

Minutes, AGM 2017
Scottish Swedish Society
1pm on Sunday 7 May 2017
Society of Musicians, 3 Belford Road, Edinburgh

- 1. Welcome by the co-Chairs, Gunilla Hampson and Harris Keillar**
- 2. Present** Gunilla Hampson, Harris Keillar, Arthur Lightfoot, Christina Roberts, Nicholas Hampson, Lina Weckner, David Stewart, Elizabet Stewart, Madeleine Sjöstrand, Monica Dowley, Stephen Hampson
- 3. Apologies:** Kerstin Phillips, Ingegärd Cochran, David and Britta Sugden, Jeanette de Geer Nairn, Helene Nordberg, Conny Petterson, Berit Owen, Shonagh Patten, Kerstin Keillar
- 4. Minutes of AGM 2016** had been sent to all members before the AGM and were accepted.
- 5. Chair's address Gunilla Hampson,**

Gunilla reported as follows:

At last year's AGM we reported that the Society's website was too costly and unnecessarily complex for the needs of our small society.

During the year Lina Weckner and Conny Petterson in particular have been working on a replacement website. We are not yet quite in the position to replace Wild Apricot, our current website, but we have been able to reduce the cost of the present system by opting for a slightly restricted version. Lina will tell us more about this later.

Financially we are now in a satisfactory position, partly because of the reduced website fee, partly reflecting a fairly rigorous pursuit of subscription income, and partly from driving down a range of our costs. The Treasurer will give us more details.

We have had a busy year with a varied programme. We hope that there has been something for everybody, but we are always open to suggestions from members as to what we should be doing.

Since the last AGM, the UK has opted for Brexit. This is causing some concern amongst the Swedish community. The Committee has been in contact with the Swedish Embassy in London regarding this. All members have been emailed a link to the Embassy's website where information and advice will be published as and when it becomes available. This link is also available on our own website and it has been posted on Facebook.

It is possible that a member of staff from the Embassy will visit Scotland in the autumn and in that event the Society will offer to arrange a meeting.

We have a new Consul General in Edinburgh, Mr Drew Wallace. The Committee has invited him to our functions but he has so far not responded. We regret that we have not been able to establish contact, particularly in these uncertain times.

Arthur Lightfoot, one of the Society's founding members and a long-standing pillar of the committee has resigned for health reasons. We wish to thank him for all his interest and his valuable contribution over many years.

Conny Petterson has been co-opted onto the committee, not least to help us with the website.

We would, however, still welcome some new members.

6. Activities of the year.....

Society Events, etc

Midsummer 2017. Again this year Malin and Richard Nairn kindly offered Niddrie Castle as the venue for our celebration of Midsummer. We were lucky with the weather and a good crowd of people, young and old, enjoyed dancing round the majstång followed by picnics in the lovely garden.

Ärtsoppa och Pankakor. In November we arranged a peasoup and pancake event at Marchmont St Giles church. The meeting was well attended and members enjoyed a home-made supper. At the AGM last year we had been asked to arrange a speaker at some time and on this occasion we invited a young Swedish entrepreneur, Caspar Odqvist, founder of Nordic Outdoors to speak to us. He gave us a very interesting illustrated talk about his expanding business.

Lucia. Lucia was again held in Marchmont St Giles church. The service was conducted by the locum minister from the Swedish Church in London. The Lucia procession seemed larger than ever and had been well taught by Malin Nairn and Helene Nordberg. As a surprise element we had some wonderful singing by Mark McLeod accompanied by Madeleine Sjöstrand. We also enjoyed a violin solo by one of our younger members. All in all this was a most successful occasion.

Spring Concert. At the end of March Madeleine Sjöstrand and Mark McLeod gave us a recital at the Society of Musicians. Several members had asked to hear more from them after their much appreciated contribution to Lucia. Their repertoire ranged widely from classic German lieder to Cole Porter and a great deal in between. A very memorable occasion and we thank them for that.

The Newsletter. Regular Newsletters are produced by Carina Dahlström Mair and are circulated to all our members. We are very grateful to Carina for all her hard and professional work. The Newsletters have become more colourful, as well as filled with more material, over her time as Editor. She is always looking for contributions.

Facebook. Information is added regularly onto Facebook by Harris Keillar. Facebook is a very important form of communication for us.

Events organised for us:

Pyssel Event. A Pyssel event with parents and children was held before Christmas at Niddrie Castle, the home of Malin and Richard Nairn

Church Events. The Swedish church in London organised two Swedish church services followed by lunch. On the following day parents and children were invited to afternoon fika at Hemma. This was paid for by the Swedish Benevolent Trust for which we are very grateful. Anna Christopherson plays an important part in the

success of the lunches.

