

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY

Thursday 23 March 2017 18:30

15 Gibson Square, N1 0RD

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

APOLOGIES **Jan Rynkiewicz**

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

Item 1: Apologies for absence

As indicated above.

Item 2: Minutes of Meeting on 22.02.2017

The draft minutes of the meeting on 22.02.2017 were proposed and agreed subject to a few small comments.

Item 3 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported as follows:

1. He had recently had a meeting with Jacques Bouffier, VP of the RWVI, when JB updated RM on the current matters concerning the RWVI. He reported that the RWVI had rejected an application by Mastersingers for associate membership of the RWVI and that the RWVI had recommended that Mastersingers apply to us for any Bayreuth Bursaries.
2. Wasfi Khani of Grange Park Opera had offered the Wagner Society a reduction of 30% off their best tickets for their upcoming Walkure (to which most committee members appeared to be going). The meeting agreed to accept this offer and to publicise this news by an e-mail to members and a notice in WN. RM agreed to check with GPO about us advertising in their programme booklets.

3. At this point the meeting turned to the question of advertising generally. HB mentioned that the ENO friends' magazine will allow inserts and she would confirm how we could utilise this. It was agreed that in future JL would deal with Advertising along with HC. They would produce a list of advertisers and HC will lead on the design of adverts so that they dovetailed with our image on the website and the facelift which HC had planned for the website. NK stressed the possibility of getting free advertising from say, Time Out or other similar publications.

HB agreed to look into taking over the Society's "Facebook" page from AB. RM agreed to pass the password for the Society's Twitter account to HB. HC and HB agreed to review FB and Twitter and report back.

4. RM had met Gary Kahn who had raised the following concerns with RM:
 - (i) GK said that he wanted to bring his own "chair" to the SC so that he didn't have to pay;
 - (ii) GK asked that we make allowance for postal communications for those members who don't have e-mail. NK agreed to do a paper for the Committee on this issue.
 - (iii) GK was concerned about the delay of members leaving the German Historical Institute after the Event in February.

Item 4: Treasurer's Report

The management accounts for February had not yet been finalised due to time constraints and the fact that NK had had to devote so much of his spare time to other Society matters.

The Auditors have now passed the draft accounts for 2016 without any amendments. **RM and NK signed the accounts and the meeting approved them unanimously.**

NK reported that we had a surplus of c£8,500 last year, and this was not helped by the fact that we had not had claimed any Gift Aid in the year to 31.12.2015 or 31.12.2016.

Income was good in the last year, with membership going up but we were not spending all of our income. NK suggested that spend more in the current and next year by increasing the number of Bayreuth Bursaries we paid for. He also felt that we should make a contribution to the Wagner Journal. The meeting agreed that having extra income would ease any losses which we suffered on events, although our objective was to make all events break even.

RG suggested that we consider having an endowment of £10,000/£20,000 as an income producing asset, which would pay for Bayreuth Bursaries.

NK concluded by saying that because of our current financial position, Students could continue to join for free and attend most events for free, and there would not be any need to increase the annual subscriptions. We would also be better able to take financial risks on events and any support we might offer to other charitable organisations in accordance with our objects to support.

Item 5: Events Report

JL reported as follows:

1. **Mastersingers Dinner.**

55 so far were coming. JL expected it to be a great success. She said the Rosebowl Prize looked great. PDB will be presenting the prize to Anthony Negus.

NK is generously donating the wine and port; RM is paying for the singers and the pianist; JL paying for the Rosebowl.

In response to a query from RG, NK confirmed that they were all availing of gift aid for their donations.

Richard, the photographer will take lots of pictures for the website and WN.

2. **Beethoven event – 06.04.2017**

We have sold 14 tickets so far with three weeks to go.

CTC will send a Mailchimp to members to remind them of the event. Mark and Mari are members of Opera Prelude.

The meeting considered offering a deal to members of Young People in the Arts (“YPIAs”) and to under30s giving them free entry for this event and review how that goes with a view to seeing if we might do this for future events.

St Botolph’s takes 70 comfortably but JL reported that it might be able to take up to 100.

3. **Negus Event – 04.05.2017**

49 tickets have been sold so far. This might be Catherine’s last event.

4. **AGM booked for 21.6.17**

HB will be taking this over from JL. They will try to persuade Catherine to cater.

5. **Singing Competition - 5.11.2017**

It was agreed that this event would take place on 05.11.2017 with auditions at the ENO on 17.9.17.

This will be an afternoon event but we shall probably need the room from 9 am with the event taking place from 2-6pm.

