

**Beltane Fire Society Board Meeting Minutes:
Board Handover Day 2022**

Date and time:	9:30am - 5.00pm, Saturday 9 July 2022
Location:	Beltonia, 16 East Cromwell Street, Edinburgh EH6 6HD
Present:	Tom Watton (TW) - Outgoing Chair, Bob Ball (BB), Sarah Barr (SB), Neil Barton (NB), Lindsey Bell (LB), Caroline Evans (CE), C'tri Peter Goudie (CG), Alex Nuttgens (AN), Stew Wilson (SW).
Late Attendees:	Katch Cait O'Neill (KO), Daniel Tysen (DT)
Apologies:	(None)

SATURDAY 9 JULY 2022	
Item	Details
Being a trustee	<p>TW and AN outlined the previously circulated papers. There was a discussion on clarifying terms within the code of conduct, for later review. There was discussion of protocols regarding voting. There was a discussion of protocols regarding access to complaints files. Timeline discussed re: go deadline</p> <p>ACTION: CE, LB and SB to review timetable deadlines.</p>
Finance as trustees	<p>NB raised point of trustees to be on bank mandates and Board financial responsibilities and obligations. NB noted need to review and locate all financial policies soon, and outlined expenses repayment procedure. NB highlighted problems with cash handling, directing trustees to the financial controls document for cash handling processes. NB noted no policies for, or current plans for, fundraising. TW noted tenant upstairs is paying sub-let rent, and income from merchandise; highlighting potential networking/fundraising advantages to Arts and Business Scotland membership.</p> <p>NB noted that November is time when Treasurer and chair have budget-setting meeting for next financial year, and that there is no budget for Samhuinn 2022 yet. TW suggested getting David (MacFadden Associates) back in for a review. Bank accounts and reserves policy highlighted; TW noted need to increase reserves (and policy reviewed) by 30% due to inflation - to £120,000.</p> <p>ACTION: NB to generate mandate forms and circulate to SB and Chair for signatures. ACTION: SB and NB to review financial policies, and consider increasing reserves and reserves policy by 30%. ACTION: Board to review all current draft policies. ACTION: NB, AN, CE to prepare Samhuinn 2022 budget for circulation once venue confirmed. (ACTION: NB/SB to contact MacFadden Associates to arrange review.)</p>
Skills and roles for 2022-23	<p>AN summarised the skills audit provided by Trustees.</p> <p>The possible areas for further improvement were identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audience and Membership care (recruitment through EC/DM) - Ambassadorial experience (training) - Conflict resolution (training) - Equal opportunities (consider training, possibly via Be United, and/or co-option)

- Fundraising (co-option, training, skills from EC/DM)
- Legal (co-option)
- Listening (Training requested)
- Media and PR (provided through comms contractor/s)
- Political and Parliamentary skills (TW noted particularly useful for conversations with councillors)
- Property (recruited through EC/DM)

ACTION: BB to investigate arranging equal opportunities training with SEMVO.

ACTION: Equalities committee to be contacted to request latest recommendations.

ACTION: Investigate work needing done on the continuing conversations around use of public spaces through Edinburgh council.

ACTION: Look to co-opt a trustee with legal experience

(ACTION: CE to conduct stakeholder analysis for current relationships?)

AN outlined list of previous board jobs. Candidates put themselves forward for positions within the Board; candidacies were discussed. The individual duties for traditional board roles were discussed and reallocated as appropriate to candidates' skillsets.

CE approved by Board as Chair.

AN approved by Board as Vice Chair.

SB approved by Board as Company Secretary.

NB approved by Board as Treasurer, with shadowing/understudying from SB.

BB approved by Board as Volunteers Secretary, with the caveat that the Volunteers Survey should not be under his remit if he GOs a group.

The Board voted that a serving Volunteers Secretary may GO a festival.

The contractual requirements for Operations Support were discussed. DT to remain in post up until November, with a full handover to Board members to have taken place by that point. Daniel was thanked for all of his hard work.

SB approved by Board as Festival Secretary, with support from LB and CG.

SW approved by Board as Sys Admin.

CG approved by Board as Assistant Sys Admin.

The Board made the decision to require a policy of segregation of data available to a Sys Admin.

LB approved by Board as Blue-Board Liaison.

The Board voted to confirm that the chair of BFS cannot also be a Blue; AN pointed out that this may already be the case in policy.

TW raised that there may need to be some handover time with Blues. CE is granted a sabbatical from being Chair until 4th September, when CE will resign Blue and take place as Chair. AN, as Vice Chair, will act as Chair until 4th September in CE's stead.

