

Beltane Fire Society

Annual General Meeting 2025 Minutes

Date and Time:	June 14th 2025, 1-4.30pm
Location:	Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL
Present:	Jenny Bloom, Neil Barton, Steffie Sutherland, Robert Lee, Franklyn Reinhart, Jenny Glover, C'tri , Zhi Kang Chua. 58 Ballots were cast, but 8 of these were proxies. All attendees were signed in at the door by Daniel Tyson and Guilia Gatti and their names checked against the membership list to confirm that they were <i>bona fide</i> BFS members.

Item	Details
Introduction and Welcome	<p>Doors were open at 1pm, to allow people to come and say hello and engage with the conversation topics. There were three tables with some of the questions raised recently, and members were invited to write suggestions or ideas. The questions related to how to encourage a two way flow of conversation from and to members, how to build or expand on a culture of kindness, how the Board could engage better with members, whether our policies and approaches match our action values and views and other traditions including whether performers should speak English during performances..</p> <p>At 1.30pm, there was a showing of Andy Walker's Photopoint video of the Beltane 2025 highlights.</p> <p>Tom Watton had hoodies of various sizes for sale, and Becky Salter had two versions of her Beltane posters, also for sale.</p> <p>There were three albums of photographs and posters from previous Beltane and Samhuinn Festivals for people to look at.</p> <p>Jenny Bloom (Chair) welcomed the Society members and declared the meeting formally open at 2pm. The Minutes from the 2024 AGM were approved by a show of hands.</p>
Chair's report	Jenny Bloom read out the Chair's Report after apologising for the length of it. This covered all the major actions of the Board in the year 2024-25, including appointment of new Contractors, Fringe by the Sea at North Berwick and the Yule meal. The full text of this report can be found here .
Financial report	<p>This was followed by the Financial Report from Treasurer, Neil Barton. This is also available to view on request, but he quoted some figures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The cost of Beltane 2025 was approximately £93,000 of which £11,300 was the cost of professional stewards and toilets cost £3,400 (for one night).. - Ticket sales were down slightly, but the surplus for the year to date for the whole Society is £16,682, which includes items other than just the Beltane festival, again down from previous years. The surplus for the Beltane festival should be about £30,000. - For Samhuinn 2024, the insurance was £4,400, with £8,000 for security and £6,200 to hire Holyrood Park for one evening. <p>Neil had finally arranged Gift Aid for the Beltane Fire Society, an extremely time intensive and bureaucratic process and a great triumph for the Society.</p> <p>He also mentioned that there is a scheme of Employer Matching, used by some banks, which is a good form of income for the Society and thanked all members who donate, as Gift Aid can be claimed on donations from people who pay tax. He encouraged members to consider whether their employers</p>

	<p>may be interested in a match funding scheme. Box office donations were also available, and amounted to about an extra £1,000 per year.</p>
	<p>Neil then noted that he will not be acting as BFS Treasurer this coming year, but will stay on for 6 weeks to assist with handover, the filing of annual accounts and other necessary filing. This suggestion was put to the membership and approved by a show of hands. (Neil was subsequently co-opted back into the board at the Board meeting on the 29th of June).</p> <p>Following the report, there was some discussion, which covered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future of Beltonia. Tom warned that there is a limited availability of suitable space and the search for a suitable replacement or renewal of the current lease in East Crowell Street continues. There is some intention to use it for room bookings or as a community space as well as a storage and workshop one, but accessibility at present is a challenge (eg steep stairs to the toilet on the upper floor) - Samhuinn 2025 will be held at Calton Hill (mentioned in the Chair's Report). It will occur on a Friday and will need to be ticketed - Copies of the accounts can be provided by Neil on request - Tom is looking for Samhuinn funding, may be council led, though there are other options.
Trustee applications	<p>The potential Trustees then each gave a short speech in support of their application with outlines of their priorities if elected and answered follow-up relevant questions.</p> <p>The potential Trustees standing are: Jenny Bloom Steffie Sutherland Robert Lee C'tri Zhi Kang Chua Jenny Glover.</p> <p>All group members present and those also holding proxies then voted with yes/no/abstain options using voting slips in a confidential ballot. After the meeting the votes were counted by neutral parties and the six Trustees were formally elected to the Board.</p> <p>Sincere thanks are given to the neutral parties, who counted the votes and produced the results quickly.</p>
AOB (Beltonia key holders, BFS fallow year suggestion)	<p>Key holders. It was noted that there is an unknown number of people holding keys for Beltonia, with a question whether it is possible to have a coded key box. The response was that the Beltonia insurers have not given permission to have a coded key box. However, one action may be to consider exactly who has keys for Beltonia and whether they still need to do so.</p> <p>Whether the BFS should consider a fallow year (i.e. a year without one or both festivals). The question was whether it is reasonable to expect group members to participate in festivals every year, especially with the associated financial and mental health costs. There was a short discussion, which made very clear that members were not in favour of this suggestion and it was pointed out that participation in festivals is voluntary and that people have the choice not to take part in one or more festivals if they need to have a break from them - it is important to encourage people not to take on too much work and to help and support people who have taken on more work than they can manage.</p> <p>New safeguarding guidelines. The new safeguarding guidelines are available and people should familiarise themselves with them.</p>
Formal closure of meeting	<p>As the AGM was closed formally, C'tri mentioned how good the post-Festival report had been. The Board was thanked for their hard work during the year. The next AGM will be held in 2026, probably in June, date, time and venue to be arranged.</p>