

Dartington Morris: *DRAFT* Minutes of AGM 2025

8:00 pm, Friday 26 September, Community Hall, South Brent

Squire, Stephen Holley, chaired the meeting; Bagman, Martin Jones, recorded the minutes.

The Squire welcomed all to the meeting. He reminded everyone that all agenda items have to be submitted to the Bagman no later than one week before the AGM. If a vote is required, the agenda items must be clearly stated and have a named proposer and seconder.

1. **Members Present**

Present at the meeting were Stephen Holley, Graham Kennett, Dan Shearer, Martin Jones, Robin Springett, Claire Craven, Brian Stone, Jess Schnoor, Samantha Cox, Louise Bell, David Sawney, Alaska Trotman, Jonathan Owen, Lynda Steer, Alan Pritchard, Rachel Stammers.

2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Ken Hudson, Howard Thompson, Colin Lodge, Cat Shearer, John Culf, Roger Easterbrook, Joe Vincent, Chris Farr, Michael Dadson, Sarah Clough, Rob Nutkins, Mark Featherstone, Mary Sweet, Frank Sweet.

3. **Minutes from AGM 2024**

3.1. **Acceptance of minutes**

AGM 2024 minutes were made available to members to read before the meeting.

Some items in the AGM minutes were revised following the EGM held on Friday 8 November 2024. The minutes from the EGM were also made available.

Proposal: The minutes should be accepted as an accurate record of the AGM 2024.

Proposed by Robin Springett, seconded by Stephen Holley, all in favour.

3.2. **Matters arising**

Items from last year's AGM, with person having an action and reference number from 2024 minutes.

3.2.1. Champernowne: Kingsbridge museum (Ken) [3.2.1]

In Ken's absence, Stephen stated he believed that Champernowne was indeed lodged at Kingsbridge museum. He explained that this is the name of the horse that was for many years the main animal of the side, but was retired a few years ago.

- 3.2.2. Storage of club archives (Rachel) [3.2.2]
Rachel has not yet received the archives. Dan confirmed he had contacted Robin Wells to arrange collection. Rachel added that once she has the archives she hopes to be able to scan them as electronic documents for future retention.
- 3.2.3. Revised kit definition on website (Martin) [6.2.1]
Done: see <https://dartingtonmorris.uk/dartington-morris-costume>
- 3.2.4. Sharing of stick bags (Alan) [6.4.1]
Alan confirmed he believed that the stick bags were shared among more people this past summer season and others concurred. Squire said he would hope we can continue to do this.
- 3.2.5. End of season social (Stephen) [6.5.1]
Not deemed relevant at this time, so not followed up.
- 3.2.6. Audience participation (Officers) [6.6.1]
Squire said he believes we have done well with audience participation this year and no further action is needed. All agreed.
- 3.2.7. Updates to Constitution (Martin) [6.7.1]
- Avoiding politically sensitive bookings (done) [6.7.1].
 - Change side name to Dartington Morris (done) [6.9.1].
 - Honorary Life Members – added to Constitution, but no nominations made at this stage [6.9.2]. [See this agenda item 6.3]
 - All changes were made and presented at EGM held on 8 Nov 2024; revised Constitution was adopted.

4. Officers' and Other Reports

Officers' reports were made available for viewing before the AGM. Squire asked if everyone had had chance to read them and most attendees nodded.

4.1. Squire: Stephen Holley

The Squire added he wished to thank Brian as our mainstay musician. He thanked the Bagman for his work, adding most people don't know all the things the Bagman has to deal with behind the scenes. He also wanted to make a special mention of Cat and Alan and thanked them for their photography for the side, and thanked Ken for handing local press publicity.

4.2. Bagman: Martin Jones

Bagman added just one comment to his report, that he feels it is time to look at an alternative to the W/W sheet to make sure everyone is more easily able to update it. An alternative system is called Morris Book, which some members have used with other sides. This will be suggested at a later date.

4.3. Treasurer: Graham Kennett

Treasurer commented on his surprise at the cost of running the side, made possible by the large source of income from collections made by Howard throughout the year. He mentioned the second account held by the side with the current bank, Nat West. This is a remnant from a savings account set up a long time ago and provides a back-up source of funds if the side has financial difficulties. The Treasurer added he will look at this again once his current activity with NatWest – correcting signatories and updating the account name to ‘Dartington Morris’ – was complete. He added that the accounts are not complete because he’s not yet been able to track down the income for the 2024 Ale, which he will discuss with Ken on his return from Canada.

Alan thanked the Treasurer for making the accounts clear to understand.

Squire thanked Graham for taking on the role mid-year, no easy feat. He proposed that the accounts be recorded as a true record. All in favour.

4.4. Foreman: Dan Shearer

Foreman said he hoped to add one or two new dances to the repertoire this practice season. He asked that if anyone has a desire to learn a new dance from any of the traditions we currently cover, to let him know.

Squire added he would like to see us do some more jigs practice to extend our range of jigs performed in public.

4.5. Musicians: Brian Stone

Brian made a reference to kit issues in his report. These are addressed later in the agenda.

