

## MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY

Thursday 19 April 2017 18:30

15 Gibson Square, N1 0RD

**ATTENDEES:** Richard Miles (Chair)  
Cormac Cawley (Secretary)  
Neil King (Treasurer)  
Katie Clay  
Ray Godson  
Geoffrey Griffiths

**APOLOGIES** Jan Rynkiewicz  
Jan Leigh  
Helen Beardsley  
Harry Clarke

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

Prior to the Agenda items being addressed Cormac Cawley and Richard Miles signed the new Bank Mandate for Online Banking for the Society.

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

As indicated above.

### **Item 2: Minutes of Meeting on 22.03.2017.**

The draft minutes of the meeting on 22.03.2017 were proposed and agreed subject to the following corrections: -

- (i) It was noted that Gift Aid applied to the contributions made by RM and JL to the Dinner, but not to the wine contributed by NK.
- (ii) Correct spelling of "Athenaeum".
- (iii) NK (and not RM) had referred to the article by Nancy Mitford.

CTC agreed to update the website with minutes of the most recent committee meetings.

### **Item 3 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman reported as follows:

- (i) **Meeting with Andrea Buchanan ("AB") on 30.03.2017.**

AB told RM that she wished to have a closer relationship with us. AB is the RWVI executive member with responsibility for allocations of tickets to societies in Europe which included the Wagner Society. It appears that the Ticket Office in Bayreuth had issued an invoice to the Society for a further 14 tickets in February 2017 but the invoice was never received by us. According to President Eggers, Frau Benker had used the wrong e-mail address for us. AB has said in an e-mail dated 04.04.2017 that Frau Benker had spoken to AB about the matter on 27.03.2017 at which point AB told Frau Benker to re-address the Invoice to Cormac Cawley by e-mail and to his postal address. The meeting noted with concern that AB had mentioned anything about these additional tickets to RM during their meeting, and furthermore that she was not aware of President Eggers intervention and the February invoice despite the fact that this was her area of responsibility on the executive committee.

The meeting also noted with concern the tenor of the e-mail which has been sent to JL at 20.06 on 12.10.2016 when she stated:-

*“Dear Jan*

*Please take this email as notification of my formal resignation, both from the Singing Competition and the Wagner Society. Would you kindly notify the committee of this.*

*I have informed the judges, finalists and the pianist and have let them know that you will be taking over.*

*I will send you the relevant emails that you need, but I am not inclined to spend any more of my time on the matter nor to engage in pointless discussion. There has been far too much time and energy wasted already.*

*I am sorry it has come to this, but I no longer wish to be associated with a competition, many aspects of which I now disagree with and with a society that tolerates and publishes the offensive and appalling views of its members, as evidenced in the recent Wagner News.*

*With regards*

*Andrea”*

The meeting was concerned that it might be difficult to maintain an arm's length relationship with AB as a member of the RWVI executive in light of this e-mail and her apparent lack of interest in our efforts to obtain more tickets for members.

However, the meeting was of the view that relations were to be repaired and maintained if at all possible and that this would involve RM explaining candidly to AB what were the views of the Committee so that we could “clear the decks” and have more cordial relations with her in her role as a member of the RWVI executive.

**(ii) Meeting with Librarian – Peter Curtis**

RM is in contact with Peter Curtis concerning the library and will report progress at the next meeting.

**(iii) Roger Lee**

RM reported that Roger Lee had been in touch by e-mail and was asking if he could be of any assistance with Wagner News.

It was agreed that RG and KC would meet with RL to discuss what might be possible.

At this point, KC stressed the importance of access to WN via our website.

#### **Item 4 Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer said there was not much to report. We are solvent! He is a little behind on preparing management accounts.

The accounts for the year to 31.12.2016 had been signed off by him and RM and were ready to file with the Charity Commission.

NK reported that we expect to make a small surplus this year, but that did not mean we should be profligate. We should spend more money within reason and on a strictly budgeted basis for either Bayreuth Bursaries or more events for members.

#### **Item 5 - "Wagner 1900" Grant Application**

The meeting considered the application for a Grant of between £2,000 and £2,500. CTC also read an e-mail from Ms Stoll-Knecht which explained whether the other funding would be coming from to enable the Mahler Tristan to be performed in full rather than in some abridged form.

The meeting was satisfied that the application was in line with what we could support under our objects as a charity.

Instead of making a lump sum payment to the Project, it might be possible for us to make a small lump sum payment and agree to buy a batch of up to 10 tickets and raffle them to members at one of our events.

The meeting wanted to be sure that the other funders and the RWVI would provide the support required to allow the Mahler Wagner to proceed as described above. It was agreed that NK would write to the Herr Riesner at the RWVI and explain that we would be prepared to offer a lump sum/buy some tickets if the RWVI would come up with a matching sum of at least £1,000.

#### **Item 6 – Annual Report to RWVI**

CTC explained that while the recent allocation of a further 14 tickets has allayed some of the effects of the confusion over this year's ticket allocation, there were still concerns about the process being more open and transparent. It would also be fairer if former or current members/officers of local societies were not involved in the RWVI subgroups which decided on allocations to those local societies.

CTC will prepare an updated version of Section 7 of the draft Report for consideration by members of the committee.

#### **Item 7 – Bayreuth Ballot Update**

CTC updated the meeting on the recent second poll which had been sent out to members on 7 April by post and 9 April by e-mail. The new deadline date is now 29.04.2017 and it was agreed that the draw of Ballot Slips would take place at the next committee meeting on 03.05.2017.

