

**FRYOG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**Saturday 18<sup>TH</sup> September 2016**  
**10:00 - 16:00 at the Quaker Meeting House, Reading**

**Present: 29**

Lucy Barlow: - Chairman: Christine Clist – Secretary: Julie Birbeck – Treasurer: Maggie Brocklehurst – Diploma Board Officer, Aimee Newton: Training and Standards Officer, Swami Satvikananda Saraswati, John Gent, Greta Dabek, Jo Standen, Kelly Bassi, Stefanie Earle, Joanne Guest, Sue Harvey, Lesley Hilton, Victoria James, Felicity McHale, Penny Nardelli, Ann Norris, Nicola Oakley- Watson, Simi Sandu, Gemma Sprack, Sarah Swan, Emily Whitehead, Yamini Naik, Norma Jones, Lynn Waddingham, Andrea Ballard, Evanthia Baldwin, Karmal Gent,

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Carole Kerton, Lorraine Walton, Ann Key, Pattie Sandham, Pat Cronin, Nickie Short, Sheila Coombes, Jo Florio, Nancy Driver, Ruth Taylor, Janette Moy, Helen Sutcliffe, Gemma Grinter, Ann Zielonka, Donna Poingdestre, Zoe Smart, Jane Moloney, Amanda Coulson, Eleana Barkans

**MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:**

The Minutes of the AGM held on 23rd September 2014 at Kissingbury Village Hall were approved by the Members at the meeting.

No Matters arising.

**REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN – Lucy Barlow**

As you know, I have stepped down as Chair. I'm very sad to be doing so without seeing several projects to completion but I am also excited to see member stepping into roles bringing the professional skills and experience needed to successfully move Friends of Yoga forward, and I know they will help to finalise change that have been underway these last 2 years.

Zoe Smart & Rosanna Meyer both have excellent marketing and event experience and great industry contacts. They are overseeing the rebranding of Friends of Yoga in order to improve our public image and our presence in the modern yoga community. I know they will create a fresh, engaging brand for our society.

I am only too aware that talk of rebranding causes shudders among some of our members. Please be assured, the Executive Committee, Zoe and Rosanna, will ensure that we do not lose our identity: with feedback from the survey offered this year, we have chosen Friends of Yoga as the single name by which we will identify ourselves in our logo and all materials in the future. The logo will be revamped but retain a lotus as voted for overwhelmingly. A fresh, modern, structured approach to the logo, website, marketing and documentation will allow us to look professional. We intend a strong, professional brand of which our teachers can be proud, in order to stand out in an increasingly diverse and now strongly competitive yoga market.

We have taken feedback to heart and wherever possible, the EC will now consult with members on major changes with Friends of Yoga.

Our decision to cease printing the newsletter was made as a Committee with the very best intentions. I take full responsibility for the lack of foresight in how the decision would impact on our longstanding members. However, in a membership of 450, less than 30 complained, and we have less than a dozen members without an email. We continue to provide a print copy for those unable to receive it digitally (under 20 members). In addition, whilst we received less than 20 responses to the logo survey via 2 print issues, response levels increased to more than 80 when it was included in the emailed issue. In order to allow members easier involvement, Aimee Newton has put together a proposal to allow all members the opportunity to suggest improvements to Friends of Yoga.

Even without the environmental concerns that we all need to prioritise, digitalising the newsletter enables the EC to save over £4000 per annum – the actual cost was closer to £5000. As I intended from the outset, that money will be redirected each year to facilitate more professional and immediate engagement with our members, both online and in the real world. Offering subsidised and free CPD, improving our public image and attending more events or taking out relevant media advertising will all help to boost the profile of our teachers and tutors and help increase our membership further. Working together is essential if we are to continue to bring Friends of Yoga in line with, and hopefully beyond, those standards being set by such organisations as the IYN and Yoga Alliance Professionals. This year, we have arranged 3 CPD days (including the AGM with the wonderful Uma Dinsmore-Tuli) and various plans are in place to continue that provision and extend it in the coming years.

