

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY

Wednesday 22 February 2017 18:30

15 Gibson Square, N1 0RD

ATTENDEES: Richard Miles (Chair)
Cormac Cawley (Secretary)
Neil King (Treasurer)
Jan Leigh
Jan Rynkiewicz
Ray Godson
Katie Clay
Helen Beardsley
Harry Clarke

APOLOGIES Geoffrey Griffiths

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

Item 1: Apologies for absence

As indicated above.

Item 2: Minutes of Meeting on 19.01.2017.

The draft minutes of the meeting on 19.01.2017 were proposed and agreed subject to a few small comments.

Item 3: Chairman's Report

The Chairman had nothing in particular to report.

Item 4: Treasurer's Report

NK reported that the Annual Report for 2016 had now gone to the auditors.

He was still receiving a huge amount of post from members with subscriptions that are being paid by cheque. He is also receiving renewals from a number whose memberships had expired in recent years and to whom he had written in January inviting them to re-join.

NK reported that the January 2017 management accounts will be ready soon.

NK reported that we had a reasonable surplus from last year.

NK will send on any comments of the auditors to the Committee.

RG raised the question of whether all of the draft Report would be published in edition 225 of Wagner News, as apparently last year's report was only published on the website. NK thought that members should see the whole report in draft and he had no objection to the putting the whole document into WN. RG said that he would suggest an 8-page version of the Report for WN and we could discuss at the next meeting what goes out to members for AGM.

Item 5: Events Report

JL wanted to discuss budgets. As she sees it our choice is to (i) set prices for event types and cut our cloth accordingly or (ii) budget for each event and price accordingly.

JL stated that a basic event at St Botolph's usually runs at surplus. The cost of more expensive events was usually driven by fees for artists/speakers. With an event like the DGJ Masterclass the viability of same depended on whether we had a ticket price of £15, £25 or £30. For example, last year we had 31 paid tickets for the DGJ Masterclass at £25.

JL also mentioned that the Army and Navy Club costs £200 an hour.

JL reported that Catherine Dobson would no longer be catering for our events. This could mean adding up to a further £100 for a typical event at ST Botolph's.

The April event for Humphrey Burton: he was looking for good AV equipment as well as someone to run it. The ROSL charges £1,400 for the room. JL reported that HB would be happy to move his event to later in year, as he wants to continue writing his book.

JL reported that Dr Carnegy will also want top quality AV equipment for his talk and he too would be happy to put his talk off to a later date.

JL mentioned a possible new event on which she had received an email earlier that day. It involved Mari Wyn Williams and Mark who is a young conductor. They will repeat a talk which they had given to Opera Prelude. His fee would be £250 and her she wants £200. Refreshments would cost £100, we would only suffer a loss if less than 30 attended at a ticket price of £20. It was agreed to go ahead with this event on 6th April 2017, the slot that had previously been reserved for Humphrey Burton.

Meistersinger Dinner

JL explained that there would be a 15-20 minute recital with Samantha Crawford and Kelvin Lim. It was agreed that JL would look at sourcing a Rose bowl for the Goodall Prize. PDB is coming as is Richard Berkeley-Steele.

JL explained that her final event would be whichever was the last one before the DGJ Masterclass and she agreed that she would do a paper for the Committee following on from our earlier discussions about budgeting.

At this point, HB spoke about the events she was organising.

DGJ Masterclass – 23rd June

NK reported that he had spoken to DGJ. Even though Friday is not ideal for some members it was agreed to go with the 23rd as the singers were not available on 21st. HB agreed to book the venue at ROSL and liaise with them on the booking, deposit etc.

Singing Competition

HB said that DGJ would prefer us not to have the same judges as last year but that we should concentrate on British names this year – that was easier and cheaper from a logistical point of view. In principle, it was agreed that we would approach Graham Clark, Sir John Tomlinson, Stuart Skelton, Terry Jones, and Anne Evans.

It was felt that it would be better if DGJ presided over the event and was not a Judge.

JL reported that DGJ was concerned last year that we had not made direct approaches to the music colleges and that is something which we ought to do this year.

It was agreed that there would be a subcommittee for SC comprised of NK, HB, and CTC. JL agreed to help the subcommittee out, but not to be a member of same.

Item 6: Membership Report

NK reported that he had had to do a huge amount of work reconciling standing orders from the bank and updating those members' details on the website database. There had been a few resignations, but there were also new members.

NK was also receiving a lot of correspondence from members about membership subscriptions which was holding up producing accurate and up-to-date figures. The year-end number of members was 916 but it will be March before up-to-date numbers are known.

Item 7: Website Report

There have been intermittent problems with people accessing the Join facility on the website. HC is looking into this and will update us in due course.

HC asked about having a budget to pay for any software add-ons or services he might need and the meeting agreed that he could incur reasonable disbursements but ask for approval of items over, say £100.

Item 8: Byelaws for Bayreuth Ballot

The draft Byelaws were approved unanimously by the meeting.

Item 9: Wagner News

KC was welcomed to the Committee and the meeting unanimously to appoint her as Editor of WN to take effect after RG finishes the April edition.

RG agreed that after his last edition he would help with handing over.

KC explained that she was not a Wagner Expert and would welcome the support of committee in her role as Editor. Her aspiration for WN was to continue on from RG and to refresh the

image, in line with any re-branding which came along with HC's review of the website. She would be hoping to extend the reach of WN to a younger audience while at the same time looking after the existing readership.

RG mentioned that Michael Bousfield had approached him about the possibility of advertising each other's events in WN and in the Music Club of London's programmes. CTC agreed to contact Michael Bousfield about this.

Item 9: Co-operation with Wagner Journal

NK and RG agreed to meet BM and to discuss this, and report back to the Committee.

Item 10: Return of Society's Records by former officers

RM reported that he would be meeting AB the day before next meeting, when he expected her to return any records which she was still holding.

Item 11: Society's Library

RM will make contact with the librarian and report back.

Item 12: AOB

1. A request had been received from Henry Kennedy that we sponsor him for a Bayreuth Bursary for this year. The meeting agreed to this unanimously. CTC would ask the Stipendienstiftung if it would be possible and inform Henry accordingly.
2. Samantha Crawford has asked Society to agree to subsidise her costs of travelling to auditions in Europe and elsewhere and the meeting agreed to sponsor one such audition in the sum of £500.
3. The meeting further agreed to give more publicity to the Bayreuth Bursary and to consider sending more Bursars next year. It was also agreed that we would need byelaws for the Bursary.
4. It was agreed that we would discuss the recent offer from White Star Yachts offer of one of their yachts for a charity event at the next meeting. It could be interesting to have an event somewhere like St Katharine Docks.
5. HB asked that we use her personal e-mail address and not her ENO one.
6. HB and HC will not be here for April meeting.

The meeting ended at 22:10

The next meeting would be held on 23 March 2017 at 15 Gibson Square