

## MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY

Tuesday 18 October 2016 18:30

15 Gibson Square, N1 0RD

**ATTENDEES:** Richard Miles (Chair)  
Cormac Cawley (Secretary)  
Neil King (Treasurer)  
Jan Leigh  
Jan Rynkiewicz

**APOLOGIES** Geoffrey Griffiths  
Ray Godson

The meeting opened at 18:30 and was declared quorate, there being over one-third of the total committee membership including at least one officer present.

### **Item 1: Apologies for absence**

As indicated above.

### **Item 2: Co-option of Jan Rynkiewicz as Committee Member**

Jan Rynkiewicz having been co-opted by agreement of a majority of the Committee on 28.09.2016, the meeting noted and affirmed the co-option and welcomed Jan onto the Committee.

### **Item 3: Co-option of Cormac Cawley as Secretary**

Following the resignation of David Pope as Secretary and a member of the Committee on 22.09.2016, and upon Cormac Cawley having agreed to act as Secretary, he was co-opted as such by agreement of a majority of the Committee on 28.09.2016. The meeting noted and affirmed the co-option.

### **Item 4: Minutes of Meeting on 10.08.2016.**

This was postponed to the next meeting as not all of the Committee had had a chance to review changes suggested on the last occasion.

### **Item 5: Minutes of Meeting on 07.09.2016.**

Subject to a number of small amendments the draft minutes were proposed and agreed.

## **Item 6: Chairman's Report**

RM reported that he would be following up on a number of things as follows:

1. Approach Anthony Negus.
2. To ask Charlie Furness-Smith about writing some material for the website, but this would depend on how soon RM could meeting up with CFS as this depended on diaries.
3. He would be writing the Librarian in order to obtain an update on the current stock.

RM reported that he had received a letter from Herr Eggers (the President of RWVI) complaining about an article in the last issue of Wagner News. He had replied and was not concerned about it, as it appeared to have come from someone who was trying to cause trouble for the Committee and the Editor of WN.

RM noted that in an e-mail to JL, AB had resigned from the SC and as a member of the WS. RM would write to AB and thank her for her contributions.

RM mentioned that he may not be able to go to the RWVI Congress in Budapest and that someone needed to be nominated to attend the sessions on behalf of the Society. NK suggested that this should be Cormac Cawley, and Cormac Cawley agreed to attend as he was intending to travel to Budapest.

RM also reported that he had not received an e-mail from Gunther Cisek (dated 17.09.2016) about the confusion which had arisen about the allocation by the RWVI of those tickets which had been given to it by the Bayreuth Festival. It appears that the most of the tickets had been "sold out" within a matter of hours. AB had sent Cormac Cawley an e-mail as a result of which he had gone online and (after agreement with NK) had opted for 4xRings, as these were all that were left.

Cormac Cawley reported that he had been informed in an e-mail by AB that there were not any written rules about the process. It appears that since there is no guarantee or expectation of tickets from the Festival Management and so the RWVI committee allocates the tickets to member societies on the basis of expressed wishes and membership numbers.

RM reported that he had applied for two tickets beyond what he needs and he might go back online and look for some more tickets on his Friends application. NK said that he would do likewise.

NK explained that most of the English-speaking societies attended the last Ring cycle and that it was a good idea to opt for tickets in this period so that members could have a better chance of meeting up and sharing the Bayreuth experience. However, we had not been able to do this due to the fact that all other tickets had been sold out.

NK is applying for tickets in the Third Ring cycle and if he has any extra tickets he will see if he can pass them on to the Society for inclusion in its Ballot.

NK mentioned that he understood from speaking to other societies that they did not all hold ballots for the Bayreuth allocation such as we do. Some of them actually offered tickets to the highest bidders.

Ab had assured Cormac Cawley and NK in an e-mail of 06.01.2016 that we would get the 4xRings which we had chosen online.

NK also mentioned that the size of society is important. For example, North California has 1500. NK also reminded the meeting that we pay €2 each year to the RWVI for each of our members.

On the WS's GdF application, Cormac Cawley explained that he had had a chat with Pierre at GDF, who explained that they look at your history and see what you have seen and if it is more than 5 years or so you stand a better chance of getting tickets for productions of the same work. Also newer productions were scarcer as everyone wanted to see them. We have applied for 24 tickets on the Society's GDF for either Meistersinger, Parsifal or Tristan.

**ACTION: It was agreed that Cormac Cawley will write to Cisek to see what can be done about our choices and to check what is the position with the 4xRings.**

RM – Raised the possibility of David Pope come back on the Committee and it was agreed that RM would approach DP about re-joining.

### **Item 7: Treasurer's Report**

NK reported. He said that there was not much of note. This month we are £132 in deficit, but he was not concerned about this.