Squire thanked Brian for his contribution to the side playing for dance, especially at practice and extended his thanks to the others that play occasionally for dance.

4.6. Collections: Howard Thompson

Howard was thanked in his absence for his very informative report. Squire said there was a lot we can glean from this.

The Squire wished to record a huge thank-you to Howard for his collecting and addition to the side in his audience communication. All agreed: “How Lucky Are We!”.

4.7. Ragman: Colin Lodge

Squire noted that Colin’s report was helpful in noting down in particular the expense in kitting out new dancers.

In Colin’s report he asked for a volunteer or two to make themselves known to share the White Hart costume from time to time so that we aren’t dependent only on him. If you are interested, please speak to Colin directly.

Squire wished to record a vote of thanks to Colin for all his excellent work in providing baldrics and bells for all newcomers, and the repairs to the existing kit. All in favour.

4.8. Archivist: Rachel Stammers

Nothing to add (as Rachel hasn't received the archives yet).

4.9. Webmaster: Martin Jones

Nothing to add.

4.10. Longsword: Ken Hudson

The Squire has written to Ken to inform him that all members that wish to learn the longsword dance will be given the chance to do so from the first practice.

4.11. Advertising & Publicity: Ken Hudson

Nothing to add.

5. Election of Officers

Elected officers were all prepared to stand again and there were no other proposals, so they were re-elected en masse with no objections.

5.1. Squire

Stephen Holley.

5.2. Bagman

Martin Jones.

5.3. Treasurer

Graham Kennett.

5.4. Foreman

Dan Shearer.

5.5. Appointed roles

The following roles are appointed by the Squire and remained as they were last year.

Collector: Howard Thompson; Ragman: Colin Lodge with Ken Hudson; Archivist: Rachel Stammers; Animal: Colin Lodge; Fool: (vacant); Webmaster: Martin Jones.

6. Agenda items

Items to be led by the named person.

6.1. Membership fee (Graham)

6.1.1. Proposal: the annual membership fee should remain as £10 per member.

- Proposed by: Graham Kennett
- Seconded by: Martin Jones
- All in favour.

Graham asked that we all pay our membership subs by online bank transfer with our name as the reference. He also asked that we pay on or shortly after Wednesday 1

October to keep it in the next accounting year. A reminder will be sent out with the bank details. If online banking presents anyone with a problem, they should speak to Graham.

6.2. Practice repertoire - to include Ring Squire's massed dances (Robin)

The Morris Ring Squire posts a list of dances they would like to see sides performing in mass dances. Of the current list, only Valentine (Fieldtown) and Vandals of Hammerwich (Lichfield) are not currently in our repertoire.

- 6.2.1. Proposal: our practice to include all the dances from the Morris Ring Squire's list
- Proposed by: Robin Springett
 - Seconded by: Ken Hudson

Some discussion ensued. The Foreman said that adding extra dances into the practice schedule will impact those we wish to learn. Considering that we would only dance them on rare occasions such as attending a Morris Ring meeting, this doesn't seem to be good use of our time. Robin concurred and withdrew his proposal.

6.3. Honorary members (Squire)

In the 2025 AGM we agreed that honorary membership could be proposed at an AGM or EGM for past members (that no longer play an active part) in recognition of a significant contribution made to the club. Honorary Members have the same rights as an ordinary member, except (1) they are not able to vote or hold an elected position and (2) they are not required to pay the annual membership fee.

- 6.3.1. Proposal: To award Honorary Membership to Lionel Harper, who was Bagman and/or Treasurer from 1977 to 2010.
- Proposed by: Stephen Holley
 - Seconded by: Martin Jones

Squire explained this would be in very rare circumstances. He believes that Lionel fits the criteria and would appreciate the honour.

All in favour, no objections. Squire will take the action to inform Lionel.

6.4. Portable defibrillator for the side (Alan)

Alan stated that the cost of purchasing a portable defibrillator for the side was rather high (detailed costing in Appendix 1). He said our experience this year was that public defibrillators have been located within fairly easy reach (within 5 minutes' walk) and suggests that this is good enough to minimise our risk.

- 6.4.1. Proposal: to continue to use public defibrillators as necessary and not to purchase a portable one for the side at this time.
- Proposed by: Alan Pritchard
 - Seconded by: Rachel Stammers

All in favour, no further action.

Squire thanked Alan for providing this support for the side, adding it might even save a life (which we all appreciate). Squire asked whether first aiders, runners, callers etc could be identified once instead of Alan having to do this for each out. Alan said he was happy to continue to do this and Martin added doing so makes it more likely that volunteers would be clearly identified that way.

6.5. A statement of purpose (mission statement) for the side and adjust the constitution so it aligns (Brian)

6.5.1. Proposal: To add something like the following text to the Constitution:

To perpetuate the 50 year old legacy of the Dartington Morris Men by promoting lively Morris dancing and entertaining apres Morris activities like tune playing and singing. In the latter we have a reputation to uphold.