Sadly, our member who volunteered as Editor for the new digital newsletter had to step down due to family needs. Through no fault of hers, you can appreciate it has nonetheless affected the transition. I have endeavoured in the meantime to ensure something is sent out rather than nothing, and I will continue to do so. Please be patient, we remain in a transitional phase for now. Whilst a member did come forward to provide a little support whilst I

continue to edit the newsletter in terms of improving appearance and delivery of the digital newsletter, we are once again in need of a new Editor – could it be you? Please, get involved if this is your area of expertise, it is not mine!

It has been raised that our membership feels disenfranchised without a print newsletter and that this is a direct cause of “low” attendance for the 2016 AGM – in fact, attendance has dwindled consistently over the last 15 years, until Amanda Coulson felt compelled to reduce it to a 2 yearly event in an attempt to ease the burden on the EC and to encourage member attendance. Actual attendance this year was higher than in 2014. If you read the Membership Secretary’s Report, you will also see that non-renewals have fallen and that overall numbers have increased. At the AGM today, we managed to vote in a new Membership Secretary and a member volunteered to take on the Diploma Board Officer’s role (to be ratified if no other nominations or objections are raised before 21<sup>st</sup> October). Several members were keen to be able to volunteer in small ways if not in a formal role and several suggestions will be reviewed to see if we can facilitate members helping as part of teams around the EC officers.

I have always encouraged members to get involved, to volunteer and voice opinions. Very few do so. For the last 2 years, most of the EC were performing more than one role and we are all volunteers. We believe that Friends of Yoga will stagnate unless we modernise. No newsletter can prevent that if our members are not prepared to volunteer and interact outside publications.

In recent years, we have fallen behind other organisations and we are no longer a leader in training, despite having an excellent standard of training and education to offer, that is well-respected in the yoga community. Outside those in the know, no one knows who we are and to survive, we have to modernise and update our processes, our communication and our appearance. Whilst the majority of subscriptions went on printing, leaving little for any other initiatives, we can now begin to redirect those funds to the benefit of our members in more meaningful ways. We may well be able to attend the Manchester Yoga Show as well as the London event, and it may be beneficial to arrange more regular or more visible advertising in relevant media publications or via Google Ads – these things are being reviewed.

So please remember that the EC are all volunteers and elected to act on your behalf and in the best interests of the majority of members. It is not practical, nor possible, for every decision to require full membership approval. Processes and procedures and communications are under review to allow more new projects to develop, more easily and to ensure that we continue to offer more opportunities to engage with each other in the real world. The EC believes that the proposals being made and the changes underway will help us attract new members, offer better exposure for teachers and tutor and yet remain aligned with our constitution and able to provide accessible, quality education in yoga.

The Bhagavad Gita 18.48 tells us there may be imperfection in all work but that we should not walk away from our duty because we see imperfection in our execution of it. I have done my best, and whilst my time as Chair is over, I remain involved as Social Media Co-Ordinator and as acting Editor until a more experienced and skilled volunteer can be found. I continued to do my duty for Friends of Yoga – what will you do? Friends of Yoga does not exist without you. Please, get involved.

You don’t have to be perfect, you don’t even have to be a teacher, and we all have skills beyond yoga. Just put the good of our members at your heart when you act, and do the best you can. Something is better than nothing. Please, get involved.

Finally, I would like to thank the outgoing and remaining EC members for their support over the last 2 years, and for all their hard work, and to thank the new EC and volunteers for getting involved. I can’t wait to see what will manifest with Maggie Brocklehurst at the helm.

NB Two days after the AGM we had a volunteer to take on the Diploma Board Officer post.

#### **REPORT FROM TRAINING & STANDARDS OFFICER - Aimee Newton**

This is my first AGM, even though I have been a member of the Executive Committee for more than 2 years, for those of you who don’t know me I was a student of Amanda Coulson graduating in 2006 but for the last 5 years I have been completing in my masters in Osteopathy which thankfully ended 12 months ago allowing me a more active role in Friends of Yoga for the last 12 months.

