

Minutes of Geomancy Group meeting at BSD Congress

Northampton, Sunday 17 September 2006 3.30pm

Present: Grahame Gardner, Sig Lonegren, Karin Lonegren, Susie Shaw, Maryrose Price, Maria Hayden, Patrick MacManaway, Branwen Edwards, Richard Creightmore. Sarah Birrell and Sara Greenwood could not be present as they had to leave right after Congress, but both had communicated their thoughts over the course of the weekend.

It was the unanimous view of those attending the Saturday lunchtime meeting that The Geomancy Group should continue, that we should continue to offer at least 2 meetings each year, that we should retain our name and website and that we should develop a professional practitioner strand. We reflected that we would like to see the Group grow to include more practitioner members.

Agenda items:

- Group purpose and energy
- Number of annual meetings
- Review of Ethical Code
- How to expand Group to more practitioners
- Training programme
- Group projects
- AOB

Group purpose and energy

It was expressed from the start that the focus of this meeting was in looking at ways we can move the Group towards a more practitioner-based structure without losing the core energy that we have at the moment or alienating the non-practitioner members.

Grahame shared his 'energetic model' of the Group as the vesica piscis symbol: we have two overlapping circles of interest, the practitioner geomancer and the non-practitioner, and his feeling that in trying to hold our mental models of the Group as one circle, we were causing blockage. If instead we use the vesica model, then both circles are free to either move together into one circle, or expand into a wider vesica piscis as energy flows from one to the other. But the central vesica is still the place where we come together and where our core energy lies. So perhaps we should look at having different emphasis on our meetings. Grahame also thought that sometimes we were getting too hung-up on procedure, such as what was the AGM, election of officers etc. Without a formal constitution as we are at the moment, the officers are only names on the bank account at the end of the day. We are still a group of peers and the energy for tasks can be allowed to manifest where it will within the Group, or allocated into bubble-groups as required.

Meetings

It has become clear over the last year or two that people have trouble committing to four meetings a year and we talked about alternative structures, such as one meeting a year, perhaps in the spring. After more discussion it seemed that it is perhaps the weekend structure that is proving troublesome for many of us, particularly as some of us may be running teaching workshops or have other

commitments at weekends. The timing of meetings near the Festivals is also a problem for many of us involved with other groups.

It was suggested that we should try holding meetings midweek, and it would seem that Wednesday or Thursday would be favourite amongst those present (Monday and Tuesday were definite no-nos!).

We considered a yearly structure of 2 meetings for practitioners and 2 general ones, but in general it was felt that the current 3 meetings per year is just about sustainable, especially if one of these is practitioner-centred (although that would not prohibit others from attending should they wish to).

Could we hold the AGM as a separate entity and have it appended to the BSD Congress, since we always have a high attendance at that? Meeting could be half-day or whole extra day open to all Group members, which would allow folk not at the BSD Congress to attend. This met with unanimous approval, perhaps not surprisingly!

Sig felt strongly that we should hold one practitioner day a year, where we would discuss case studies, share techniques, and discuss how to progress the Group on this front. He offered his place in Glastonbury for the first of these. The majority view was that this practitioner day was an essential addition to the calendar, allowing discussion of changing legislation, ethical matters and other practitioner concerns.

We didn't really attain clarity on the overall meeting schedule as we felt we needed input from the rest of the Group, but in summary:

- Aim to maintain holding at least 3 meetings a year.
- One of these is AGM appended to BSD Congress or other suitable event as a half- or one-day meeting.
- Practitioner-focussed one or two day, probably mid-week, meeting (a suggested time for this was a spring first quarter moon, probably in March or April. In 2007, the likely dates would be 28/29 or 30 March or 25/26 or 27 April. However, we need to check Patrick's availability before confirming).
- One or two other meetings could be general 2-3 day events including site visits etc. as at present.
- Weekday meetings definitely preferred, although possibly one or both general meetings could be weekend?

Ethical Code

We briefly talked about the situation with Barry and the ethical and psychic backlash that had arisen from that, which is still ongoing for some people. All expressed compassion and love for Barry, and we emphasised that we did not consider him ostracised from the Group in any way, as seemed to be implied in Sally's email, and wished that he would soon return to us. It was felt that this whole situation has been a salutary Group lesson in dealing with ethical issues and the physical and psychic fallout that can arise from such incidents. We all need to be aware that this happens and deal with it appropriately on a personal level.

Maria and Grahame had spent some time beforehand making some revisions to the ethical code to take these issues into account, and these were discussed and approved with some minor rephrasing of a couple of sections for clarity. It was also suggested that we require practitioner members to sign this ethical code as an act of commitment to it. This met with unanimous approval, and we would

request that these 9 votes in favour of adopting this new ethical code of practice be taken into account when the rest of the Group votes on this.

- Maria to seek legal clarification of disputed phrases and revised code to be distributed to Group for approval at Samhain.

Expansion of Group

We looked at various means of increasing the number of practitioners that we have in the Group. Shaun's suggestion of an 'open door' policy was examined. Options discussed included the following

- We could ask other practitioners to sign and adhere to the ethical code, and maintain a register of practitioners for referral from website enquiries. Practitioners would be asked to pay an annual fee of £20 - £25 for this.
- We could ask incoming practitioners to attend at least one meeting, ideally the Practitioner Day, so that we 'get a feel' for them, before proceeding as above.
- We could ask them to supply three letters of reference from clients.
- One or more of us could go out with them on a case (or vice-versa).
- We could have a combination of client references and practitioner recommendation or reference.

Sig suggested that all we really require is that prospective candidates fulfil the following criteria:

- They must provide evidence of competence.
- They must sign and adhere to the ethical code.
- We have to like them!

Patrick pointed out that new practitioners would likely have different working methods, so we would need to develop some register categories to accommodate this. Indeed, even amongst our own practitioners, different people work in different ways or have a different emphasis to their work so Maria indicated that this would be most helpful with the current referral process too. Patrick offered to work on a set of guidelines for this.

Richard asked what the difference is between such a register and the BSD professional register. Indeed, do we need a register of our own?

Maria and Grahame pointed out that we do need our own register to deal with referrals from our own website.

Q: What's the difference between geomancers and BSD EEG members who are into sacred space work and have done the EEG L3 course?

Answer: Geomancers do it deeper! The EEG courses are not as comprehensive or as magically-emphasised as the Group, however they might provide good prospective candidates for the Group, these to be hand-picked and recommended by Geomancy Group / BSD tutors for entry into further training, as necessary.

Despite much discussion, we could not get clarity on how a completely open scheme could be practical, or how it could be done whilst maintaining Group energy, and it was decided that we should keep the present 'invitation only' system for now. At present the policy is to allow only two newcomers into the probationary cycle at once though we felt that this should be increased to 3 or 4 for the first year of the new scheme, with numbers possibly increasing more rapidly thereafter.

With the possibility of less than 4 meetings per year, the length of the probationary period may need to be looked at and extended. We could change this from 'a year and a day' to 'attend 2 meetings' for instance.

- Maintain policy of new members by invitation only.
- Consider allowing 3 or 4 in the programme at once.
- Consider changing probationary period from the present 'year and a day/ attend two meetings' requirement, to 'attend x number of meetings'
- Patrick to develop categories for practitioner register.

Training

Existing practitioner members of the Group, especially those who are BSD registered, should look into devising a modular training system that will complement and extend the BSD courses to provide further geomancy training. We all thought that a modular structure would work best, and existing BSD or other courses like Richard's or the Feng-Shui Society's could be given 'credit' towards a geomancy practitioner course. Richard's school could serve as a good model for this, and it was agreed that we should look to develop a training system as a medium-term aim.

- We should look into developing a modular training system, with a transferable credit system from suitable external training courses, as a medium-term aim of the Group.

Group Projects

Shaun's idea of getting more Group projects was enthusiastically welcomed, but we have discussed this in the past and nothing more has come of it. Should we advertise for larger jobs, such as castles or commercial properties, perhaps through the website or by approaching other organisations? The ethical issues of indiscriminately 'hitting' a space geomantically without clear permission were looked at. Richard suggested that churchyards sometimes require healing and cleaning work and that since such work would have an effect on entire neighbourhoods this could be regarded as being in the higher public good and thus 'fair game'.

