

Ukastle Ukestra

Minutes of Steering Committee meeting
Wednesday October 27 2010 5.30 pm

Present

Dianne Pope, Royce Burns, Mark Jackson, Christine Garvin, Robin Bond, Neil Weaver, Margaret Weaver, Denis Browne, Paula Browne, Wendy Townsend,

Meeting started at 6 pm.

Agenda

1. Insurance for Ukastle Ukestra
2. Possibility of incorporation/association status
3. Future directions

Mark broadly described the nature of community music groups and their aims. Most are voluntary but in our case the set up is slightly different as Mark is pursuing business goals that are altruistic but also practical. As the Ukastle Ukestra has been running for nearly a year, it is perhaps time to think about the structure, aims and goals of the group particularly if there is a continuation and expansion of performing opportunities. Mark's continuing involvement with the group will be as a "Director" (working title only) who will take a percentage from any fees/funds that are earned by the group where he is directly involved in seeking and securing opportunities for public appearances. He will also continue to seek out opportunities for Ukastle Ukestra to perform and promote themselves and his community musician role.

The most important issue at the moment is the need for insurance cover for members of the Ukestra who perform at public gatherings. It was decided that Dianne Pope would follow up several suggestions that were made as possible insurers. These included PAN (Performing Arts Newcastle), The Newcastle Folk Club, Folk Alliance, Brass Band, Markey's Insurance and other performing groups. The results of this enquiry will be reported back to a subsequent meeting at the end of November of Ukestra members.

Another issue of importance is the possibility of incorporating the group so that it can be recognised as a body distinct from individual members and so is able to pursue activities/grants. It was suggested that if we are incorporated it may be possible to run events such as festivals. This could involve a membership fee of some kind. It was decided that Mark would look into options for this and report back to the November meeting.

In terms of formalisation of the group, it was generally agreed by all that it is important to retain and encourage the open and impromptu atmosphere of the current weekly gatherings. These should be a welcoming and relaxed opportunity for everyone who attends. However it was also agreed that if Ukestra members were going to be performance-ready for opportunities like appearances at nursing homes, festivals, fairs, parties etc, there needs to be a few members who can take up some responsibility to complement and support what Mark has achieved.

It was also raised that members who felt confident or willing may be able to take on a role of "mentors" for the weekly gatherings to assist newcomers particularly when there are a large number

of people.

It was decided that there would be another meeting at the end of November (Tuesday 30th?) to make some firm decisions regarding structure/objectives/executive etc. At that time all positions will be open to all people who attend ukulele groups in the Hunter run by Mark.

In the meantime, Dianne Pope was elected to "facilitate" the process.