

LEVIN FOLK MUSIC CLUB INC

Acting Chair's Report to AGM – 24 July 2015

On behalf of the committee, I welcome everyone tonight and appreciate your commitment to the Club and its future. As acting Chair, I also want to express my appreciation to the committee members over the past year. Unfortunately 2014 did not run smoothly, firstly with the resignations of the Chair and then the Secretary. In November I took on the role of Acting Chair with the goal of bringing club members together in a positive and enthusiastic way. Our Mission Statement is "To encourage the appreciation and performance of folk music of all kinds" and the committee has focussed on this aim and worked together to put the Club's best interests first.

Due to pressure of work and personal commitments, we lost Jo Sheffield and more recently Denyse Howell-Styles from our committee. Over the Xmas break, members Rona Cooper and Colin Brown offered assistance and we were able to begin the new year with 6 committee members. We also co-opted Barbara Lucas as Co-Bookings Officer, Chris Lloyd as Newsletter Editor/Website Designer and Jill Roddick on Rosters. I must express the appreciation of the committee to these members, and to the others who have volunteered in various ways to assist on club nights.

Our new website has been operating since 2014 and Chris has put many volunteer hours into making it a very professional looking site. Subscription to our newsletter must be done on line now but members have opportunities to promote their music on the site and provide feedback, and guest performers can contact our Bookings Officer online. It is also the go-to place for newsletters and information, forms and photos. We now are looking for volunteer help to put out the monthly newsletter and assist with the website. Anyone with skills in this area would be very welcome.

Club nights have continued to provide excellent entertainment and value. A very good schedule of performers had been arranged in advance by previous Secretary Anne Campbell and this job has been continued on by Rona and now Barbara. Our 2015 program includes 2 UK touring traditional folk musicians in October and a special Christmas evening with Steve McDonald, a past winner of the Tui Folk Album Award.

In September 2014 a Special 25th Anniversary Night was organised by the Committee with decorations made and displayed by Barbara, Denyse and others. It was a great night, with floor spots by our regular performers and guests Gumboot Tango, with wonderful cakes, and wine on offer. A radio interview was also given by Rona and Danny Healy to Dave Key on the history of the Club.

Several socials have been hosted in 2015, by Jo and Merlin Sheffield in January and by myself and Don in May. Both were sponsored in part by the Committee

and were an opportunity for members to socialise, jam and enjoy music together. A special thank you to Alastair Pain for his contribution of hot mulled wine on a cold winter evening.

Music Month in May was a golden opportunity for the Club to showcase our folk genre to the public. It went very well on the day and I thank all the participants and supporters who played a part. A photo display will be kept by the Club and made available on club nights.

The committee has grappled with some hotly debated issues and so the survey at our July meeting is an attempt to find out the wishes of membership regarding the regular blackboard, possible inclusion of floor spots, sound quality, and door charges. These are important issues which affect our club's reputation and future. The catalyst for these discussions has been the lower audience numbers which point to the Club failing in some areas to draw the local audience. This has led to a falling bank balance and the Club making a small loss this year.

Because of this, we have discussed holding workshops of interest for our membership and the community, including percussion/timing, stage management, performance, use of microphones, singing harmony, banjo etc. At the end of June, Kevin Watson held a successful guitar workshop for 10 people and if there is demand, we envisage further workshops spaced throughout the year. We will offer these opportunities at subsidized cost to encourage members to expand their knowledge, hone skills and improve as performers. Thank you to members who have put forward proposals or who have offered workshops.

The importance of maintaining and improving our sound quality on club nights cannot be ignored and so the committee proposes a half day workshop with the sound team, and experienced sound technicians to determine if quality can be improved with our equipment. If the recommendation is to upgrade our equipment, it is likely the Committee would investigate a community grant for this purpose.

Considerable time has been spent discussing aspects of club night, and in particular, the blackboard. The blackboard policy wording has been updated to reflect one song per slot, or two songs for a recognised performing duo or group where there is a change in the lead. A committee slot has been reserved, at the discretion of the committee, to allow for known special performers in recognition that a variety of performances will contribute in a positive way to the blackboard and to the enjoyment of our audience.

We are looking for members who are motivated to join the committee and add their input and ideas to revitalise the club. Everyone's help in the running of the Club is appreciated and we look forward to continuing strongly into the years ahead. Thank you.

Dale Webb, Acting Chair