

Outreach Portfolio

Purpose of Outreach - to look for new members, younger members, develop 'community' of members, build email lists.

I volunteered for this portfolio thinking that its purpose was to promote and encourage participation in folk music.

However, discussion at our last meeting had a bias towards promoting membership of the folk federation - the main vehicle for this being the Cornstalk Gazette.

The Cornstalk Gazette is a information publication. I find it very useful for quickly finding out what's on and for little grabs of who is doing what. However, it may not be the right format for actively encouraging young people or the uninitiated into becoming involved in folk music?

Some of the questions posed re membership included:

What are we offering?

Why would you join the folk fed?

What benefits are there apart from Cornstalk?

Why don't people renew membership?

The first three of these are outlined in the Objectives forwarded by Christine. To maintain and increase membership we need to be seen to be actively promoting those objectives and promoting what we are doing in the Cornstalk and in the community. What are we doing to encourage and support artists, organisations, festivals, projects? What benefits are there for me as a performer or as a punter that I can't get elsewhere?

Re the question 'why don't people renew membership' - my guess is that is due to the perception that the federation offers very little more than the Cornstalk and that most of the information supplied is now available on the net or via publications such as Trad and Now.

To reach out to new members we need to have something positive to offer which means being sure of our objectives and be seen to be implementing them.

I propose that instead of asking members what they want etc that we tell them via Cornstalk what exactly the Folk Fed has to offer (help with grants etc) and ask for feedback. If there is little or no feedback then the majority are happy - if the contrary is the case then we will find out.

Jennifer Lee