

Selection Process for Samhuinn 2019 Court

This document sets out the process which will be used to select court members for Samhuinn Fire Festival 2019.

The performers of the court roles are a key part of making our Samhuinn Fire Festival as special as it can be. Here we set out the process for how they the Cailleach, Winter King and Summer King will be selected, so it's as clear as possible for everyone involved.

THE SHORT VERSION

Performers for each of the three court roles for Samhuinn will be selected from those who put themselves forward. The BFS board of trustees will be presented with a short-list of likely candidates beforehand, and will inform the Blues if any candidates are inappropriate for the role. Selection will be made by the Blues (and in the case of the Kings, the Cailleach will join the selection group once appointed, if available) from the remaining applicants .

BFS members are encouraged to nominate anyone they feel should be encouraged or 'nudged' to apply. This stage is designed to give scope for more input from BFS members in the selection of performers for court roles, and to ensure that even those who might not ordinarily have considered themselves for the role are encouraged to apply.

Anyone who puts themselves forward (whether or not they were nominated by a community member initially) will be considered, and a shortlist will be drawn up. Those on the shortlist will be invited to a discussion with the selection group. The selection group will then decide on a final choice for each role.

THE LONG VERSION: EACH STAGE AND COMPONENT IN DETAIL

Notification of opening process:

The call for nominations/nudges to apply and applications will set out detail on how to nominate and apply and will be posted on beltane.org, be circulated via the BFS announcements mailing list, and posted on BFS social media.

Nominations for a nudge to apply:

BFS members will be invited to nominate those they feel should be encouraged to apply for the roles of Cailleach, Summer King or Winter King. Nominations must be submitted by email to blues@beltane.org by the nomination deadline. There is no form to complete and no need to tell us why you are nominating - simply email the name of the member(s) you are nominating and the role(s) you are nominating them to be encouraged to apply for.

The Blues will contact all those who have been nominated for a nudge to apply (before the application or 'self-nomination' deadline) and inform them that they have been nominated for one of the Samhuinn court roles, and invite them to put themselves forward if they wish to. Only the Blues will be involved in this part of process, and they will keep all nominations confidential.

Important note: Those interested in applying for the roles of Cailleach, Winter King or Summer King do not need to be contacted in this way in order to apply. Applications are welcome from and will be considered equally from all. The purpose of this stage is to allow greater scope for BFS members to be involved in the process of selecting performers to be considered for court roles, and to ensure that even those who might not ordinarily consider applying are encouraged to do so.

Applications/self-nominations:

Notes of interest for all court roles should be sent to blues@beltane.org by the deadline. There is no formal application form, but we do need some information in your email:

- your name
- contact details
- the role you wish to be considered for
- your availability across the Samhuinn period
- plus an optional up to 500 words (or recording or other format) in support of your application, if you wish to.

People may apply whether or not they have been nominated by someone else at the previous stage. Self-nominations for all roles are welcome from performers of any gender. We ask that Cailleachs submit individually. While we welcome joint

submissions from pairs of Kings, we also encourage them from individuals who are open to working with others. If you would like more information on the whole process, contact the Blues on blues@beltane.org, or the Festival Secretary on festival@beltane.org.

Who can be a court member?

Court members can be volunteers of any kind. Core criteria selection group members include, but are not limited to:

- Active and recent participation with Beltane Fire Society and our festivals: contributing effectively to our community and performances.
- Strong interpersonal skills: empathetic, a good listener, ability to work well with creative groups and bring people together.
- Charismatic, engaging and inspiring: ability to express and represent emotions and sentiments; to bring out creativity and performance in others.
- Respects and embodies the principles and qualities of our community, including: equality, respect for humanity and the environment, connection with BFS history, culture and creativity.
- Exceptional performance skills and presence.
- Ability and willingness to engage collaboratively with volunteers (GOs, Blues, Trustees) and contractors (Event Coordinator, Communications Coordinator) as part of a creative process.
- Clear interest and commitment to the role, the festival and Beltane Fire Society.
- Ability to attend and fully engage with key dates including: GO weekend, rehearsals, walkthroughs, the festival itself.

