

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY 16 AUGUST 2017 18.30 – 21:00

15 Gibson Square, London N1 0RD

ATTENDEES: Neil King (Treasurer)
Cormac Cawley (Secretary)
Katie Clay
Alan Ridgewell
Geoffrey Griffiths

APOLOGIES Richard Miles (Chair), Helen Beardsley, Jan Leigh & Ray Godson

ABSENT 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. The Treasurer chaired the meeting in the absence of the Chairman.

Item 1: Apologies for absence

As above.

Item 2: Minutes of Meeting on 26.07.2017.

The draft minutes of the meeting on 26.07. 2017 were proposed and agreed by all, subject to a few minor points and typos as follows: -

- (i) Dame Anne Evans had been a guest at the meeting.
- (ii) Dame Gwyneth had paid for the sandwiches at her Masterclass (“MC”).
- (iii) At Item 6 it had been decided to ask the RWVI for a “matching contribution” for the “Wagner 1900” Grant Application.

Item 3: Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting.

CTC had circulated these and it was agreed that the Committee would provide feedback on the draft by e-mail for review at the next meeting.

Item 4: Chairman’s Report

RM had sent an e-mail to NK with the following points for the attention of the meeting: -

1. While at Bayreuth RM was staying in the same hotel as George Osborne and Michael Gove and had made good contact with them. GO had agreed to join the Society. Through some friends RM had been introduced to Catherine Foster. He had also met Ian Paterson who told RM that he (IP) would come and talk to us.
2. RM reminded the meeting that we needed to make a decision about the Goodall Award for 2018.

3. He also had wanted us to consider whether all Goodall Award winners should be made Honorary Members.

Item 5: Treasurer's Report

NK reported that the June and July accounts had been circulated. While our finances were not rosy, at the same time they were not so bad as anticipated and there was not a lot for us to be worried about. We had lost £1,200 on the MC and NK said that we cannot go on spending money on events like that without eating into our reserves.

NK suggested that, in future, "Budget" should be an item on the agenda for each meeting going forward, so that if it was intended to reduce reserves by spending on some other event or matter, each meeting would be aware of that fact and updated about it so that such decision could be discussed/reviewed fully.

NK also suggested that we discuss the budget at the September/October meetings.

JL has also proposed that we have a strategy meeting in September.

CTC suggested that where we make a surplus on events that such funds are used to support young singers and that this is specifically mentioned in any programmes produced for events.

NK reported that we had accrued £2,500 so far this year from investments.

RG suggested that the MC should "wash its own face" and we should not be losing anything on it. NK stated that the prime reason for the loss on the MC was that not enough people came to it.

Item 6 - Written Resolution & Decision Procedure ("WRP")

CTC reported on the WRP to date. It was intended that the WRP should only be used where relatively straightforward matters were to be decided or where a matter was very urgent and it was not practicable to hold a meeting at short notice.

Following some discussion, it was agreed that CTC would produce (for approval) a revised version of the WRP Bye-laws to make sure that those entitled to vote had the option of voting either "yes", "no", "abstain" or "to nominate a proxy".

Item 7: "Wagner 1900" Grant Application

NK reported that he had written to Herr Russwurm (Treasurer of the RWVI) and was still waiting to hear back.

It was agreed that CTC would write to Anna Stoll-Knecht ("ASK") and explain that we were waiting to hear from RWVI, explain what we were inclined to do if the RWVI agreed to make a contribution (but that our contribution would be no greater than £2,000) and invite her to comment on our proposed approach.

Item 8: Bayreuth Bursaries/Mastersinger co-operation

The meeting was updated by NK and GG about how the Society had worked with Mastersingers ("MS") in the past, providing support to the Goodall Scholars of £2,000 and a grant of up to £5,000 for their own activities. They would also put on some entertainment in the interval of the SC, e.g., end Act 3 Walkure and provide musicians for some other events. That co-operation has now ceased.

KC suggested that we have a Grant System which would be open and transparent, but she did not feel that we need to involve MS in assisting us to run that.

NK pointed out that any expenditure would have to be justified and accounted for. He suggested that we put the issue of a Grant System on the Agenda for the next meeting.

NK reminded the meeting that RM thinks we should do more but that we do not need to be in any rush with this.

After some discussion, it was agreed that we should ask for receipts to show how any grants/prizes are spent.

GG said that he felt we should work with MS. KC suggested that we consider doing joint events with MS.

Item 9: Events Officers' Reports

(i) JL Events Officer's Report

AR agreed to have a chat with JL and try to sort out any loose ends.

