

VALE OF YORK T'AI CHI QIGONG ASSOCIATION



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 13 February 2010 at 1.00pm at St James' Methodist Church

Present: Pat Brooks (Chair), Andrea Snow, Sue Dixon, Judith Wood, Elisabeth Dunnett, Ann Morrish, Val Box, Christine Knights and friend (?)

1. Apologies received from Ro Walmsley, Pat Thompson and Jean Hornby

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 14 February 2009 – these had been previously circulated and were accepted as a true record of the last AGM.

3. Matters arising - Pat thought the only matter arising was the link with the Five Elements, this had not changed although she and Judith had been to some classes, the proposed BBQ had not taken place due to the weather.

4. Chairman's report

"Thank you for attending this meeting, which is a chance for us to review the health of our association, and to make plans for its future.

Numbers have remained stable but disappointingly low. However, there is a great feeling of mutual support and loyalty as well as of friendship among our members. Local classes generate interest, which sometimes leads people to become members, whether or not they want to take part in the grading system. The three month taster membership gives people an opportunity to sample the Wednesday evening meeting, but although some availed themselves of it, no-one became a regular member as a result. Last year an open evening was successful, and it may be time to try this again in the current year.

Two gradings, as usual, took place during the year, and were reported in the newsletter which comes out after each. Numbers grading are small, but members take it seriously and responsibly. We now have a few people knocking on the door of the black sash. Sue has already graded once on Wild Goose Qigong and will gain her black sash in March when she performs the whole grading syllabus. Andrea is only a short step behind her, with Judith hot on her heels. It will be great to have others complete the whole grading process. I was myself very surprised, delighted and honoured to be granted my second degree at the last grading.

During the past year, as well as regular training with Master Alan Box, we have for the first time had two guest trainers. This has been an interesting and invigorating experience for most. Sandie Day was ill and had to cancel her first workshop but was able to rearrange and has worked with us since on Jason Chan's Infinite Tai Chi and Chi Kung. She did a three year training with Jason, and is a very skilled practitioner. Some found the work strenuous, but enjoyable. Our other guest, Stuart Agars from the National Centre for Contact Martial Arts in Harrogate, has also given us the benefit of his experience and skills. His t'ai chi form is the Chen Style, the oldest form. He also offers a wide variety of qigong and can talk knowledgeably from his experience working with his Chinese

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masters both in China and in this country. Working with Stuart is very enlivening, and the energy feels great.

Both of these will be training with us again this year, and this morning we will have had another chance to learn from Stuart.

The new arrangement for regular training with Master Box means that as well as the general training there will also be a chance, with the extra time, for those who want to, to work on grading forms.

The website, ably managed by our publicity secretary, Judith Wood, and Euan Raffel, is becoming a tool for us all to use regularly. All the forms are on it, and the newsletter will be on there for you to read. Information about classes and workshops are there to see. It does mean members need to check the web-site as a means of keeping up with arrangements. The library list is now included so that rather than the librarian having to lift a heavy box, members can select items from the online list and ask the librarian to bring them to class. Only class teachers/trainers will have printed lists of trainings. Of course, printed copies of forms etc. will be made available to anyone who does not have access to the internet. There are various reasons for using the web-site more fully. It saves time and money printing and posting, it is immediate and it is eco-friendly, reducing our carbon footprint.

In March 2009 some of us were able to travel down to Grassmoor to the Harmony grading and the "passing out parade" of the instructor trainees who had now qualified. Heather Arbon and Susan Purdy from Harmony both gained their black sashes, and Susan became a Sifu as well. It was a very happy occasion with a highlight being a performance by the group of the Old Unnamed Form. Sue Dixon has since given us a chance to try it out, and will train us again in December this year. Lynne Auckinson, Linda Settle and I were all given life membership of Harmony in recognition of our contribution to the instructor training. We now have five qualified instructors in the VoY – myself, Val Box, Sue Dixon, Christine Knights, Andrea Snow.

We have a number of local classes, run by myself, Sue Dixon and Christine Knights. Sue in particular is developing classes in Ripon as well as in Thirsk and Easingwold. If you hear of anyone interested in learning please steer them in our direction.

Lynne Auckinson and I ran three workshops last year on topics connected with our practice. We are at the moment thinking about whether to run more, and if we decide to, we shall let you know. Our attempts to forge closer links between our groups have resulted in a few Five Elements members coming to our trainings.

