

FINNISH SCHOOL IN MANCHESTER
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AT ST MARY MAGDALENE, ASHTON-ON-MERSEY
Saturday 1st October 2005, 12.15pm

MINUTES

Present

Jenni Viitanen (Chair)
Christina Aro (Vice-chair & Secretary)
Olli Aro
Pirkko Burgess
Calle Elmberger
Piia Huurtola
Sami Huurtola
John Marsh
Leena Kirk
Marianna Koli
Leena Prothero
Iori Prothero
Päivi Turunen
Tuuli Töyli
Heli Yrjölä

1. Welcome by Chair and an overview of 2004/2005

A special thanks was proposed to all those who continue to support the school.

See enclosed sheet for overview of 2004/5

2. Apologies

Mari Pelkonen
Taina Rahkola

3. Minutes of previous committee meeting (02.04.05) and Matters Arising

Minutes were agreed as a true record.

Finn Guild 40th anniversary celebrations - Harjun Lauulu concert and reception were our contribution to the celebrations and anniversary. The proposed Christmas Market in Manchester will not be proceeding: Jenni recapped how following our October 2004 application we were allocated a place for 2004 rather than 2005, and how we have missed the deadline for this year's (2005) applications as application deadline moved forward. It was agreed that the market would have been difficult to organise, staff and finance in any case. Jenni proposed that instead we hold a small scale bazaar on the 3rd December to link in with the proposed Kauneimmat Joululaulut Christmas carol concert.

This was approved. Leena brought up the issue of security on the premises to avoid e.g. shoplifting.

Action: Jenni to ring premises to check we have permission to hold the bazaar and to enquire about security.

E-shot to be sent out to members to recruit volunteers to help advertise events, e.g. in local press, church website, local schools and community centres as soon as possible. E-shot to be compiled to all members asap.

Child Protection Policy – Iori expressed his concern that the Manchester school is still without a child protection policy. Jenni reiterated that there is no legal obligation for us to have a policy as teachers spend such a short time with the pupils and parents are on the premises at all times. However, it was agreed it was still a wise move to adopt a policy. Päivi added that it might be easier to get local government grants for the school once a policy was in place. Jenni has gathered copies of child protection policies from other Finnish Schools which were deemed unworkable for the Manchester school. Christina has received information about setting up child protection policies for charity groups from HRV CVS.

Action: To examine information received from HRVCVS. To chase up matter with the new Finn Guild education officer.

4. Appointments

4.1 Committee

- i) Chair – Jenni Viitanen
- ii) Vice-Chair – Christina Aro
- iii) Treasurer – Noora Hyvölä (elected in her absence). Olli to take a break from this duty – a huge thanks to Olli for his service over the past 4 years.
- iv) Secretary – Marianna Koli
- v) Head teacher – Leena Kirk. Päivi to shadow with a view to taking over. Thanks to Leena for over 20 years service in this role.

4.2 Functions

- i) Kiosk – Heli Yrjölä. A shadow to be arranged for Heli with a view to taking over in the future. Highlighted deficiencies with premises, i.e. lack of storage. Members urged again to keep eyes and ears open for suitable new premises.
- ii) Cafeteria – Kirsti Murray & Pirjo.
- iii) Library – Leena Prothero. Assistants to be appointed by Leena to cover in her absence. Leena to coordinate display cabinet; site drawings have been commissioned. Päivi had found a potential contractor – Leena to contact for quote once site drawings completed.
- iv) Newsletter – Christina Aro & Laura Linkomies to continue in this role. Thanks were expressed for this free and invaluable service. Volunteers sought to help submit articles, e.g. for a spotlight on members column.

- Distribution of newsletter to be reviewed, as members without email not always receiving paper copy.
- v) Website – Olli Aro. To work on updating website. Olli informed members of a forum he has developed for the site. Members approved forum to go live. Olli also expressed the need for volunteers to contribute to updating the website – training will be given. A banner was proposed for the school advertising the school's web address.
 - vi) Events – Mari Pelkonen (elected in her absence).
 - vii) Welcomers – Proposed that committee members take on this role on a rota-basis. Welcome pack to be compiled by Christmas – volunteers welcomed to help Christina with this. Päivi to bring digital camera to school next time to take photos of committee and function members to be posted on wall at school and on website. Banner idea to be expanded to cover welcome message to new members.

- 4.3 **External Auditors** – Eila Higham to continue in role, Pirkko Burgess to stand down – thanks for her years of service. Olli Aro to take over as second auditor.

Job Descriptions In secretary file; Christina to pass to Leena at next school day, to be made available to all members and included in the ABC file.

5. Teaching Groups and Teachers

Leena Kirk gave brief report on 2004 teaching numbers:

Children's groups: 17 in autumn / 19 in spring

Adult groups: 35 in autumn / 29 in spring

Concern over falling number of children in the lastenrhymä. Finn-Guild need a list of how many children attending classes. Potential for funding for mothers and toddlers group for under 3s – list of toddlers to be drawn up

Potential for funding for adult groups – list of adult students and their connections with Finland to be drawn up

Päivi is acting as contact for Tukiryhmä / School's Council this year – aim is to update the ABC file.

Iori reiterated that school dates should be booked a year rather than half a year in advance. Leena to action.

6. Financial Update

Olli gave brief overview of finances to date. School account making a loss but events making a profit. Biggest income continues to be Ministry of Education grant and adult fees. Important that grant stays as it is. No fee or salary increases for 3 years – our fees are considerably less than other Finnish Schools. Deemed not necessary to raise main fees as we want to continue to encourage students and we are a charity. However, children's fee raised from £8 per child to £10 per child, and from £10 per family to £15 per family, to cover cost of new teacher and room. Also agreed to scrap

student fees as so few students use these lower fees and fees were deemed reasonable for students. Hardship fee proposed for isolated cases.

7. Library

i) Independence Day

To be held on Sat 10th Dec. New premises sought. Needs to be central location. Iori and John to chase up some city centre locations.

ii) Kauneimmat joululaulut (Christmas Carols) / Bazaar

To be held on Sat 3rd Dec after normal school day. Kari Kanala to organise. Miira Riipinen to play piano. See point 3. for information about bazaar (5% of sales profits to school).

iii) School's Xmas do

To be held Sat 17th Dec. To be held in school hall. Miira to play piano. Decided not to hold raffle again.

iv) Vappu

To be held subject to weather.

v) Summer Outing

To be held in June. Invite suggestions for destinations now – to be announced at next school day. Whitby trip great success; as such ideas for destinations further afield welcomed.

8. Any Other Business

Suomi Seura – membership to be renewed – need for someone to pick up our book allocation from Helsinki – Jenni to contact Mari who is currently in Finland.

Signing-in book – confirmed that this not necessary for insurance purposes.

Date and time of next meeting to be arranged

Meeting closed at 2pm.