Committee Meeting 1 (Inaugural/Organisational Meeting)

New Forest Folklore Society – Minutes of the Meeting

Date: 4 March 2026
Time: 10:00 AM
Location: New Forest Heritage Centre, Lyndhurst

Attendees

- Vikki Bramshaw
- Vicki Burgess
- Catherine Shutler
- Hugh Bernard
- Brice Stratford
- Ian Kocher
- Judy Faraday
- Angus Harley

Apologies:

- Nicola Carass

Opening Remarks

- **Angus Harley** opened the meeting by announcing he is stepping down from his role at the New Forest Heritage Centre. He expressed his enthusiasm for the establishment of the society and confirmed that **Judy Faraday** will now be the main point of contact with the Heritage Centre. Angus wished the group every success before leaving the meeting.

Business Statement & Purpose

- The society's mission was reaffirmed as:

  "To gather, preserve and share the folklore and cultural heritage of the people of the New Forest"

- The geographic scope was confirmed to include the following traditional boundaries of the New Forest:

  - River Avon (West)
  - Southampton Water (East)
  - Chalk Downs (North)
  - English Channel (South)

- Emphasis was placed on **folklore as a living, evolving tradition**. The society's role is to **support and educate**, rather than dictate what is right or wrong. The discussion highlighted how folklore evolves over time, offering the example of Wassailing in the New Forest, originally celebrated on Christmas Eve, now often celebrated in the New Year.

Constitution

- The **draft constitution** previously shared by **Vikki Bramshaw** was discussed.
- It was agreed that the constitution will remain a **working document**, and a **final version will be agreed upon** at the next meeting.

Committee and Board Membership

- All present, **except Ian Kocher and Judy Faraday**, agreed to serve as Committee/Board members.
- **Ian Kocher** will serve in a role focusing on **Community Interest Company** (CIC) compliance.
- **Nicola Carass** will be given the option to decide if she would like to join the Board.
- Members will send their **Companies House Unique Identifiers (ID numbers)** to Ian Kocher for administrative purposes.

Elected Roles

- **Chairperson:** Vikki Bramshaw (Proposed by Brice, seconded by Vicki, unanimously agreed)

- **Vice Chairperson:** Brice Stratford (Proposed by Vikki, seconded by Vicki, unanimously agreed)
- **Secretary/Treasurer:** Vicki Burgess (Proposed by Vikki, seconded by Hugh, unanimously agreed)
- **Non-Executive Director (NED):** Ian Kocher (Proposed by Ian, seconded by Vikki, unanimously agreed)

Volunteers

- It was agreed that **volunteers** will be used for future events to help manage workloads and increase engagement.

Membership & Communications

- **Current Engagement:**
    - **Facebook**: Over 2,000 followers
    - **Registered Members**: 198
    - **Donations**: £235
- The society agreed to reduce Facebook posts to **three times a week** (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) to maintain engagement while not overwhelming followers.

Member Benefits & Events

Membership Benefits

- **Private Facebook Group** for members, offering:
    - Early access to event tickets
    - Discounts for paid events (e.g., walks)
    - Some free member-exclusive events

- Access to online and live member-only events. *Suggestion of Private FB group was withdrawn post-meeting.*

Events

- **Types of Events Proposed:**
  - Panels and Q&A sessions
  - Quiz nights
  - Talks and walks
  - Lunches/afternoon teas
- **Venues** have expressed interest in hosting events, with some offering free venue space in exchange for food and drink sales.
- The first **proposed event** is a **pub quiz at The Swan Inn**, provisionally planned for May 2026. **Hugh Bernard** will contact **Lisa** (owner of The Swan Inn) to discuss possible dates.

Long-Term Goals and Development

- **Membership Tiers**: The possibility of introducing **different membership levels** with varying benefits.
- **Expansion of Platforms**: Exploring additional social media platforms for wider engagement.
- **Online Support**: Looking into platforms like **Substack or Patreon** for fundraising or member support.
- **Symposia & Conferences**: Future long-term plans for symposiums or conferences on folklore.
- **Folklore Library**: Exploring the creation of a small folklore library at the **Heritage Centre**, with potential online access to archives for public engagement.

- The feasibility of a **smaller-scale folklore section** without access to valuable physical items and artifacts was also discussed.

New Forest Heritage Centre Collaboration

- **Judy Faraday** confirmed:
    - **The Heritage Centre** is happy to host meetings, with smaller rooms available free of charge.
    - Larger events may incur a fee.
    - **The Heritage Centre** welcomes mutual promotion and collaboration on social media.
    - Potential collaborations with **Brockenhurst College** and local schools for folklore-related activities.
    - Future events may include walks around the village and additional academic events.

Public Engagement & Outreach

- Outreach efforts will focus on **schools**, offering folklore talks under the umbrella of **historical education** rather than religious education (RE).
- Discussion of potential **half-term activities** or workshops targeting creative sectors/arts, which are often more open to unconventional ideas like folklore.
- Promotional materials:
    - **Business cards with QR codes** linking to the website for easy access to information.
    - A **banner** will be created for event stalls, with **interactive maps** or **storyboards** for engagement at local festivals.

The New Forest
FOLKLORE SOCIETY

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Promotional Events

- **Event Presence:** For upcoming festivals, including the **New Forest Show (July)**, the society will focus on **promoting the NFFS** and sharing folklore stories.
- **Proposed Event:** A **pub quiz at The Swan Inn** in **May**, potentially with food and discounted tickets for members.

Newsletter & Content

- The society will produce a **quarterly newsletter** for members only. The next edition will be scheduled for the **end of March 2026**.
- **Content:** Local folklore stories, book reviews, seasonal recipes, and member contributions.
- Vikki Bramshaw and Hugh Bernard will be contributors to the next newsletter.
- Future newsletters will include **calls for contributions**, allowing members to submit their folklore-related stories, articles, or recipes.

Planning and Coordination

- A **shared calendar** of folklore events, local traditions, and festivals will be created, with input from **Vikki**, **Brice**, and **Hugh** to streamline planning and ensure events are appropriately scheduled.

Finances and Administration

- The **CIC registration** and **bank account set-up** are still in progress.
- Funds from donations are being held temporarily online.
- If necessary, funds can be transferred to a **dedicated card set up by Vicki Burgess** for event-related costs.

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Asset Lock Agreement

- The Society agreed that, should any assets require distribution, they would be divided equally, with **50%** allocated to **Commoners Defence** and **50%** to the **Heritage Trust.**

Next Steps

- **Next Meeting Schedule:**
    - The **AGM** will be held in **March**.
    - The next **main Committee/Board meeting** is scheduled for **September 2026**.
    - A **planning meeting** will be held in **May 2026** to discuss upcoming festivals, shows and event planning.

Meeting Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned with no further business.

Minutes Prepared by:

Victoria Burgess
Secretary/Treasurer, New Forest Folklore Society