Until then I have been very passive in my role but hopefully now I can find sometime between my classes my patients and my several clinics to try and implement some new ideas which will benefit you all.

As Lucy mentioned I have been reviewing our internal processes based on feedback from members to see how we can make things run a bit more smoothly and harmoniously when changes are suggested. What I discovered is actually we don’t have any internal processes so it is not surprising that there is confusion and issues arising when change occurs.

I have provided you with a hard copy of what the Executive Committee have approved based on our Constitution. I am hoping it will provide an anchor for us to ground and settle the organisation through change, a bit like the breath in a challenging asana.

The first part is clarifying the responsibilities of both the Executive Committee and the membership. This was just writing down what we do on a regular basis and what we feel the membership should do, as you can see we have reinforced this need for seva and the desperate need for volunteers and I would like to draw your attention to our Constitution. Volunteering for the good of yoga is part of FRYOG Constitution, it is in our very essence, you are all members therefore this is something you should all be doing as FRYOG members no matter how small the commitment. We don't expect everyone to volunteer for a massive role. All the Executive Committee need help with is little projects, administration, article writing, and help at the Yoga Show. Everyone could do something within the time they have available.

The process diagram is a very simple flow diagram with a few stages the main points to note are

- 1) Anyone can propose a new idea for the memberships' consideration, for ease of administration you need to approach a member of the Executive Committee to work with and complete a proposal form. The Chairperson will then make sure it is all in line with our Constitution and a viable idea before getting our Marketing Officers to distribute to the members.
- 2) There will be a consultation period, we have stated that there is a minimum of 4 weeks to gather constructive feedback from everyone and we welcome volunteers to administer this as well, a revised proposal will be created after the consultation period and passed to the Chairperson who will check that the member's feedback is incorporated.
- 3) The membership will then be asked to vote within a 2 week period.

Obviously this is a new Communications Policy and there will always be improvements needed and refinement so please be patient while I try and smooth out any creases.

The documents mentioned in my report will be available to view on the FRYOG Website.

The first idea to test the Communication Policy is going to be my proposal for using some of the funds we now have available. You also have a document there called Communication Proposal 1, Subsidised Friends of Yoga CPD, this will be sent out via the Marketing Team, hopefully very soon, but I would like to get your feedback maybe at the end of the meeting if we have time to gauge peoples initial thoughts.

We also need committed Area Officers for these to work and we have the need for some fresh people regionally, this could be a great opportunity for you to raise your profile as a teacher as well as helping FRYOG. If you feel you could be an Area Officer then please let me know. We need a South East Area Officer as Sharry Clark has asked to step down and Amanda Green has asked for some help in the Midlands but is happy to stay on as deputy.

#### **Skills Active – National Occupation Standards for Yoga**

FRYOG have been invited to be part of the Steering Committee for this. The IYN are strongly opposed and there is a petition on line to sign. This link will also be available on the FRYOG website. Generally the yoga community are opposed to what seems to be a BWY driven attempt to control and standardise yoga by setting a benchmark for teaching. There is not a lot of information available at the moment but we will keep you informed of any updates.

#### **REPORT FROM DIPLOMA BOARD OFFICER - Maggie Brocklehurst**

Students on FRYOG's teacher training courses continue to grow. Since the last AGM two years ago, by the end of September, I will have issued 85 Teaching diplomas, 96 Foundation diplomas and I am just about to issue FRYOG's first batch of 500 hr diplomas to three of Vikki Bedford's students with another five 500 hour students due to complete in October under Sheila Coombes. There has also been one teacher who decided to 'bridge' over to FRYOG from another teaching organization.

At the present time there are 8 Students training on foundation courses and another 13 training on the 200hr teaching year. I also expect to sign up two more 200 hr courses under Jeanette Moy and Vikki Bedford in October.