### **Item 8 - Bayreuth Bursaries/Mastersinger co-operation**

Following the decision by the RWVI to reject Mastersingers application for associate member of the RWVI, it was agreed that Mastersingers would be invited along with all other music colleges and academies to submit applications for either the Society's Singing Competition or for Bayreuth Bursaries.

It was also agreed that we would prepare draft Byelaws about the allocation of Bayreuth Bursaries.

### **Item 9 - Events Officers' Reports**

The meeting noted the e-mail which had been sent by JL apologising for her absence and updating on upcoming events.

### **Item 10 - Membership Report**

NK reported that there has been an increase in numbers to 940 members. 10 of these members had come from the mailshot sent by NK to "lapsed" members. NK reminded the meeting that we were now offering at least three months' lee-way to lapsed members before removing them from the list of current members.

### **Item 11 - Website Report**

HC has been dealing with issues which have arisen and can be expected to provide an update to the next committee meeting.

### **Item 12 - Wagner News**

RG reported that WN was coming out this week. He has gained some impetus from contributions and he reckons that KC will have a choice of what to include going forward.

RG mentioned an enquiry from an organist who had written 30,000 words on organ in opera and he wanted to know if he could use references to WN in his footnotes.

RG reported that the process of digitising all the periodical of the Society going back to the 1950s was continuing – these were "The Newsletter", "Wagner Newsletter", "Wagner Journal" and "Wagner News" as we now have it.

RG was intending to meet KC next week to agree a transfer to her as new editor.

CTC agreed to add more "pdfs" of WN onto the website.

KC explained that she had a vision for WN which would make it look more modern and appeal to young people while making sure the existing readership was catered for. She intended to make better use of photographs. She asked the meeting for permission to retain a couple of younger professional photographers. The meeting agreed that KC could invite

one of them to the Negus event on 04.05.2017 and to have a budget of up to £200. The committee would review the outcome and whether to use such photographers further after the Negus event.

KC asked that all e-mails be sent to her at [editor@wagnersociety.org](mailto:editor@wagnersociety.org)

### **Item 13 - Supply of Copies of WN to RILM**

RG reported that RILM was a body in New York which made periodical and publications about music available online on a worldwide basis using sophisticated software.

The meeting agreed that RILM would put copies of our periodicals in their library. RG would see if RILM could assist in any way in the digitisation of our older material by passing our print copies to them for scanning using their software.

### **Item 14 - Co-operation with Wagner Journal**

NK and RG reported on their recent meeting with Barry Millington ("BM") of the Wagner Journal ("WJ").

While the WJ meets our aims and objectives it was agreed that we could not give money to what was not a charity but a commercial organisation. It is clear that this is BM's business and that he is looking for donations but is not willing to give up any control. As things stood at the moment, if BM were to die, his estate could wind up the company which produces WJ and distribute the proceeds to his heirs.

NK and RG had offered to be trustees and to help him seek charitable status but BM was wary in taking the course.

BM was concerned that he would lose control of the publication if it became a charity and he cited a previous experience in that regard, where he had nothing but problems and was left feeling very alienated.

RG estimated that the about 100 of our members currently subscribe to WJ. BM was not interested in agreeing any deal which would allow our members to have access to a digitised version of WJ.

BM has agreed to reflect on what was discussed and to come back to NK and RG.

### **Item 15 - Return of Society's Records by former officers**

RM will arrange a new meeting with AB to collect the papers which she still holds.

### **Item 16 - Goodall Award/Honorary Members**

The meeting agreed that all Goodall Award recipients would be invited to become Honorary Members of the Society.

It was also noted that Honorary Members did not need to be Winners of the Goodall Award.

Potential recipients in future year might be Catherine Forster, City of Birmingham Touring Opera, Klaus Florian Vogt. The latter could be presented with the award in June 2018 at a dinner when he is in London for Lohengrin.

The list of Goodall Award Winners and Honorary Members will be updated to include Anthony Negus.

### **Item 17 - Society's Library**

RM will be replying to an e-mail which he has received from Peter Curtis. The meeting agreed that it was important for us to have an updated catalogue which could be made available to members on the website.

It is believed that there are over 1000 books in the catalogue.

### **Item 18 - Date for AGM in 2018**

It was agreed that the Committee would check their diaries with a view to agreeing a date for this at the next committee meeting.

### **Item 19 – AOB**

#### ***1. Events.***

NK felt that we should plan a calendar of events a year in advance and start now.

He also felt that we should prepare a proforma/budget for each event setting out its elements, a draft advert and a budget.

#### ***2. Catering***

Catherine is resigning and the AGM is likely to be her last event. RM will speak to Catherine about this. We shall also arrange a gift for her to be presented at the AGM.

NK suggested that we send an e-mail to members inviting them to offer assistance with catering at events now that Catherine was retiring. It was also suggested that we put a note in Wagner news calling for catering volunteers.

RM pointed out that we had not served any wine at the PDB Study Day.

#### ***3. Cantus Ensemble***

KC mentioned that she belonged to this choir and invited members to consider coming to their events.

#### ***4. KC request re replies to e-mails***

KC asked that committee members not “reply to all” on e-mail unless this was absolutely necessary or a decision needed to be taken urgently. CTC pointed out that this was a consequence of using the [committee@wagnersociety.org](mailto:committee@wagnersociety.org) e-mail address.

**The meeting finished at 21.51.**

**The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, 3 May 2017 at 15 Gibson Square.**