(ii) HB Events Officer's Report/

Volle talk – it is not clear when he will be able to be free from rehearsals at the ROH for "Vespres" – so we do not have a date yet.

Singing Competition – It was agreed that we can't change the age rules.

Meeting was concerned about the lack of applicants. It was also agreed that HB/CTC would do a further round of e-mails to the conservatories/vocal coaches to make sure that they are aware of the deadline of 15.09.2017. HB to also contact amateur opera companies and Mastersingers.

Item 10: Media, Advertising, Twitter & Facebook

HB had volunteered to do this but as she was not at the meeting it was decided to leave the matter over to the next meeting.

NK said that Charles Styles is interested but he's on holidays at the moment.

Item 11: Membership Report

NK reported membership growth was stagnant at moment.

Item 12: Website Report

No report as HC was absent.

Item 13: Wagner News

KC reported that she had had comments about the new font of WN. It's a half point smaller, but KC wants to make it bigger and if we do it will mean less articles. It was agreed that she will make it bigger as even some of the Committee found it less easy to read.

CTC agreed to send KC the log in details for the Mailchimp account as she wanted to write to members asking for contributions to the Bayreuth Edition of WN.

It was agreed that we would make an exception to the 100g postage limit for this edition so that a magazine of up to double the normal size could be produced as long as content was available; this additional expenditure will be about £560, and the additional size/quality of the magazine must justify this cost.

Item 14: RWVI Newsletter and Calendar

CTC explained that the RWVI now had a special on-line form which had to be completed if we wanted to have items included in their Newsletter or posted on to their Calendar.

Item 15: Return of Society's Records by former officers

CTC will get from RM a copy of the e-mail which AB had sent to RM about the lack of files and documents and about which RM had reported at the last meeting.

Item 16: Jorge Rodriguez's CDs

CTC agreed that he would e-mail members and invite offer for the CDs.

Item 17: Dates of (i) September meeting & (ii) Meeting on 14th May before AGM

It was agreed that the next meeting would be on 20.09.2017. It was agreed to move the October meeting to 17th October.

CTC agreed to send out Doodle Polls for the (i) a committee meeting on 14.5.18 and (ii) the 2018 AGM on 16.5.18.

Item 18: Goodall Award Winners to be Honorary Members

The meeting agreed that we need to update the list of Goodall Winners.

RM will write to all GW and offer them Honorary Membership.

Item 19: Goodall Award 2018 Winner

The meeting agreed that committee members will each nominate up to three persons for the 2018 Award in advance of September's meeting.

Item 20: Advertising in Mastersingers Newsletter and the MCL Magazine

It was agreed that the Events Secretary/Officer was the person who should be passing details of our event on to MCL for inclusion on their website or programmes.

Item 21: Date for Dinner in 2018

It was suggested that this should take place on a Thursday in late March so as to avoid Easter which was on weekend of 01.04.2018.

Item 22: AOB

(i) Preservation of Archives

This was raised by GG. RG said that he was happy to assist in digitising whatever we had and that he would go and visit GG to get a better idea. GG said that he had 3 or 4 separate volumes. It was then agreed that RG and GG would sort out the Society's archives.

(ii) RG Ralph Wells obituary

GG raised this, and KC confirmed it was being included in the next edition of WN.

(iii) Archives sub-committee

CTC agreed to compile a list of core documents which were to be preserved for inclusion in the Archive, but it was felt that there really should be Agenda of meetings, Minutes and Written Resolutions and any accounts documents held by the Treasurer.

(iv) WN item

KC raised the issue of getting more contributions from members about what Wagner Events are going on around the world or just UK. It was felt that we should not be replicating the kind of material which appeared in Opera magazine and that we should focus on any materials sent in by our own members.

(v) JL strategy day in September

CTC agreed to send out a Doodle Poll to find a suitable date for this.

(vi) E-mail traffic

KC raised the issue of the amount of e-mail traffic which was coming from committee members. It was agreed that we would try to keep this to a minimum. CTC pointed out that some members were "replying all" when the "committee" e-mails and individual ones were listed on the initial e-mail - this resulted in the whole committee getting the reply and the named person getting a further copy, so this should be avoided in future.

The meeting closed at 21:45

NEXT MEETINGS

Wednesday 20 September

Tuesday 17th October

Wednesday 15 November

2018

Wednesday 17 January

Wednesday 21 February

Wednesday 21 March

Wednesday 18 April

Monday 14th May (proposed)

AGM 16 May 2018 (proposed)