NK explained that he was trying to get Gift Aid sorted out as this was a very useful source of additional income for us. He had sent out GA form to all members and they were coming back slowly but surely. NK reported that each completed form is worth between £7.50 & £10.00 to the Society. Even if members don't pay income tax, it is helpful for them to strike the form through to signify that and return it to us so that our database can be updated.

NK explained that he had received lot of forms back from members and he was processing them. He has done about 40% of them so far which has resulted in additional income of upwards of £5,000. NK hoped to get the GA forms sorted by the end of November but he really does need Mike to help with the HMRC form.

NK reported that RG was putting a statement in WN about the GA forms explaining their value to the Society.

### **Item 8: Events**

#### **(a) 08.11.2016 DGJ 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration & Interview w/Humphrey Burton**

JL reported that this was going to plan. She was liaising with ROSL and DGJ.

A quotation of £200 has been given for a birthday cake and it was agreed to go ahead with that.

DGJ wants us to have drinks and sandwiches afterwards and that will have to be arranged separately by DGJ or us. JL will deal where necessary and report to NK about any additional costs involved.

NK reported that DGJ had sent about 100 e-mails to her friends inviting them to come. JL mentioned that there was a limit of 120 for the Hall.

It was agreed that RM would make a short speech at 18.50 to introduce DGJ and HB.

NK reported that we had sold 33 tickets so far on the website and that Lady Solti had sent him a cheque.

### **(b) 20.11.2016 Singing Competition**

JL reported that the Andrea Buchanan had resigned from the SC for personal reasons. JL has agreed to take over, the SC is going ahead and the Committee intends it to be a success.

It was agreed that RM would send e-mail to the judges and Eva Wagner about the changes following AB's departure and also copy DGJ in.

JL has agreed that Kelvin will go ahead with rehearsals for the finalists whose CVs she handed out to the meeting.

JL will prepare a statement for the finalists as to why we are not having the coaching days which previously suggested by AB.

All in all the preparation with the ROSL are going ahead well.

NK said we had sold about 30 tickets so far. It would be good to have another 50 on the door to get us closer to 100

### **(c) Opera Now advert**

It was agreed to take out a quarter page advert for £200 in Opera Now. JL reported that she's been dealing with Christopher there who is very nice. Most of their readers are younger. JL felt that this Christopher could be very useful to us. JL will need help with the artwork. The guy is their marketing guy.

### **(d) Elemental Opera**

Christopher at Opera Now was at one stage connected with Elemental Opera, who coincidentally were putting on a Parsifal over 27- 29.10.2016. It was discussed whether any committee members were going. CTC explained that we had agreed concession for 27.10.16 of £10 for our members. It has a 17.00 start.

**(e) The Sir Reginald Goodall Prize**

The meeting discussed who it should be and agreed on Anthony Negus.

It was agreed that RM would write to AN.

**(f) New Honorary Members**

The meeting discussed who these might and it was agreed that Antonio Pappano and Kaspar Holten would be invited.

It was agreed that RM would write to AP and KH.

**(g) Meistersingers Dinner on 24.03.17**

The meeting discussed sending e-mail to other RWVI societies. CTC suggested we could make them complimentary members or creating a separate Mailchimp mailing list to notify them of things of mutual interest. NK would look into create a sub-category of members.

Price for dinner is £95. Subcommittee agreed this. NK explained how the figure had been arrived to cover base costs as we are not paying for room at the ROSL, thanks to DGJ.

**(h) Meistersingers in March 2017 at ROH**

It was agreed that the Committee would aim to go on 25.03.2017.

RM mentioned that Glyndebourne had not sold out it Meistersingers. It takes 1600 and apparently, they lost £100,000 on very performance. If they were to sell tickets for what it costs they would be £400 each.

The Grange Park Walkure for next year was also noted.

**(i) Marketing**

JL reported that she had been in touch with ENO and they have agreed to offer our members £5 off their concert tickets, if we will just add each concert/event on to our website. JL will send CTC the name of the person dealing at the ENO.

JL would like to be able to hand out leaflets. This is something which JR is looking into.

**(j) Letter from DGJ**

NK had received a letter from DGJ to the Committee. The letter was read by all but given the amount of matters on the Agenda it was not going to be possible to give the letter due consideration and it was agreed that the Committee would discuss the letter at the next meeting.

### **Item 9: Membership Report**

NK reported that the number of members joining was increasing.

NK reported that Gift Aid was taking up a lot of his time at present.

He was gradually checking through each member's records to make sure they had completed a GA form and tick the appropriate box on their website profiles to confirm their status as regards GA.

In tandem with this he was updating details of some members who had not given e-mail addresses and were not using the website. He will report in future on any changes to this category of member.