	<p>CE outlined the current role layout for safeguarding and requirements for confidentiality. TW willing to continue to see cases through to completion whilst not being a board member. CE proposed CE, TW and KO as a safeguarding subgroup. TW and CE dealing with live complaints, KO working on strategies for preventing issues happening in terms of education and has great professional experience on this but is not able to attend board meetings. KO feels she could also work on conflict resolution, inc. de-escalation and diffusion.</p> <p>CE proposed that a Safeguarding Sub-Committee be formed, consisting in the first instance of TW, CE and KO. Board agreed that TW should hand over only, and not take on new cases. The Board noted that new Sub-Committee members would need to be approved by the Board, with a contract the same or higher level of confidentiality liability as the board would have. This proposal was approved. CG will be liaison for Safeguarding Sub-Committee technical matters.</p> <p>KO discussed need for a safeguarding officer whose only focus is safeguarding cases. KO would have some capacity to support if there's new cases; CE and KO can only process new cases for now until there's more capacity. CE highlighted that Board were considering making Safeguarding Officer a paid role, held within the Safeguarding Sub-Committee. KO volunteered to do education for future prevention, minor complaints, and recruiting a safeguarding officer if possible as an organisation. CE highlighted that we discussed making the board accessible to a more diverse range of people, and excluded KO by accident due to digital nature of last board term - CE TW KO will meet up monthly in person. AN highlighted need for feedback to trustees as a whole due to trustees' joint liability on safeguarding (with accommodations for confidentiality). Board role to be named Safeguarding Lead.</p> <p>KO was approved by Board as Safeguarding Lead, as per the above proposal.</p> <p>DT to manage Volunteers Survey.</p> <p>New EC/DM to manage Fundraising.</p> <p>BB to manage Sustainability as part of Volunteers Secretary role.</p> <p>After Party planning to be dealt with at a later date, noting that the venue has already been booked.</p> <p>Family Samhuinn planning to be dealt with at a later date, depending on volunteers from community.</p> <p>ACTION: Create up-to-date organisational chart for reference. ACTION: AN to confirm if Alan Howse is to continue as Quartermaster, and in what capacity. ACTION: SB, LB, CG to consider creating a Festival Sub-Committee to assist with direct Festival Operations. ACTION: CG to assess and implement segregation of data between Sys Admin and Assistant Sys Admin, and discuss ringfencing of safeguarding data with KO. ACTION: Safeguarding Sub-Committee to arrange format for regular updates to Board. ACTION: KO to investigate creation of Safeguarding Officer contract role.</p>
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<p>Complaints, grievance and resolutions procedures</p>	<p>TW outlined and explained the previously circulated information, and it was noted that the board decide which procedure to use for a complaint submitted on a case-by-case basis. CE provided an update on the safeguarding project and its history. CE highlighted that Trustees MUST act on safeguarding issues that they find out about, and cannot keep them secret. CE highlighted that fresh legal advice means we are now taking into account members' behaviour outwith Beltane Time, as well as historic cases with no time limit. KO, CE, AN noted difference between</p>
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	<p>supporting someone and enabling them. TW added that OSCR have been notified about all current/recent OSCR-notifiable complaints.</p> <p>CE proposed becoming a SCIO (a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) - highlighting issues with our articles of association regarding safeguarding and the need for BFS to be able to remove members by unanimous vote at Board level. BB highlighted that a great many charities have converted to SCIOs since the designation's introduction in 2012. Becoming a SCIO would let us renew our membership. DT highlighted we don't currently know who is in a group until they are already in the group. AN highlighted disadvantage of being a SCIO, which is that if OSCR decide we are not a charity, then we will no longer exist - highlighted risk from restrictions brought in by Westminster.</p> <p>Board Members' preferences regarding Complaints Process involvement were outlined as follows: Serious complaints: SW, LB, CE Not as serious complaints: BB, CG, AN Surface level/sifting: SW, CG, BB, LB, AN None: SB, NB</p> <p>ACTION: AN to schedule an EGM for the purposes of amending the Society's Articles of Association. ACTION: CE/AN to prepare a paper on the positive and negative consequences of becoming an SCIO, to be circulated ready for voting on during this Board term.</p>
<p>15 min Break</p>	<p>TW was thanked for the huge amount of work he has contributed as a board member and as chair. TW left the meeting.</p>
<p>The year ahead - how do we want to be?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goals/aims/wishes for our term ● What will we do differently? ● We can't do everything - so what are our priorities? ● Setting boundaries / expectations: workloads and time commitments etc <p>The Board and Ops Support Contractor outlined their personal goals, aims and wishes for the current Board Term, as follows:</p> <p>BB: I'd like to have resolved the Safeguarding Project by the end of this year, with a set of documents produced from it. Would like training resources brought in in areas discussed. Would like, by the end of this year, or within 2 years, for sustainability to be something we all know enough about to work on. I would like to arrange more of each festival further in advance; I would like timing of things to give volunteers the time they need to rehearse, to set up, and for problems to happen. This year's Beltane, for many reasons, was 2 weeks shorter. I would like to work very hard to make sure that that's no longer a thing. I would like to champion transparency in what we do, and best practice.</p> <p>CG: I want to make people's lives lighter; if we can find stuff that is cumbersome and doesn't need to exist, remove it, offload onto other people where we can.</p> <p>AN: My biggest aim is to get all of you up to being the Board members I think you can be; in that I think it's been a really great crop of Board members, and would be good (after a period of board isolation and shrinkage) to get a fully confident Board where losing/gaining members is okay - a large group of competent people, rather than a tiny one. I think we need to provide more opportunities for people who are competent within the Society to do important jobs, to try to get people into doing stuff for us, so it's not trustees doing everything. In the long run, possibly move to being Trustees vs. Committees, but that's a long way away.</p>