Board members and Blues for the upcoming festival may not be court members. A Board member or Blue may apply or be nominated to be to be court members, with the following restrictions:

- The applicant may not sit on the selection committee
- The Chair may not apply or be nominated for a court role.
- If successful in their application, the applicant must renounce their membership of the Board and/or the Blues.

Gender is not a criteria used to select for any BFS role.

No person who has been excluded from membership of BFS or participation in BFS festivals may be be a court member. If there is a complaint investigation or disciplinary process underway at the time of selection which calls into question an applicant's ability to be an effective member of the court, the decision may be taken not to consider their application (see below).

Who makes the decision about court members?

Blues for the upcoming festival will handle and respond to initial nominations. All decisions about who will play a member of the court, including shortlisting, will be made by the court selection group. The group is made up of all Blues for the upcoming festival (where any Blue has not yet taken up their place, a Blue from the most recent past festival may be asked to act in their stead, where approved by the board), and in the case of the Kings, and if available, the Cailleach.

Each group member plays an equal part in selection, with not more or less than one vote per group member, and each with the same role. Decisions will be made jointly and collaboratively via open discussion with all group members, but final decisions will be made by majority vote. The group will be chaired by a member of the Blues, and should a vote be tied, the group chair carries the deciding vote. A Board member will be present at the group meeting to provide oversight and information, however they are not a voting member of the group.

The court selection group has the authority to decide to respond to exceptional circumstances relating to this process if they wish - decisions to do so should be decided by a majority vote. If the group cannot agree or require additional input or support, they should contact the BFS board chair.

Processing nominations

The Blues will respond to all nominations and self nominations to confirm they have been received. Anyone who has been nominated by someone else will be contacted to let them know they have been suggested, and to invite them to put themselves forward.

Only those who apply will be considered at shortlisting stage - having been nominated by someone else is not sufficient in itself.

The names of those who nominate others will be kept confidential to the Blues and Board. The names and relevant details of those who apply will be shared among the selection group, but kept confidential by the members of that group.

Blues will send the note of interest emails from anyone who applies/nominates themselves for a court role to the full court selection group, not less than 24 hours before the shortlisting meeting. These emails will be stored securely by members of that group, for their viewing only.

Before the final decision meeting, the board will check for any relevant disciplinary or complaint findings relating to shortlisted applicants, as well as relevant debrief notes from recent festivals they were involved in and the membership list. If any outcomes or information from these sources are of relevance, this may result in the Board removing the applicant from the selection group.

The Board may make decision to remove an applicant from the shortlist on the following grounds:

- Past or ongoing disciplinary action related to the applicant, which would affect their ability to take on roles of responsibility within the BFS
- A situation where the applicants selection as Court member would have significantly negative impact upon the Society in legal or reputational terms.
- The Board being aware of reports (E.g. from past Event Co-ordinators, Health and Safety Officers, group organisers or volunteers) of the individual behaving in an unsafe/inappropriate manner in past festivals.

All applications and nominations will be treated as confidential.

The Cailleach will be selected first, with the aim that the person selected will then join the selection group for both kings if they are available.

What will the format of the shortlisting and selection meetings be?

Shortlisting and final decisions on applications will be made at a meeting of the selection group in an appropriate, private space. In order to ensure sufficient time to consider applications fully, a contingency plan should be made in case not all decisions can be made during the first meeting - such as an allocated time the following day to meet to discuss and decide on any remaining applications.

The process meetings will be chaired by a Blue. Meetings will be meetings of the festival court selection group, not a board meeting or meeting of the Blues. A nominated member of the group should take basic minutes, (which should include recording declared conflicts of interest, conditions and requirements set for any approved applications, any key points which are to be discussed at interview, vote counts, and other pertinent information). These minutes will only be shared beyond the selection group in the event of a problem. Candidates should note that while all efforts will be made to ensure all decision-makers meet all shortlisted candidates, this may not always be possible.