- Proposed by: Brian Stone
- Seconded by: Jess Schnoor

Brian was asked to explain what he is trying to achieve by doing this. He said he was especially keen that anyone new to the side understood exactly what it is that we do, including not only the dance but also the sessions and other activities. He added that we have never been a 'dance and go' side, but always one that sings and plays after the dance performance. Jess suggested that this could be achieved by any new member spending time with an experienced member of the side when they first come along to practice and the full range of activity is explained, using photos to support. Samantha said this would have been helpful when she and Louise joined the side in January.

There was a further suggestion that some suitable wording be added to the printed programmes; Martin suggested it could be made available on the DM website.

It was then agreed by all that we take this as an action to prepare some simple introductory information and photos to show to new starters. Dan accepted this as an action.

6.6. Dancing kit is part of our legacy (Brian)

Brian said that at the last AGM he warned that by not specifying the kit, members would take advantage and standards would decline.

6.6.1. Proposal: kit should be specified

- Proposed by: Brian Stone
- Seconded by: Jess Schnoor

Brian explained that he is especially concerned at where sleeves are rolled up to and the length of breeches. Some discussion followed, with examples mentioned; Dan showed some old photos of the side where shirt sleeve length was both above and below the knee, confirming that this has never been consistent. The general consensus was that there is already sufficient detail on the DM website (following last year's EGM) and that the Squire has the responsibility to address any concerns with

individual kit directly with that individual. This was met with general agreement. Louise added that a clear kit definition for new starters is really helpful.

The proposal was adjusted to something we could vote on:

- (a) Further tighten the definition of kit as proposed by Brian, or
- (b) Accept the kit definition as-is with the Squire addressing any individual issues.

There was one vote for proposal (a) and everyone else voted for proposal (b).

6.7. Event planning (Bagman)

Rather than spend time in the AGM discussing events, we will defer all such discussion to the Planning Meeting, to be held in November/December.

In the meantime, the following dates were agreed:

- DM hosted (King John) weekend: 18-19 April 2026.
- Day of Dance in Totnes in September: Sat 12 Sep 2026.

6.8. Dartington Morris Ale – 15 November 2025 (Ken)(for information)

Arrangements are well in hand for our third Ale at Rattery Village Hall. Once Ken has the confirmed numbers he will make a start on the Catering arrangements.

Many of the side are unable to be present due to other commitments, notably the annual Pudsey Day of Dance in Tavistock. We have to factor in to our planning such clashes to ensure better attendance in future.

6.9. Charity/charities to support 2025/2026

With the state of the accounts this year, Treasurer said he wasn't sure we could make a very big contribution to any charity. Robin proposed we don't make a donation from this year's funds and wait until the accounts are in better shape. All agreed.

This can be reviewed by the Treasurer in the 2025/2026 accounting year, and Rowcroft Hospice was mentioned to remain as our preferred charity.

6.10. First practice: Friday 3 October (for information)

Practice resumes on Friday 3 October. The new code for the car park barrier is **2 3 7 8**.

Squire thanked everyone for their input and discussion and the meeting closed at 10pm.

Appendix 1

Proposal for Dartington Morris AGM: do not buy a defibrillator (Alan Pritchard)

This year, we had a high probability of defibrillating anyone suffering a cardiac arrest within 5 minutes; at most most performances, within 3 minutes. That seems to be good enough*.

Furthest public defibrillators were:

- The Waterman's Arms, Bow Bridge to The Maltster's Arms, Tuckenhay: Round trip 1400 metres.
- Totnes Castle to Totnes civic hall: round trip 800 metres, with a hill.
- Cornworthy village fete to the village: round trip, 700 metres.

Defibrillator prices start at £780 purchase plus £110 per year consumables.

* Reference: "A guide to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)" by Resuscitation Council UK in collaboration with British Heart Foundation, December 2019, reviewed 2024. AED_Guide_2019-12-04.pdf

Calculations (prices include VAT)

Choosing a defibrillator

- Prices are cheaper from British Heart Foundation than St John's Ambulance.
- Semi-automatic rather than automatic if cheaper.
- Unlikely to need for anyone under 8 years old: child heart attacks are uncommon without a primary cause like drowning.
- Don't need connectivity to log use.
- Don't need ingress protection.

Cheapest

IPAD NFK200 semi automatic defibrillator | British Heart Foundation £780

- 10 year warranty. Weight 2.2 kg
- Battery: estimated life 4 to 5 years, replacement £280
- Adult and child electrode pads: estimated life 2 years, replacement £80
- Annual running cost at current prices $(£280/4) + (£80/2) = £110$ per year

My recommendation (if we buy one)

I have never heard of IPAD, I have owned a variety of Phillips stuff and found it well designed and well made. The company is likely to still be around in 12 years, and still support the equipment. Running cost is slightly less than the IPAD. It is lighter.

Philips HeartStart HS1 Defibrillator British Heart Foundation £1074

- 8 year warranty. Weight 1.5 kg
- Battery: estimated life 4 years, replacement £170
- Adult SMART Pad Cartridge: estimated life 2 years, replacement £78
- Annual running cost at current prices $(£170/4) + (£78/2) = £82$ per year