

**Board, Blue and Court selection:  
Here's what we might do following the blether - let us know what you think?**

After the recent BFS bletthers (where all BFS members were invited to come and discuss our future), we've had a think and come up with some actions we are considering taking, to improve selection processes for the BFS board, blues and court. Please take a look and let us know what you think about the proposed ideas, so we can use your input to help make a final decision later this year: email us at [chair@beltane.org](mailto:chair@beltane.org).

**What is the process to decide on improvements?**

After recent kerfuffle, we want to make sure we are consulting with everyone who may be affected by any changes made before things are set in stone, so our plan is this:

- We started gathering views with a Blether in January 2019 focused on selection, and inviting emails from anyone who couldn't attend;
- Then the board and current Blues met to talk through the outcomes from that Blether and come up with this list of proposed actions we could take based on it;
- Next we are sending this note to all BFS members to share the potential improvements we're considering, and inviting everyone to comment on them before any final decisions are made - by email or in person;
- Then board and blues will meet again to discuss final actions or improvements to make, and the board will make a final decision based on feedback;
- And lastly, those agreed actions will be put in place from late spring/early summer 2019.

**KEY THEMES RAISED AT BLETHER:**

Bletthers don't always give concrete and specific actions that everyone agrees on, but they can give key themes / a general sense of direction. We felt the last blether brought up the following themes, and we used them as guide for selecting the potential actions or improvements that could be made (which are set out the sections on next couple of pages):

- Importance of separation of governance and operations
- Need to increasing continuity and stability in key roles and processes
- Need for increased clarity on, and communication about, selection and what roles involve
- Focus on getting right skills in the right roles - training, no 'wave throughs' etc
- Importance of building trust
- Importance of feedback for all
- Need to find ways to spread to load more effectively: devolving more of the work, tapping into skills/experience of wider range of society members/ exploring different approaches
- Need to increase engagement from BFS community in governance and key discussions
- Need to support key volunteers and ensure workload isn't too much, and that there's still scope for joy in there somewhere

## **SOME IDEAS FOR POTENTIAL ACTIONS WE COULD CONSIDER TO HELP MAKE THOSE THEMES REAL:**

### **- Board selection/support suggestions:**

- Scope what required to introduce external trustees, and aim to introduce one or two in 2019-2020 term
- Promote opportunity to stand for the board heavily - including setting out relevant skills, so clear what's needed
- Trial combining AGM with something fun (ideally something that already exists) to increase attendance for 2019 (or 2020 if not time this year)
- In 2019, explore what's required to increase standard board term length to two - five years, and staggered, with view to introducing from 2020.
- Trial making board candidates available for discussion/Q&A in advance of AGM in 2019
- Introduce paid worker to take on operational role and lead creation of sub groups (inc festival ops, welfare, and continuing existing fundraising and stores groups) *[NOTE: Board agreed to explore potential for this at end of 2018, so work is already underway to move this forward]*
- Deliver existing new fundraising strategy to increase BFS resources, so increased paid team becomes more possible, to share load
- Set up and promote option to join subgroups that members can join, to spread load and allow more opportunities to get involved: welfare/safeguarding group, festival operations, etc

### **- Blues selection/support suggestions:**

- In 2019 introduce suggested 2 year i.e. (4 festival) 'terms' for Blue. This would mean when a Blue is selected, it is expected that they will be Blue for 2 years, and do not need to be 'reapproved' during that time, even if they do not perform as Blue for a festival in that period (though they would still be subject to feedback and disciplinary processes, so any issues that may arise would be addressed). At the end of that two year period they would be able to be proposed again as a Blue, but would have to go through the approval process again. If a Blue wanted to stand down before the end of their two year term, that would be fine - there's no formal or binding minimum period. If practicable Blue terms would be staggered, meaning that not all two year terms would end at the same time - to reduce the risk of a whole set of Blues standing down at once.
- Draft clear description of factors taken into consideration when new Blues are selected in 2019, and publish these along with clear description of process used to select new Blues on website - circulating link to this each year as new blues are being chosen, via email, website and social media, so members are aware that the process is taking place and how it works. This communication would make it clear that the 'factors taken into consideration' when new Blues are selected are not an automatic checklist - so clear to all that people would not be guaranteed to be invited to be a Blue if they feel they had all the things on the list of factors - they are a guide used when selecting from different people, and factors will include subjective things like cultural fit with other Blues.

- Community members continue to be invited to nominate any other community members they think should be considered as Blues.
  - Board involvement in Blue selection to change to: reviewing list of potential candidates to remove any who are not eligible (ie safeguarding issues/upheld complaints/unsafe according to set criteria etc - but specifically not whether candidate is suitable for the role in other ways). Option for board to provide views/comments on remaining candidates and their suitability in relation to criteria to the Blues deciding on those they wish to appoint, in an advisory capacity.
  - Blues decide from remaining candidates, on basis of key factors referred to above.
  - Blues who are approved may be Blue even if they choose not to perform in the festival as Blues; meaning that they may carry out the other tasks Blues may take on, even if they aren't painted Blue on the night. This would allow some Blues to act as 'supporting Blues', helping to share the workload of Blue, even if they aren't able to perform or take on all of the festival responsibilities. This would provide that support and still allows the community to still be clear who is and who is not Blue, and how they were selected. Blues would not be permitted to GO, be court or other festival role during their term as Blue, even if they were not performing on the night as Blue.
  - Processes for stepping down as Blue, and transitioning into or from other festival roles - to be clarified and circulated.
  - Feedback given to individual Blues post-festival in same way as GOs (ie formal feedback sheet based on input from volunteers survey, and feedback from event coordinator, board etc), and written record referred to at future decision points rather than recollections - including mechanism to capture input from individual being referenced.
- **Court selection/support suggestions:**
- Existing criteria/key factors to consider for potential court members reviewed and clarified ahead of Samhuinn 2019
  - Board involvement in court selection to change to: reviewing list of potential candidates to remove any who are not eligible (ie safeguarding issues/duty of care/upheld complaints/unsafe according to set criteria etc - but specifically not whether candidate is suitable for the role in other ways). Option for board to provide views/comments on remaining candidates and their suitability in relation to other areas to the Blues, in an advisory capacity
  - Blues decide from remaining candidates, on basis of criteria/key factors to consider. Basic written record kept so can be referred to in case of any issues.
  - Feedback offered to all unsuccessful candidates - in form of single, focused engagement (rather than ongoing dialogue - for capacity reasons).
  - Samhuinn court to be selected in time for pre-GO meeting where possible (given story emphasis can shift depending on court for samhuinn); Beltane May Queen and Green Man to be selected in time for final GO selection at latest where possible.
  - Feedback given to court members post-festival in same way as GOs (ie formal feedback sheet based on input from volunteers survey, and feedback from event coordinator, blues and board).