

## North of England Branch

### Report of a Meeting held by video conference on the 5<sup>th</sup> July at 1pm

#### Attendees

Kevin Reilly – Branch Chairman & Houghton le Spring  
Ken Thacker – NWE Section Chairman & Warrington  
Malcolm Robertson – NEE Section Chairman & Houghton le Spring  
Colin Smith – Music Board Rep & Morpeth  
Theresa Brown – Music Board Rep Warrington  
Chris Eyre – NWE President & Wirral  
Paul Wright - Beverly and District  
Bryan Robinson - City of Newcastle  
Les Chadwick – Houghton le Spring  
Paul Brown – RSPBA Vice-Chairman & Warrington

The Report covers the key discussion items covered at the meeting.

#### Welcome

The Branch Chairman welcomed all those attending to this the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the North of England Branch. The meeting had been communicated to the members of both the NWE and NEE Section members.

It took a few minutes to overcome some technical issues experienced by those using the GoTo Meeting application for the first time.

Using a virtual meeting gives all Bands the opportunity to participate as it saves on the need for time to be set aside for travel as well not needing premises to be available for the hosting of a meeting

#### Operation

The two Sections would continue to operate independently due to the geographical spread across the north of England. The joining of membership enables the bands to have “director” representation at headquarters and combine efforts in running events where appropriate.

The decision to combine to form the North of England Branch was agreed by both Section at their last Branch AGM at the end of 2019. The NWE AGM minutes have been issued and were approved at the first GM in 2020 so actions raised could be progressed. The NEE AGM minutes have not yet been circulated.

Both sections are financially viable, the NWE section has maintained a balance of around £2000 for the last few years. The NWE Section has tried to run indoor solo and band contests as well as workshops each year, support for these events has diminished over time.

## Competitions / Workshops

Events used to be held centrally in Manchester / Oldham, but over years premise costs have risen or are no longer available. The Section has used the St Josephs School, Wirral as this is available and cost effective but the use of this location has to be balanced with the need for travel. The NEE section uses Ampleforth College which is quite centrally located. The bands from both sections were looking forward to travelling to the 2020 event at Ampleforth College before it was cancelled. The number of bands involved would larger and the competing bands would have had a broader experience prior to the competition season.

It was decided that the sections would run their separate solo contests but ensure there was no clash of dates. The events are open so all Branch band players would still be able to participate.

It was agreed to combine the minibands, trios and quartets, looking for a central location. Initially Ampleforth College, but the Branch is open to any other suggestions.

## Recruitment

The sections are supported by a small number of Bands who are as active as they can be. There are several bands who are simply happy to perform at parades and carnivals, and not participate in RSPBA activities or competitions. We should keep them in the loop as circumstances may change and they may become involved.

A question was asked on how bands actively engage in recruitment. English Schools not really interested in teaching piping. Youth is recruited by family connections or they have seen the Band out and about. Many give up once they realise the input required. It was recognised that a Band would need to offer tuition and instruments to develop the next generation of players / competitors.

Bands need to issue flyers in their local area, contact schools and social clubs. Chris would be happy to put a promotional video together, he would need the necessary scripts to edit together. This could then be posted on the Band, Section (x2) Facebook and Web Sites.

My get transient playesr who are attending University (2 to 3 years) but these players are likely to be those who would travel to higher grade bands rather than attend a low grade to keep their skills and competition playing current.

## AOCB

Minutes of the RSPBA Board of Directors meetings are now posted to the Web Site.

Entry Fees and Summer School Fees are being refunded once the office staff return from furlough.

RSPBA AGM was run online. 97 bands submitted a proxy. 5 bands voted against or abstained from all the motions on the proxy form. All the motions were passed. The questions asked on the proxy form by Members (the Band Secretary) have been answered. A Report of the RSPBA AGM has been made available on the Web Site.

The MB are meeting monthly to ensure any items that need to be progressed on behalf of the association are debated and minuted.

1. Grade 4B / Novice Juvenile B are to receive a questionnaire, to gain physical evidence regarding whether there would be any uptake on the "introduction proposal", start in the circle or start from the line.

2. A video conference with the Grade 1 Pipe Majors / Leading drummers to discuss the Medley format would hopefully take place at the weekend of the cancelled World championships, with 2 calls needed to accommodate time zone differences.

It was agreed that the meeting had been a good start, section meetings should be held to discuss competition dates and a further North of England Branch meeting should be arranged towards the end of August.

Paul Brown  
NEW Section Secretary

NSPBA North of England Branch July Report