

# **Annual General Meeting of Yoga Fellowship of Northern Ireland**

**Held at NICVA on Saturday 8 June 2019**

**Present:** Margaret O'Neill; Eileen Morgan; Anne Furgrove; Maria McCarter; Michael McCann; Frances Rutland; Lisa Copeland; Billy Ingram; Frank Moylan; Aine Dorman; Alison Roberts; Sue McBride; Bridgeen Rea; Laraine Spackman; Maggie Crawford; Margaret Gunn King; Joanne Maguire; Jill Henderson; Terence Quinn; Heather Kemp; Margaret Scott; Anne Knocker; Irene McSorley; Josephine Rafferty; Maeve Kelly; Sue McCrum; Dunla Flanagan; Bridget Hamill; Justina McCullagh; Tracy Smyth; Mandy McNaul; Sheila Waterworth; Lisa McCann; Samantha Bloomer and Joy Kitson and new member Lisa.

**Apologies:** Liz Comerton; Jane Wright; Moira Harper; Jean McMaster; Barbara Gibson; Viola Morgan; Joe McKeown; Jane Tedford; Mairead Flynn and Anne Costello

## **1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

Margaret O'Neill welcomed everyone to the AGM. She informed all present that apart from the normal formalities, the future of the YFNI was to be discussed and voted upon by members.

## **2. Minutes of AGM 2018**

The minutes of the last AGM were read by Anne Furgrove and approved subject to a minor amendment raised by Alison Roberts relating to GDPR information on our website.

## **3. Presentation of Reports**

## **Chairperson**

Margaret thanked the Committee for its hard work throughout the past year, and thanked Lisa Copeland, Alison Roberts and Michael McCann for their contribution to policy making.

She gave an overview of the Committee's activities over the past year and the events it had organised for our members. However, despite the high quality of workshops, sadly attendance figures had been low. This, along with decreasing membership and competition from a plethora of private yoga studios had prompted a sober look at the role of the YFNI in a changing world of Yoga.

The Committee, along with the YFNI president, had spent a day with a professional facilitator, looking at our strengths and weaknesses and charting a way forward. We concluded that as the Fellowship had achieved many of its aims, we should continue to foster and support our community/ membership. We committed ourselves to 'promoting the gift of Yoga to enhance mental, physical, and spiritual well -being' in the community.

Before going forward, we consulted our membership and Margaret had written to say that a vote would be taken at the AGM on the future of the YFNI. In the interim, she said that many members had expressed their sadness at the prospect of YFNI 'leaving the stage' as they valued the sense of belonging to the organisation.

Margaret concluded by expressing a hope that YFNI would continue as a community of like- minded people, a Sangha (fellowship) of those devoted to Yoga and its benefits.

**Proposed:** Sue McBride. **Seconded:** Michael McCann

## **Secretary**

Anne reported on the work of the Committee during the past year and then provided an overview of the wonderful programme of events that took place during the year.

**Proposed:** Margaret O'Neill. **Seconded:** Maria McCarter

## **Treasurer**

Eileen provided a detailed report of the income and expenditure of YFNI in the past year and noted that in spite of best efforts YFNI accounts recorded a loss due to increased tutor fees, low attendance at events and reduced membership subscriptions. Only two events out of eight made a profit. Eileen thanked the committee for their support.

**Proposed:** Margaret O'Neill. **Seconded:** Frank Moylan.

## **President:**

Frank thanked the committee for its hard work during the past year. He encouraged new members to come forward and join the committee.

**Proposed:** Eileen Morgan. **Seconded:** Billy Ingram.

## **4. Appointment of Auditors**

Eileen proposed that we keep the same auditors as we have a long and successful relationship with them.

**Proposed:** Margaret O'Neill. **Seconded** Maria McCarter.

## **5. Committee Resignations**

It was announced that, Gayle Keenan, Anne Costello and Joe McKeown had resigned from the Committee.

## **6. AOB**

At this point of the meeting, it was decided to go directly to point 7 of the agenda and discuss the way forward for YFNI and to allow members to cast their vote.

## **7. Future of YFNI**

Much discussion followed on the future of the YFNI and many of the comments made are recorded below in brief;

Suggestions/recommendations

- Use better marketing to attract more people to events
- Better and creative use of Social Media for promotion
- Reflect on the quality and diversity of our events
- Invest more money and ideas in modernising the YFNI
- Be more flexible about the days in which we stage our events (not always a Saturday)
- Expand the Committee with new members and fresh ideas
- Consider the lease/ acquisition of a centre for the YFNI as a hub for members

None of these suggestions in the wide-ranging discussion were discounted by the Committee, in fact some members pointed out that several of the ideas were not new, and some had been considered or tried. The bottom line was that we are a voluntary organisation, and the 'heavy-lifting' was being done by a small Committee in their spare time. It was noted that recently three new committee members left after one year on the committee. It was pointed out that perhaps the issue had its roots in the huge change in the world of Yoga since the

fellowship's inception. We were competing with other studios and training courses and we were no longer the sole Yoga accrediting body. Ultimately, we had to find a role for ourselves, or face becoming irrelevant.

### **Voting for the future of YFNI**

The motion – to dissolve YFNI as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 was put to a vote by way of a show of hands. The vote was a majority in favour of YFNI continuing.

A second motion – to keep the present committee was voted on and the decision to expand the committee was the result.

Margaret read the constitution so that new committee members would know the expected responsibilities.

At this point in the discussions Michael McCann put himself forward as Chairperson.

This was put to a vote and upheld by a majority.

Margaret O'Neill brought the discussion to a close and thanked everyone for attending. She welcomed the support for our moving forward with a new vision on nurturing and supporting our existing community. She reminded the members that the next years would be crucial, that words and aspirations were not enough, and we would all have to support the Fellowship in whatever way we can going forward.

The AGM came to a conclusion.

**Anne Furgrove**  
**(Secretary YFNI)**

