WSD group have recommended the Overseas qualifiers be invited to the 2021 event, with those who qualify from the 2021 branch events should these events be allowed to take place as planned.

Over 150 candidates have taken their SQA / PDQB examinations. There is a lot of coordination needed between the PBC and the schools / bands involved which is being made difficult by the current circumstances of Covid19.

It was reported that the Pipe Band College are now looking at creating a better online presence through training events, demonstrations and educational activities. The College is also working with our partners in The Piping and Drumming Qualifications Board to roll out the new syllabus for drumming qualifications.

Competitions / Workshops

The NWE Section forwarded to the Music Board its indoor contest formats, and its thoughts on running an online contest for consideration. The MB feels that an online contest creates an uneven playing field and raises safeguarding concerns, that are not in the interests of the association. The NWE Section are not progressing an online piping contest.

It was agreed the indoor contest(s) run by the NEE Section would be subject to the Covid-19 restrictions and would be postponed until October 2021.

AOCB

A question was raised from the floor regarding the move to replace J Hughes as chairman, if that was the case would K Reilly accept a nomination from the Branch. K Reilly responded that the chairman's current term was up for re-election, and as he had already been approached by another Branch, he would accept a nomination. T Brown asked if this was in the best interests of the MB and the Branch due to his commitment to these bodies. K Reilly replied he had some good people in his section that he could call upon. A motion put to the Bands present for K Reilly to be nominated for the position as Chairman of the association and was passed following a ballot of the Bands.

Paul Brown
NWE Section Secretary

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