I would like to thank the committee, and in particular the officers, for all they have done in the past year. We have very capable people in post, who all do an excellent job and keep us straight in their various ways. I'd like to thank Ro for her contribution as secretary, until pressure of work and family made her decide to give up recently. I have been caretaking the job since but am glad to hand it over to the next incumbent. Elisabeth and Judith have been a great support

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throughout. Thank you all. Thank you to everyone for another year of friendship and enjoyment in our association. We may be small, but our quality is excellent."

5. Treasurer's report - Elisabeth presented her accounts for the year and made some small amendments to the figures to show an overall loss of £295.90

There was an amendment of £50 to the website costs – Judith to check if this was correct.

The cost of room hire had increased mainly due to the extra half hour on Wednesday evenings, this has now been cancelled with a saving of £6 per week. £200 more was spent on room hire and we have £300 more income from Thirsk Classes.

Workshop costs – £160 Alan Box, £140 Stuart Agars and Sandie Day £190 It was suggested that we cut down Sandie Days' time, but as we already have a commitment to her this was not an option. The cost of workshops, regular practice was £225 more this year than 2009, the loss is on the regular training.

Christine asked what the miscellaneous costs of £107.50 covered, this was for the magazine, CDs and books for the Library, she suggested that it would be helpful to have a separate item in the accounts for "library costs". Elisabeth said she would do this next year.

6. Secretary's report – Pat gave a very short report as she had only taken over from Rosemary in November. She had visited Sutton Village Hall on our behalf and thought it suitable for grading and had booked it accordingly at the reduced rate of £7 per hour rather than the normal £10 cost.

7. Publicity Secretary's Report

"I have been trying very hard this past year to raise the profile of the VOY, by publicising events and Saturday Classes in the local press and submitting photos and copy after gradings. Unfortunately, my material has often been altered to the point of being virtually useless and the Thirsk Weekly News will not accept anything relating to future events or joining classes unless it is in the form of a paid advertisement, but their coverage of Gradings has been good.

The website has mutual links to T'ai Chi Finder, Harmony and Sandie Day; we have had 36 referrals from T'ai Chi Finder and 17 from Harmony with none from Sandie's website as yet. As far as the major search engines are concerned, 297 came from Google, 26 from Yahoo and 4 from AOL.

In the continent of Europe, 9.1% of all sessions came from Great Britain, which represents an average of 3 sessions per day, but the highest number of sessions come from the USA and, understandably, China. Leaving aside Antarctica, with no hits, Africa is the only continent with a very low showing. So we as a group are truly part of a world-wide interest.

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We also have some (free) business cards with the web address and Pat's phone number; can I urge you all to take a few and hand them on to anyone who expresses an interest in learning or joining us.

Vale of York clothing, which I suppose is a form of publicity, also comes under my care, and I would like to remind you that we have a large stock of T-shirts (as opposed to polo shirts) with the rectangular embroidered logo. These retail at just £7 to members and (I think) feel cooler if we get a hot summer this year. It is no longer possible to obtain the sweatshirts in the original fabric; Pat Brooks has an example of the new ones; however, some older ones are still available in the less popular sizes."

8. Election of Committee Member/Secretary - Andrea has resigned as a committee member; Pat thanked her for input which she said was always sensible and pertinent.

It was felt that that we needed one more person on the committee, at present we have a committee of 6, although no longer secretary Ro wished to remain a committee member, Val also agreed to be a committee member – all agreed.

Pat thanked Ann for standing as Secretary and offered to help whenever it was needed.

9. Any Other Business

Elisabeth raised the question of grading for the black sash as Sue had to do the whole syllabus, Pat agreed that it was not for the faint hearted, but added that as she was an instructor this could be the reason for the change. Judith pointed out that it does say "not instructor level" on the grading syllabus.

This was a change from Harmony which had been dropped on us. Elisabeth wanted it minuted that if anything like this change occurs again it should be put to the committee first and be discussed before any changes are made to the syllabus. Pat thought this should be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Christine suggested the committee discuss the 9am start on Saturdays – Judith said this was had been one of the questions on the survey and that she had the results. Elisabeth thought a vote of thanks was due to Pat for being a fantastic chair, taking over from Ro as temporary secretary, and acting as treasurer in her absence – all agreed. Judith thought we should give consideration to shortening the length of time we have with Sandie Day.

Judith proposed that Sue should not pay when she teaches at Wednesday classes, Sue would rather pay as she does not want to be instructor all the time, it was then suggested that she could have a discount when she teaches. Judith also thought that she should be paid the same as other instructors, she is, the reason it is less is because she didn't have a travel expenses claim as well.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 2pm