The demographics of teacher training is still South heavy but thanks to Debbie Avery and Helen Sutcliffe in The Midlands FRYOG is gently expanding. We still don't have a presence in Central London which is a shame as that would compensate for no FRYOG presence in the surrounding counties of Essex, Hertfordshire and NW Kent. Those Counties are very commutable into Central London. Even though there are 'denser' areas of teaching members, there certainly seems to be more demand for yoga teachers. The requirement for yoga teachers is increasing and I know of one teacher who has a slot in a bicycle shop on a Saturday morning, teaching yoga to cyclists.

I can't stress enough how grateful I am to theory and practical assessors who reply so quickly to my requests for thesis marking and practical examining. Over a six week period this summer every theory assessor marked at least three papers when more than 50 students completed their trainings. The remuneration for the work involved for marking papers is very small compared to the hours required to read, mark and comment on theses.

It is with great sadness that FRYOG loses one of our most willing theory assessors, Kathleen Pepper, as she finally takes retirement after over 30 years of assessing papers.

#### REPORT FROM TREASURER – Julie Birbeck

On 11th of September 2016 the bank balance was £15,060.14. Revenue to date in 2016 is £9,220.40, whilst expenditure is £ 4,615.17.

The main expenditure is for a stand at the October Yoga Show in London. The cost of dressing the stand and promotional items to support is as yet unknown. A commitment has been made for advertising space in Om magazine, both for the London Yoga show, and January editions.

The membership for BYCT, Liability Insurance, and societies' membership for Yoga Alliance have been paid. And the societies' membership for ICNM, and the Independent Yoga Network are due later in 2016.

Monthly donations to Nirvanavan have continued at £20.00 per month.

So far in 2016 there have been two further donations from the proceeds of donations to FRYOG from the society's Continuing Professional Development days.

Funds have been allocated to allow members to represent the society in National Occupational Standards Initiative via SkillsActive.

Signatories on the bank account are Julie Birbeck, Christine Clist and Amanda Coulson. Chris also has access to the PayPal account, which may be used to pay for membership. Bank transfer remains the preferred option for membership, due to both less cost and less administration. It is recommended that membership subscriptions remain at £20 per annum (£23 overseas).

Friends of Yoga Society International Balance Sheet Period Ending 11 Sept 2016	
<b>Assets</b>	£
Co-op Bank	15,060.14
Unpresented Cheques	-
PayPal	169.55
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>15,229.69</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
AGM/Tutors & Assessors	710.00
Newsletter	31.12
Associations	360.00
Web Site	170.00
Marketing	1,044.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>2,315.12</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>12,914.57</u>

Friends of Yoga Society International  
Profit and Loss  
Period Ending 11 September 2016

	2016	2015
	£	£
<b>Revenue</b>		
Member Subscriptions	8,359.59	9,475.11
Adverts	0.00	80.00
Diploma Award Fees	620.00	1,230.00
Donations	55.81	249.10
Interest Received	0.00	0.00
Junior Subscriptions	0.00	0.00
Teacher Register	90.00	110.00
Poetry Books	35.00	0.00
Merchandise	0.00	0.00
CNHC	60.00	105.00
<b>Total</b>	<u>9,220.40</u>	<u>11,249.21</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
	£	£
Newsletter	7.78	3,195.92
Yoga Show	1,843.20	1,883.44
Website	250.00	265.00
Printed Ads	1,500.00	1,200.00
Nirvanavan	238.81	417.10
Yoga Alliance	0.00	132.00
BCYT	200.00	200.00
IYN Subscription	0.00	200.00
ICNM	0.00	100.00
Insurance	262.80	254.40
Stationery	208.15	97.12
Travel & Expenses	103.43	707.61
AGM/Tutors & Assessors	0.00	368.25
Poetry Books	0.00	0.00
Bank Fees	1.00	6.00
Misc.	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<u>4,615.17</u>	<u>9,026.84</u>
<b>Profit/Loss</b>	4,605.23	2,222.37

## **REPORT FROM BCYT REPRESENTATIVE – Pat Cronin**

I appreciate that these two acronyms may be unfamiliar to some members so to clarify;

BCYT is the British Council for Yoga Therapy which is a professional forum of yoga therapy training organisations and professional organisations whose members are Yoga Therapists. It promotes high standards in the training, education and regulation of Yoga Therapists in the UK and accredits Yoga Therapy training. I represent the interests of FRYOG within this group.