### **Item 10: Website Report**

Cormac Cawley reported that he has been updating MNB.

JL has agreed to do a piece about the Sir Reginald Goodall Award so that we can get details of it and previous winner on to the website.

We also need to see about getting details of the Society's archive and library available for uploading to the website for members to peruse and consult. Cormac Cawley will liaise with GG about the archive and RM about any details from the librarian.

We are also planning to get details of older events on the website.

In addition, Cormac Cawley is gathering pdf files and scans of old Wagner News (prepared by RG) for uploading to the website.

It was agreed that If RG cannot get them all scanned, then we would use the company which Cormac Cawley had spoken to who are prepared to scan each 50-page copy of WN for £2 each.

RM reported that Margaret's record contained a box of some older WN. RM has loads of his own older copies and he would go through them all and pass them on if we needed them once RG had done his scanning.

Cormac Cawley mentioned that he had received and passed on to GG several boxes of documents from a relative of Granville C. Pyne, a former officer of the Society. They contained a lot of Bayreuth Programmes from the late 50s and early 60s as well as copies of the Society's earlier version of WN from that era on foolscap.

The meeting agreed with RM's suggestion that we should try scan as much of this older material as we can. It was very helpful to be able to document as much of the Society's activities as possible since 1951. It that RM would be writing to former officers asking them to hand over any papers still being held by them. It was suggested that GG would be the ideal person to put all of this material together if he was available.

### **Item 11: Bayreuth Ballot**

Cormac Cawley is going to write to Gunther Cisek to clarify the position in relation to our choices for the 2017 Festival.

It was agreed that Cormac Cawley would draft a new set of rules for the Bayreuth Ballot to include the RWVI allocation as well as the GdF allocation.

### **Item 12: Society's Library**

RM will be writing to the librarian for an updated inventory or list of stock and report back.

### **Item 13: Wagner News**

RG not here, but NK reported that RG has got 44 pages, not 48 and is waiting for several contributions, such as a Brexit piece, and a diary piece about Bayreuth from NK. JL asked if RG has only got 44 pages, whether we can increase advertising. 48 pages comes in at under 100 grams, which make postage cheaper. NK mentioned that in the past WN has been as low as 36 pages.

JL reported that she had a friend who wanted to do a review of Bayreuth.

NK said that he had done a review of the Ring.

JL mentioned that we need a leaflet to give out at events. JR agreed to look into this. RM reported that we had an A4 sheet which folded 3 ways like a triptych. Cormac Cawley has one at home and will copy it over to JR.

### **Item 15: Principles about publicity in Wagner News**

The meeting discussed the circumstances in which we would give free publicity in WN.

It was agreed that this would always remain in the discretion of the Committee but that we would take account of the following factors:

1. Whether the party seeking advertising space would give us some publicity in return, e.g., by putting an advert about us and our events in their programmes;
2. Whether the event being promoted was a "valiant" endeavour to put on one of the Wagner works, such as the recent performance of Parsifal in a local church;
3. Whether promoters would agree to put copies of our fliers in their programmes.
4. Where appropriate a promoter was prepared to offer a concession in price to our members, but this was only where the promoter was not on a tight budget;
5. Whether it was overall in the interest of the society and members to agree to any publicity.

### **Item 16: Archive**

Agreed to postpone any discussion until GG was here.

**Item 17: AOB**

1. Wagner Congress in June. Committee members making arrangements to go are Cormac Cawley, NK, JL & JR. RM was not sure yet whether he can attend. It was agreed that Cormac Cawley will be our representative at the meetings of the RWVI if RM did not go.
2. JL – Tristan at Longborough on 14.6.17 JR & JL going. Tickets are already on sale. That is RM's wedding anniversary, so he may not be able to make it.
3. Cormac Cawley mentioned the e-mail which he had received from Francisco Diego on 20.9.2016 which read:

*“Please, please, would it be possible to talk to someone in the society about the ongoing destruction of sacred works like The Ring and Parsifal by arrogant and egotistic producers that believe themselves superior to the genius of the composer? I really hope that something can be done. I am sure I am not alone in this. Please let me know.”*

4. RM – He will reply to the DGJ letter and explain that we shall consider it at our next meeting.
5. RM had written to Sir John Tomlinson inviting him to dinner for his birthday and he had said yes in principle. RM will chase. RM could do dinner at home in Lewes.
6. RM met lady at a recent dinner party, who joined WS, and had bought 3 tickets for SC.
7. RM may be late for SC because he had got to go to a family lunch party. He won't be there by 2 pm, so JL will do the intros.
8. The meeting assured JL that she had their full support as Events Secretary.
9. NK re-iterated the importance and usefulness of sub committees.

**The meeting ended at 21:44**

**The next meeting would be held on 22 November at 15 Gibson Square**