DGJ will be helping with the nomination of Judges.

The committee decided to invite DGJ to be the Presiding Judge for this year and that the role of Presiding Judge would rotate each year on a cyclical basis with no one person being Presiding Judge twice within any three-year period. Dame Anne Evans was suggested for next year, then Sir John Tomlinson the following year.

DGJ feels that having more English judges would be less costly and better all round. RG suggested that Adrian Muller be considered as a judge for next year, but no decision was made on that by the meeting.

HB will write to DGJ tomorrow to inform her about the Committee's decisions.

It was also agreed that the SC would be open to residents of England, Wales, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

6. **Chairman's Summer party – July ???**

RM said that he would need to speak to his wife about this.

7. **Other venues**

HB reported that she was looking at the following alternate venues for future events: -

Pushkin House in Bloomsbury. RAF Club (GG) caters to 120 – very impressive.

Lancaster Gate – looks like really good value and was the location for next year's combined dinner.

Athenaum in Pall Mall.

HB mentioned that ROSL good because of its piano but we had to bear in mind that the relative affordability of it was dependent on the generosity of the President's membership of ROSL.

8. **Advertising of Events**

JL reported that she and HB would agree wording for any adverts.

Item 6: Membership Report

NK reported that it had been difficult getting accurate numbers recently due to problems with the website having to be restored to an earlier date which meant NK had spent a lot more time adding a number of records again to make sure they were aligned with receipts in the Society's bank account.

Item 7: Website Report

HC reported that he was looking at alternative website software called Apricot. HC said it was a good platform with good CMS (Content Management System) which was what we needed and it worked very well.

It was agreed that there would be a Committee Subgroup of NK, CTC & HC to look into making this change.

RG asked about using Direct Debits for recurring membership subscriptions but NK reported that the bank would require an indemnity/Bond from us which would be too expensive.

RM suggested that we review this DD issue.

NK reported that a Paypal recurring payment was like a DD.

NK also reported that DD was better than standing orders since increases in subscription can be easily made.

Item 8: Bayreuth Ballot Update

Cormac Cawley reported that so far 11 slips had been received by post and 9 by e-mail. On this basis, all the available tickets should be taken by winning members.

Item 9: Wagner News

RG reported as follows: -

He continued to scan old copies of WN.

April is the last WN of RG. The deadline for the April edition is 31.3.17 and there had been a flood of odd things in the last few days.

He had had some interesting correspondence, which would go into the next edition.

He was expecting an item about a Rupert Brooke poem about how ghastly Wagner is!

NK mentioned something about the writings of a visitor to Bayreuth before 1914, such as George Bernard Shaw and Virginia Woolf.

NK referred to an article about Wagner written by Nancy Mitford for The Lady magazine.

RG would speak to Michael Tanner about possibly reproducing his Spectator review of the ROH Meistersinger. Apparently, MT would like to give a talk to the Wagner Society.

KC reported that DGJ was coming to RCM for Masterclasses and KC suggested that we advertise these in WN.

Item 10: Co-operation with Wagner Journal

RG & NK reported that they are meeting Barry Millington on 07.04.2017 to discuss co-operation and they would report to the next meeting on the outcome.

Item 11: Return of Society's Records by former officers

RM reported that AB had cancelled their last meeting and that he was intending to meet her on 30.03.2017 for breakfast.

Item 12: Society's Library

RM agreed to contact the Librarian, Peter Curtis.

GG reported that he had an old file on a Windows XP computer, which he will try to get onto a memory stick. RG offered to visit GG and assist with this if necessary.

Item 13: Scheduling of future committee meetings

Next meetings are as follows:

WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL 2017

WEDNESDAY 3 MAY 2017

AGM 21 JUNE 2017

It was agreed that the July meeting would be on 26 July, and that meetings would thereafter take place on the third Wednesday of each succeeding month but no meetings in August or December.

Item 14: AOB

1. It was agreed to increase to £300 the fee payable to PDB for his Meistersingers Study Day.
2. GG reported that a new Ring is in the pipeline for 2019 but had not yet been scheduled.
3. It was agreed that we would invite Bryn Terfel to come and talk to us/members.
4. It was suggested that Bryn Terfel be offered Honorary Membership, now that we only have 6 following the passing of Alberto Remedios.
5. RG suggested approaching Jacob Rees-Mogg to come and talk to us/do an item for WN.

The meeting ended at 21:16

The next meeting would be held on 19 April 2017 at 15 Gibson Square