The CNHC is the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council which was set up with government support to protect the public by providing a UK voluntary register of complementary therapists.

I actually wear two hats here, as I am an elected member of the CNHC's profession specific board for yoga therapy in my own right – looking out for the needs of yoga therapists and representing them within the CNHC, and I also carry out FRYOG's role as a verifying organisation for yoga therapy.

What that means is that I check the credentials of newly qualified yoga therapists who wish to join the CNHC's register and verify them if they qualify. FRYOG receive a fee of £15 for every one I verify. This year we received £60.00.

In terms of news the most relevant development for FRYOG yoga teachers is that SkillsActive have just been commissioned to complete a review of the National Occupational Standards for yoga – an activity that I hope FRYOG will actively contribute to as a stakeholder, because working to raise standards of training in the UK can only be a good thing for all of us that love and care about yoga.

Those yoga therapists among you will be interested to know that the core curriculum for yoga therapy training will shortly be reviewed by the CHNHC.

I appreciate that accreditation is not a sexy subject, but I am pleased to be able to carry out this small but important function on behalf of FRYOG. Yoga therapy is one of the fastest growing aspects of yoga in the UK and a profession that I am immensely proud to belong to.

## **REPORT FROM SECRETARY/MEMBERSHIP OFFICER – Christine Clist**

We now have 116 teachers registered on the FRYOG Teacher Register - an increase of 18 from 2014.

I receive enquiries from people looking for a yoga class in the area close to where they live and I either direct them to our Teacher Register on the FRYOG Website or if it is a more complex enquiry I contact the teachers direct via the information I have on the Register. So it's only the teachers who have registered that I am able to get in touch with.

Once again I would just like to remind you to keep your details up to date and let me know of changes so that I can get them updated.

On behalf of the committee I would also like to take this opportunity and thank Ann Key for her hard work and dedication she has given to FRYOG during the many years as Newsletter Editor. Also thank you to Kathleen Pepper who after over 20 years has decided to retire from her role as an Assessor.

### **Membership**

From July 2015 I agreed to take on the Membership duties for one year alongside my role as Secretary as no-one volunteered when Lorraine stood down. The position has been advertised in each newsletter since and we still had no volunteers. I will not let FRYOG down and will continue for time being until a suitable replacement comes forward.

FRYOG currently has 472 members and increase of 21 since September 2014 357 of these are teaching members, 71 are training and 44 are non- teaching members.

The regional breakdown is as follows:-

East 10, London 12, Midlands 54, North 32, Overseas 7, Scotland 4, South 71, South East 17, South West 233, and West 32.

The regional breakdown for 2014 was:-

East 10, London 15, Midlands 37, North 33, Overseas 11 Scotland 3, South 59, South East 20, South West 222, and West 38.

### **Non Renewals**

2013	106
2014	40
2015	37
2016	48

Most members pay by standing order or bank transfer and now some pay via PayPal but 103 members paid by cheque at the 2016 renewal. This entails logging all the details on the cheque onto a paying in slip and either paying into the post office or post directly to the bank. It would be less work for the Membership Officer if more members would set up a direct debit or send via bank transfer. Forms will be available from the FRYOG website.

Since 2014 the cheques are no longer sent to the Treasurer to process.

Some new members are paying by PayPal via the FRYOG Website. However, this does cause a problem in terms of renewal as PayPal will auto renew one year from first payment and this does not coincide with FRYOG membership year which runs from January to December. The members involved have all been contacted and advised that their auto renewal has been cancelled and to set up their payments in January either via PayPal or preferably via their bank.

