

ESTCC AGM CHAIR'S REPORT AGM Feb 29th 2020

PAST

Thankyou everyone for attending the meeting.

Most of you know me, my name is Sue Beecraft and I am the incoming chair of the ESTCC.

I first came across Tai Chi purely by accident whilst living in a Quaker community in Cambridge and was inspired to learn the Long Form from Bronwen Hipkin. In class, I heard speak of a man called Tew but imagined him to be older. Fast forward forty or so years and once I had made space from being a full time Occupational Therapist, I heard about Rodney's class at the Lido. I was impressed by his teaching and have been attending ever since. Finally, I have met Tew, he hasn't aged! In this third and last chapter of my life, I feel as though I have returned home and feel blessed to have found the Sangha that is the ESTCC.

At the last AGM there was a hiatus: the existing officers had fulfilled their terms of office. Caroline Purkhardt, Chair, Rodney Adams, Treasurer and Tracey Underhill Law, Secretary, had all contributed an enormous amount to the school and wished to step down. There were no immediate offers of replacements. An emergency was declared and members were asked to consider the issue and wait for the spring retreat at Roselidden. There an extraordinary committee meeting was held. With time to think, several people did come forward and new officers were elected: Alan Sparkes is our treasurer, Amanda Whiteland-Smith, secretary, and myself, chair. These posts will be confirmed later in the meeting. John Brindley is capably managing our website. Jos Hadfield writes our biannual news- letter and has innovated an Instagram account. Jos and John, together with Sue Webber who manages the Face Book site and is planning more teachers' support days and Nikos Trigkatzis provide invaluable continuity and support as committee members. Others have been friends of the committee, there to help when needed. It has been a steep learning curve and there have been moments of uncertainty and doubt if not outright panic at the task before us as we are cohering as a new committee. I appreciate that there is much room for improvement and welcome ideas for future development.

During the past 9 months, we have been in a period of transition as we take up our new roles. We have clarified certain points. For example, at the last AGM there was a question about whether we wanted to change the status of the school; Alan Sparkes attended a course on voluntary structures and following his feedback from this, it was agreed to maintain our standing as a Co-Operative, regulated by the FCA.

The diverse teaching of the school continues:

Tew led last May's, Roselidden workshop entitled Myth and Symbolism, with a particular focus on the Long Form (Yang Style). We explored the myth and symbolism of the Tai chi movements during our time together.

30 people attended last autumn's retreat at Springhead. Louanne worked with Tew to offer a week- end exploring links between the Tai Chi and the I Ching using Hexagram 63 as a focus.

As well as the 3 main retreats there have been many other enterprises, including a workshop with Sue McAlpine and Alex Ioannou entitled the Hero's journey. Louanne and Jos's Earth and Being workshop, combined T'ai Chi with calligraphy and Rodney continued his work with older people at the Castle Haven project. Very recently, there has been the retreat at Lauvitel Lodge. Rodney has re-commenced the Chi on the Heath sessions.

Some have been very actively involved in the climate emergency and exploring ways to respond to this.

Dominica Kolkos from the London group embarked on her Master's thesis. Entitled, 'What's the Appeal? Adults Experience of Tai Chi Practice.' She interviewed members including Tew. Her thesis will add to the fast- growing evidence base for Tai Chi and Chi Gong which is now recognised as a main stream form of therapeutic activity.

This illustrates the diverse and creative reach of the School as it continues to develop and grow.

PRESENT

We have begun a new year and a new decade. The school currently has 56 members.

The committee's job is to fulfil the aims of the school which include;

Furthering the teaching and practice of T'ai Chi

Drawing inspiration from the spirit of T'ai Chi and helping each other develop in a balanced and harmonious way

Sharing whatever skills we have, where needed, whilst keeping awareness of developments and changes both culturally and environmentally

The new committee holds 6 weekly virtual meetings to plan and discuss the retreats, manage membership and finances, manage and develop the web site, organise and run teaching support and more recently an Instagram feed.

Tracey and others generously left the new committee with a well- developed web site which we are continuing to manage and grow on. John will say more about the future direction of this later on.

A big thankyou to Jos and Caroline for developing and facilitating our AGM workshop this week-end whose theme is, "Being still; Hearing silence".

So here today we are provided with an opportunity of activated energy, a well spring, out of which movement may proceed.

FUTURE this year we continue the workshops; today's, Roselidden, from Thursday 7th May to Monday 11th May, when Tew has agreed to return and Springhead this coming October from 9th to 11th October.

We continue to support the Mercy Centre and are interested in the progress of the Vinyana Association. Both Sue and Jos will briefly update us later in the meeting.

Thinking to the year ahead. Our direction as a School. Short group exercise.

Finally, looking back. We recently realised in a committee meeting that is the School's 25th birthday. We are all most fortunate to have a school and we invite you after the AGM to a small celebration marking its quarter century.

Sue Beecraft Feb 2020