SB: I want to tackle GO burnout, improve the GO experience, streamline GO paperwork, and encourage and facilitate enthusiastic consent from people who come forward to GO.

SW: I want to leave the Society in a better place than it was when I came onto the Board, however I can do that.

KO: Complete and carry through all ideas for safeguarding protocols to make the Society a more safe environment for everyone.

DT: I'd like to get the new member system built, with at its centre an IT project, but also connect to how we categorise membership in terms of festival vs member participation, and dissemination of important info. Will probably be a 2 stage process, building it over next 2 months, and revised in Winter. I think if we do it right, we will make things easier for volunteers, but people will NEED HELP on using it, so it needs a united front on how it's going to work.

LB: I just want the board to be seen as an entity that can be trusted again because it hasn't been for years - and when it's mentioned it's "ugh, f**king board".

NB: I want to make it easier for everyone, probably to have more time for the whole process so everything is not done at the last minute. And that we find somewhere for Samhuinn very quickly.

CE: My main focus is on safeguarding, and to finish the open safeguarding cases that I'm working on - some of them are quite involved - and to do the ones the next level down. Want to make sure the Society is set up at the organisational level, recruiting for more diverse membership. One small thing - we used to recruit students on the way in; I'm sure there are other ideas about widening recruitment. At times there has been a bit of cronyism that has helped the predicament we're in to perpetuate, so flushing in new life would be great. Also to get help with safeguarding documents to make sure they all agree with one another - and make sure all names of docs are correct. I can't do that, so would ask for help - I know what needs to be done, but it's quite a big job. I want to ensure succession planning is in place so that someone other than me or AN can stand as chair next time and feel they have the knowledge to support, and guard against burnout, for us and the people around us, and to make it a bit nicer for everyone and bring that into everything we do - doesn't have to be so brutal, such a chore. Can hopefully make things nicer in little ways. Would like to get some press training so that I do feel better standing up in front of people; training in giving the right message is something I'd like to have. It was me who stood up and said current rules were not good enough and we need to change them, and I'd like to raise another thorny issue (not for resolution today) - our storyline was initiated by Angus at a time where it reflected what was going on in wider society - the miners' strike, Thatcherism, where women seen as weak and men were seen as strong leaders who were soldiers, etc. The characters in Beltane were built up to throw those ideas on their head - White women warriors, Red silly men, objectified. At the time, the role reversal was a bit revolutionary. I propose that that time has passed, and in the time we find ourselves in now, we've got different concerns and different things happening in society. I want to bring Angus and others in to look at our storyline again, and throw on its head to reflect what's happening today. I think there's a way to address it ritually and through storyline, as well as with safeguarding work.

AN: I think that's a really great idea, but I want membership involved in it as well.

SW: This sounds like a blether. (AN, BB, CG, SB, KO agree)

BB: Yes; modern misogynist narratives are much different from what they were in 1988.

SB proposed monthly/quarterly updates from Board to membership to go out with links to minutes, relating to BB's goals on transparency.. NB suggested sending out financials too.

	<p>There was a short discussion on boundaries and expectations, which was then tabled for next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: SB to create a document on Boundaries and Expectations for people to fill out, to be read out at next Board meeting which can also be sent to people not at the Board meeting.</p> <p>NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday 13th, 7pm, Beltonia.</p>
Live Issues	<p>AN raised the following list of live issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Venue discussion - Membership system - CE confirmed that he has informed the council of our intent to find a venue for Samhuinn 2022 - Need for new Beltonia keys - Need to update trustee profiles on Beltane.org - Need for individual role handovers <p>ACTION: BB to inform membership that there is no Carnival application this year. ACTION: SB to reply to Giles at Carnival to confirm we are not applying. ACTION: Individual role holders to hand over emails and to-do lists to new board members. ACTION: GO Shout out to be finished and approved at Board meeting on Wednesday 13th, and posted the same day. ACTION: SB to update Companies House with new trustee information. ACTION: NB to represent the Board on the Court Selection Committee. ACTION: SB to send minutes to Board for approval.</p>
Close	

MOVE TO 13th July:	Processes for Samhuinn 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Samhuinn venue ● Live community issues ● Contractor Recruitment and Line Management ● Volunteer agreements ● GO selection (inc Board members as GOs) ● GO weekend, meetings and debriefs
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