#### **REPORT FROM THE WEBSITE CO-ORDINATOR – Joanne Standen**

In 2015 we began a major face lift of the FRYOG website. It had been untouched for several years and looked tired and out of date. Using the existing FRYOG logo colours the site now looks much brighter. Old and unused headings have been removed from the main menu.

Members can now join FRYOG on line and set up regular subscriptions. There is a link to our Facebook page.

Details of training courses can be found. There is a link for Foundation course but not for 200hr and 500hr.

There is a great post code search facility to enable people to find a FRYOG teacher near them. FRYOG teachers who want to be found please make sure you are included.

Members can get a free day at the OM Yoga Show – follow the links.

Over the year any changes to teacher contact details, training day information and courses I have forwarded to Jason for amendment/inclusion on the website. Going forward if we could make our own minor amendments the website would be updated quickly.

Also it would be great to develop the member's area, member's blog. At present we can sign in but there is no content.

#### **REPORT FROM THE YOGA SHOW ORGANISER - Patricia Cronin**

Last year the Om Yoga show transferred from Olympia to Alexander Palace and although for those of us based South or West of London it was a much less convenient location, I have to say that the venue itself was wonderful. The vaulted ceiling and beautiful stained glass window gave a feeling of spaciousness and as the sound was able to expand upwards there was a much more peaceful atmosphere that was better conducive to yoga.

As usual, exhibitors ranged from the seriously yogic to the downright wacky and there was certainly something for everyone. There were some great free classes and talks, fabulous and seriously tempting yoga equipment and clothes, and delicious food.

I know that in the yoga world there are differing opinions about the value of the show. On the downside it is very commercial and the quality of some of the yoga leaves something to be desired, but there are also hidden gems and given that FRYOG's aim is to: 'propagate comprehensive yoga in all its aspects', I think that it's important that we get our name out there at the heart of modern yoga practice setting an example.

This was my fifth and last show as coordinator and I'm sure the committee will support me in emphasising a point that I have raised many times, which is that we would have more impact at the show if on the day the website was up to date with full details of future training courses – venues and costs and if we had flyers from each of our teacher trainers. I know it's a London based show but my own experience is that people are willing to travel considerable distances and are often eager to get out of London for training.

Thank everyone who helped at last year's shows and those that preceded them and thank you to Carol Kerton for giving me the opportunity to take on the role in the first place. It has been a wonderful learning opportunity and I am very grateful.

I wish Zoe Smart all the best for her future in her role.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2016/17**

The current Chairperson (Lucy Barlow) is stepping down and being replaced by Maggie Brocklehurst. This was proposed by Lucy Barlow and seconded by Aimee Newton. The current Treasurer (Julie Birbeck) is also stepping down and being replaced by Nancy Driver. This was proposed by Maggie Brocklehurst and seconded by Lucy

Barlow. Sarah Swan volunteered to take the vacant post of Membership Officer, this was proposed by Lucy Barlow and seconded by Sue Harvey.

The new Executive Committee post of Marketing Officer (subsequently renamed as Marketing and Public Relations) was unanimously agreed. Zoe Smart will be overseeing our external image and looking after the yoga show and website under Public Relations. Rosanna Meyer will be looking after our internal image and overseeing social media, membership bulletins and editorship of magazine under Marketing.

The election of the new Committee was unanimously agreed by the members and voted in at 15.30 pm.

#### **AOB**

Swami Satvikananda Saraswati wished to thank the members of Friends of Yoga for their continued financial support for the charity - Towards Nirvanavan.

Lesley Hilton commented that this having a yoga workshop attached to the AGM and counted as a CPD day was a good idea and asked if this was going to be repeated for the next AGM. Aimee Newton confirmed that this was the plan going forward.

**Date of next Executive Committee Meeting:** Sunday, 6th November 2016

**Date of next AGM:** Date and venue to be confirmed and will be announced later.

**Close of Meeting:** – The meeting was officially closed at 16.00 pm