



Irish Forest School Association

Minutes of AGM 2018

DATE: 22 April 2018

Venue: Brigit's Garden Galway, Hazel room

11.30am -12.30pm

AGENDA

1. Minutes of AGM 2017
2. Chairperson's report
3. Financial Report
4. Social Media update
5. Membership update
6. Conversation Cafe Feedback
7. Election of ACORN
8. Dates for the Diary Autumn Gathering date:13th October 2018, in Belfast
9. Members update
10. Close of Meeting

1 **Minutes** of previous AGM 2017 are available on the website. Proposed by OG and seconded by C Ni B

2. Chairperson's report

JW welcomed everyone to the 2nd AGM of the IFSA.

She noted the IFSA is in a three-year start-up phase of the association and have just completed year one.

Following the AGM in May the new ACORN met in July, September, November, February, March, April, normally from 10am to 3pm on Saturdays. Thanks to RMDS and to KCCC who provided the venues for our meetings.

JW thanked the members of the ACORN for all their efforts. Special thanks to Trisha McLoughlin who contributed to the development of the Association during the year but resigned from the committee for personal reasons.

The major work of the year related to putting in place arrangements for the association going forward and acting on the outcomes of the Conversation Café last year. JW reported that good progress on all fronts had been made, although it is always slower than you would like.

The Chair reported on a number of items:

We arranged our Samhain event in October in Brigit's Garden which was cancelled due to stormy weather.

The IFSA have made contact with Maria Walsh, the new Education officer in the Heritage Council. We were very pleased that a number of FS practitioners were included in the recent list of heritage in schools' leaders' panel. Important link going forward

We have made some progress with developing a relationship with insurance brokers on your behalf and we look forward to developing that relationship.

We can now provide Garda vetting for FS trainees and leaders who have no access to training through other channels, through the Volunteer Centre Network.

We agreed that all members of the ACORN must complete the online Children First training.

We have made application for charitable status to the Charities Regulator.

We applied for funding to the Community Grants fund of the Heritage Council but were unsuccessful this year.

We have published policy on financial governance, social media, garda vetting, on the website.

We will shortly have policy on Conflict of Interest and our Safeguarding children policy up.

We have continued to develop our social media platforms.

We produced a leaflet about FS and the IFSA which is available to members.

We are at an advanced stage of producing a map of FS practitioners and hope to publish that over the coming months.

We had discussions on our membership structure and made a decision to tie membership to our annual conference.

We have continued our association with the NIFSA and JW represented the association at their Autumn seminar in November.

We have also continued our initial engagement with the Leave No Trace Organisation and we will be developing those links going forward.

We met with SEAI Education officer and discussed our common aims.

We were delighted to see articles by some of our members in various publications and members were encouraged to share such papers with the IFSA.

CC and JW attended the FSA annual conference in the UK in July 2017, at our own expense to represent the association.

CH represented us at the Green Schools Expo in the RDS

We were invited to take a stand at the upcoming Woodlands of Ireland Conference.

We are seeing increasing interest and knowledge about FS and we are committed to moving forward together as the go to association in Ireland for Forest School. We agreed our next tasks going forward are to:

- Establish a database/map of practitioners in Ireland
- Continue to define the benefits of membership.
- Increase our membership.
- Develop our website and policies.
- Act on the outcome of the Conversation Café at this conference.
- Work on the future governance structure of the IFSA
- Continue to develop our links with NIFSA and FSA

3. Financial report

The treasurer reported a bank balance of at the moment of €5,324.95, however out of this we will have to deduct monies for Conference Expenses. This will leave a balance of around €2,000 after all monies paid.

The monies left in the bank will facilitate us to improve our IT and Website system and support the development of the IFSA over the coming year. .

We would also like to thank RMDS and Kilkenny County Childcare Committee who provided the venues for our meetings free of charge.

PL approved report and NS seconded it.

4. Social Media report:

OG reported that IFSA are using FB, twitter, Instagram, 1400fb, 200int, 180 twitter.

We have not paid for outside advertising, showing organic growth.

We are looking for high quality postings, images, news you follow, own story, any events coming up that are relevant to FS.

We have Social Media policies on website.

The IFSA forum is members only – please send a request to join.

Website is being developed all the time. Please get in contact about what you would like to see there. Our main aim at the moment is to develop a map. Forms have been circulated with the conference pack and on the website. Please hand to OG.

5. Membership Update: 104 members. Membership numbers are being issued.

6. Conversation Café A summary of the Conversation Café was presented. This will be put on the website and will inform our vision going forward.

7. Elections Nine members of the current ACORN were re-elected. Two members were proposed for the remaining place. Laura Kennedy and Lucy Bell. An election followed and Lucy Bell was elected. Both were thanked for putting their names forward.

8. Dates for the Diary (provisional) Joint Autumn Gathering with NIFSA in Clandeboye Estate, Belfast

9. Member announcements about forthcoming events were announced from the floor.

Evaluation forms and **CPD certificates** were circulated to attendees

10 Close: The Chairperson closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation.