

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY

Wednesday 9 September 2015 18:30

15 Gibson Square, N1 0RD

ATTENDEES: Richard Miles (Chair)
Andrea Buchanan (Secretary)
Neil King (Treasurer)
Margaret Murphy (MMu)
Geoffrey Griffiths (GG)
Simon Empson (SE – guest/new Committee member)

APOLOGIES Gilly Wyn-Thomas
Roger Lee
Edward Hewitt

NO RESPONSE Charlie Furness Smith

The meeting opened at 18:30 and was declared quorate.

Item 1: Apologies for absence

These were received from GW-T, RL and EH. No communication had been received from CFS.

Item 2: Approval of minutes 11 August

The minutes of 11 August were approved without further comment. *In accordance with the decision agreed at the meeting on 11/08, these would now be published on the Society's website.*

Item 3: Chair's Report

The Chair noted the regrettable resignation of Gillian Wyn-Thomas from the Committee for family and work reasons. She would continue to work on events until the end of November 2015, for which the Committee was most grateful.

Item 4: New members for approval

One new member was approved – David Pottinton. Some further membership payments had been received but approval was postponed until the payee details had been clarified via the online payment system.

Item 5: Budget Update

The Treasurer presented the latest budget information, noting that we were once again in credit by a modest surplus. Income was still behind budget (largely due to fewer new memberships than anticipated), as was expenditure.

The Treasurer was still working on obtaining an electronic banking facility and a response was awaited from the Society's bankers on this issue.

The Treasurer noted that the income from tickets sales for the President's Masterclass, held earlier in the year, had covered the venue hire costs and the Society had therefore reimbursed the President for these costs.

Information on membership renewals that would fall due in December 2015 would be inserted in the forthcoming Wagner News. There would be no increase in membership fees for 2016.

Item 6 Wagner News

The Committee, after discussion, agreed that 650 copies of Wagner News would be printed for the forthcoming September edition. This allowed for a number of complimentary copies to be sent out. The Treasurer noted that expenditure on WN had not been as high YTD as forecast.

The Committee noted that the insert for the Baden Baden opera house in the forthcoming Wagner News would cover the cost of the increased postage. Jones Rowe Opera Tours had also taken a page of advertising space.

Item 7: Events

The Events Secretary had submitted a report on forthcoming events. The programme for the first part of 2016 was in place.

The Committee agreed a date for the Christmas party, and the Treasurer offered his house as the location. The party would be held on Wednesday 2 December from 6-8pm and the tickets, priced at £20 (to include food and drink) would be sold on a first-come, first-served basis by the Ticket Secretary. Places would be limited.

Dates were also agreed for the 2016 AGM – 18 May and the President’s Masterclass at the Royal Overseas League – 19 May.

The 2016 Singing Competition would likely be held on 27 November. The President would also give an illustrated interview at the Royal Overseas League on 8 November.

The Events Secretary had suggested that the committee consider using an external ticketing agency for events tickets. The costs would not exceed those that would be incurred for developing this on the website and many small charities and organisations already used third party providers to sell event tickets. Eventbrite and wegotickets were noted as possible providers to consider. The Committee would give further thought to this helpful suggestion.

Item 8: Website

Simon Empson had been invited to join the meeting for this agenda item. He is a recent member of the Society with considerable knowledge of and experience with running websites in a professional capacity.

The Committee began by agreeing unanimously to co-opt SE to the Committee in the role of Web Liaison. Simon was duly welcomed to the Committee.

A long discussion ensued about the purpose and orientation of the website. It was agreed that this should serve multiple purposes – to attract new members to the Society, to be a repository of information on Wagner, on Wagner-related events and to give members the facility to join, update their information, access Society documentation and other administrative functions.

Since the site had been “upgraded” earlier in the year, it had become clear that work to improve the functionality was required. The Committee agreed that we should aim to improve the current site as much as possible within the constraints of the current design and administration.

SE would act as liaison with the provider and would aim to implement as many technical changes as possible to improve functionality without incurring additional development costs.

It was also agreed that one of the major issues was lack of resource to keep the site populated with information. The Secretary had been attempting to do this over the past year, since the original Committee member was no longer available to assist, although she was unable to maintain the role or perform it adequately, given other commitments. SE would therefore find and recruit a content manager who could take on this responsibility. He was pursuing various leads and would report back in due course.

Item 13: Any Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 21:30.