Brannie suggested accident black spots as another 'fair game' target in the public good. This was met with general approval, being on public land.

We didn't have time to reach any consensus on this issue, other than:

- It's perhaps not appropriate to advertise for jobs yet. Keep to referrals through personal contact for the moment.

AOB

Election of Officers – Because many of us present at this meeting will not be able to make the AGM at Samhain, Grahame expressed concern over our existing policy of 'whoever turns up makes the decisions' with regard to the election of Group officers, as it doesn't seem fair that the whole Group is not represented in the voting. Perhaps we should consider implementing an email poll on this?

Again, it was emphasised that the officers are only names on the bank account and nobody was particularly bothered who is called what. Nonetheless, it seems like a procedure that we have to go through. We agreed that nominations should be received in advance and that voting be done electronically to a Third Party, specifically Karin. Grahame said he was happy to stand again as Secretary or Vice-Chair or whatever it is he is currently listed as! Maria said that she was happy to continue as client interface and work on developing services and the training provision but not to organise Group gatherings.

Oliver – Everyone expressed sadness at Oli's decision to withdraw from the Group. It was thought that perhaps a cheaper subscription level (£10) could be offered as an incentive for him to keep in touch. But even if that fails, we don't think he should get away that easily as he is an initiated member. We therefore unanimously rejected his resignation from the Group.

Barry – Sig offered to call him again to see if he will consider coming back to the Group, perhaps at the Samhain meeting?

Mission Statement – this was looked at again. Although we felt that it is still valid, perhaps we could play with it a bit to give more emphasis to the practice and advancement of geomancy.

- Suggest email poll of whole group for elected officers Nominations to be circulated throughout the Group in advance and all votes to be forwarded to Karin
- Susie was delegated to call Oli to ask him to remain within the Group
- Sig to call Barry for same reason.
- Grahame to look at revising mission statement.

Meeting adjourned at 18.00 (Minutes by Grahame)

Addendum: Some points that we didn't have time to consider...

BSD Affiliation: Patrick suggested this, and Maria and Grahame are totally in favour of the idea. It costs nothing, and will give us the BSD's liability cover for public events and workshops. This will also mean that the BSD will likely refer suitable cases to us. We already fulfil all the requirements for affiliation, since most of us who practice are already BSD members, and our ethical code is based on the BSD's.

Subscriptions: Should we change the subscription rates, and should there be more than one rate of fee?

Over the past year, there has been no newsletter so £30 seems rather a lot to pay, given that our only fixed cost has been £5 per month hosting fee for the website. This would definitely seem over the odds for members who have not even been able to attend meetings.

Grahame and Maria recommend that the subscription fee be reviewed, and that a second, reduced, rate be introduced which would apply to non-practitioners and those who can rarely attend, such as Oli. Perhaps a sum of £10 might be appropriate? We would like to suggest that the higher rate also be reduced, perhaps to £20, for the moment at least.

Meeting schedule: As discussed in Northampton, we propose holding The Geomancy Group AGM after BSD Congress and having a dedicated Practitioners' Day in the spring, which may or may not be combined with the Spring Meeting. (Susie, Grahame and Maria are all a little unsure as to how this might pan out. Non practitioners may well not want to spend a day listening to us discussing legislation etc, so it might be worth considering having this either as a stand-alone day or else as an add-on to a two-day event. This would mean that practitioners could chose to spend the weekend/ 2 weekdays with everyone else or not, as they wished, and the other members would not miss out on a day from their usual event. Otherwise, assuming we want this to be the Spring Meeting, we could have a Practitioner Day with one other day, but non-practitioners could organise an alternative programme for the first day). This, in effect, means that there would probably only be one more event to organise during the year, or two at the most. Grahame has suggested that we might want to consider retaining one of these events as a weekend moot, to facilitate those of us who cannot easily make mid-week gatherings.