Ongoing activities organised by members

The Swedish School. This is led by Heléne Nordberg and is very popular with an expanding roll. Further details are available from their website, to which there is a link on our website.

Hemslöjdsgrupp. The Handicrafts Group meets regularly every month on a Tuesday evening at a member's house. We craft in mixed media such as embroidery, knitting and crochet, we chat in Swedish and have a fika. New members are very welcome, if you are interested, please contact Linda Winskel (linda.winskel@gmail.com)

Reading Groups. There are three reading groups that read and discuss books written by Swedish authors:

Swedish books in Swedish coordinated by Christina Coltart. These have tended to be the classics, but since the group has now read most of these, newer books are also selected.

Modern Swedish books in Swedish coordinated by Kerstin Phillips. Seven of us meet once a month for a couple of hours to talk about the book we have read. Each summer we choose the books for the coming year and obtain copies from Sweden. Some books we have all liked, and a few we have all disliked, but all have stimulated interesting discussions. We mostly read fiction and occasionally a book set in the past in Sweden. We often read books that have won a recent August Prize.

Swedish books in English translation coordinated by Britta Sugden. This group is a mixture of Swedish speakers and those who would like to read books by Swedish authors but prefer to read them in translation. They also meet monthly in the afternoon or evening.

Coffee Mornings. A group of women meet monthly in each others houses for coffee and cakes. In May last year the group had an outing to the West to meet members there and also to visit the Weaver's Cottage, a National Trust property. Dates, etc are posted on the website.

7. Secretary's Report by Kerstin

There are minutes taken of all the committee meetings and distributed as well as at the AGM.

A regular trickle of emails are received on the SSS email address. Individuals ask advice about moving here, accommodation, jobs, schooling and how to make contact with Swedes here. A variety of organisations ask us to advertise events or services such as choirs visiting Edinburgh. I respond to all, sometimes referring people on to more suitable websites for information.

Booking the venue and liaising with the Swedish Church in London for the Lucia event, booking the organist, maintaining check lists and the writing of letters can take quite a lot of time.

Events are added to the Event file on the website covering both those originated by the committee or members as well as events initiated by other organisations such as the Swedish church in London, visiting choir concerts, lectures etc which might be of

interest to members. Emails are sent out with this information as well as reminders of events.

People have to actively stop their contact address being available to members on the website by informing the secretary. They will be open to those who are members.

8. Treasurer's Report

Stephen reported as follows:

I am pleased to say that the year to the end of March saw a very satisfactory financial outcome for the Society. We recorded a surplus of income over expenditure of £600 on a total income of just under £3,000. Once more I am grateful to John Phillips for his independent examination of our accounts.

A couple of special factors worked together to flatter our results this year, but the overall picture remains of a modest surplus.

Membership stayed level, though, as ever, gathering in subscription income proved quite a chore!

After an earlier run of years in which our expenditure ran well ahead of income it had become important to ensure the Society remained financially secure. With two years of surpluses we are well on the way to that goal. Our reserves are now equal to over a year's total expenditure. We should be able to cope with any predictable short-term financial setback which could affect us.

We should plan to continue earning a modest surplus for the foreseeable future, but there is no purpose in aiming at an unnecessarily high figure. This year we reduced charges for Lucia to members and arranged the Spring Concert for members and their guests at a price that deliberately fell short of our costs. The Committee may feel able to continue with such initiatives.

John Phillips was thanked for his work and was reappointed Examiner of accounts for next year.

9. The Website

Lina Weckner reported on the progress of the new website. It has been decided to build our own site rather than using Wild Apricot as at present. It will, we hope, be more user-friendly and certainly much cheaper than our current arrangement.

10. Election of Committee.

The current members are as follows:

Gunilla Hampson, Chair
Stephen Hampson, Treasurer
Kerstin Phillips, Secretary
Harris Keillar
Arthur Lightfoot
Lina Weckner
Conny Petterson

Members thanked the committee members who have contributed significantly over the years. We are especially thankful to Arthur for his contributions over all the years

that the Scottish Swedish Society in its current form has existed. He has been a faithful attender at events and contributor at meetings. A certificate of Appreciation for all his contributions was presented to Arthur by Harris on behalf of the Society, and members showed their warm appreciation.

Unfortunately there were no new offers from members wanting to join the committee. We really do need more members. We meet four times annually, normally in Edinburgh.

Office bearers will be elected at the first meeting of the Committee.

11. After the completion of the formal business of the meeting, we retreated to the kitchen for coffee and cake.