The Blue chairing the court selection group will arrange set times and venue (usually the Beltane office) for shortlisting, interviews and final selection decision meeting, and inform all selection group members as soon as possible in advance.

At least two members of the selection group must be present in person. At the beginning of the meeting, the group chair will outline the decision making and voting process and the role of all those present, and this document will have been circulated to selection group members in advance, so any questions about it can be raised. The group will aim to ensure questions asked of the candidates will be similar, so the same opportunities are given to all those being interviewed.

Decisions will be made by majority vote. In the event of exceptional circumstances, the Board invest the selection group with the authority to make the appropriate decisions, and in the event that they cannot agree, they will refer back to the BFS Board chair.

How will conflicts of interest be managed?

When details of self-nominees / applications are circulated, the group Chair will invite all members of the selection group to declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to any of the potential court members being considered. Conflicts of interest will include connections which may (or may be perceived to) unduly influence the decision, such as: being partner/spouse of an applicant, or otherwise being in a position to directly benefit from the outcome of an application.

Members of the selection group should self-declare any potential interests, and if any member of the selection group feels there is a potential interest that has not been declared, this should be brought to the attention of the group Chair. If there is doubt regarding any matter on this process, including whether a declared interest represents a conflict, decisions will be made by and at the discretion of the group Chair (or a nominated BFS board member where any potential interests relate to the group Chair).

Any selection group member who has an agreed conflict of interest will not be involved in the court selection process. Where this relates to a board member, this board member should be replaced by another member of the BFS board.

Shortlisting potential court members

The court selection group will meet to consider all those who have applied / sent a note of interest to self-nominate. Each applicant will be discussed, with particular focus on how well they meet key criteria for court members, and whether or not to shortlist will be agreed. Discussion should happen in an open and collaborative manner, sharing reasoning with all group members. Where a vote is required, the decision will be made by majority vote.

Ordinarily, a shortlist should involve no less than two and no more than four candidates for each role.

At the shortlisting meeting, the selection group should also agree a list of topics to discuss with all those shortlisted when they meet. These should focus on allowing those being considered to show how they meet core criteria for court members.

Following shortlisting, the Blues will contact all those who applied, to let them know that they have been invited to a meeting to discuss their application, or to inform them that their application has not been successful.

Meetings with potential court members

No one may be appointed to a Court position without having met the selection group for a discussion, even if the person finally selected is the only applicant. Where more than one person applies, it is advised that interviews be held with between two and four people.

The meeting should be as informal as possible, and cover the topics agreed at the shortlist meeting. The candidate must be available for interview on one of the assigned days, preferably in person - though phone is acceptable if necessary, at the discretion of the selection group. Not all selection group members must attend all meetings, though this is preferable.

Final selection

Following the meetings with candidates, the selection group will meet to discuss which candidate for each role fits core criteria to the greatest degree. The final decision will be made by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the group chair carries the deciding vote.

Notifying applicants:

When this is complete, all shortlisted candidates will be contacted to inform them if they have or have not been selected. This should be done in order to ensure those selected for court roles can be announced as per agreed timeline. When notifying people that they have not been selected, this should be done by phone if possible, and an offer of feedback at a later date given - rather than providing instant feedback. Telling candidates that the decision was close should be avoided, and sensitivity used. Candidates not selected may be informed of who has been selected, but should be asked to keep this news private until it is announced.

Notifying the board

When a decision is made by the selection group, the Board member on the panel shall share a paragraph to the Board setting out the reasons for that decision. This is provided for information, not for decision, and may happen after the applicants have been informed.

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KEY DATES – a quick reference.

Please bear in mind that with the exception of the first two deadlines, these are all subject to change, due to availability/life being life.

Wed 25 July	Deadline for member nominations
Wed 1 Aug	Deadline for self-nominations
Fri 3/Sat 4 Aug	Meetings with those shortlisted for Cailleach
Sun 5/Mon 6 Aug	Cailleach informed
Tue 7/Wed 8 Aug	Meetings with those shortlisted for Summer & Winter King
Sat 11 Aug	Court roles announced