

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2017 18.30 – 21:00

15 Gibson Square, London N1 0RD

ATTENDEES: **Richard Miles (Chair) (“RM”)**
 Cormac Cawley (Secretary) (“CTC”)
 Neil King (Treasurer) (“NGK”)
 Helen Beardsley (“HB”)
 Harry Clarke (“HC”)
 Ray Godson (“RG”)
 Geoffrey Griffiths (“GG”)
 Jan Leigh (“JL”)
 Alan Ridgewell (“AR”)

APOLOGIES **Katie Clay (“KC”) & Henry Kennedy (“HK”).**

IN ATTENDANCE **Jacques Bouffier**

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 Chairman introduced and welcomed Jacques Bouffier (“JB”), Vice President of the Richard Wagner Verband International eV. (“RWVI”) JB explained his path to becoming nominated as a Vice President of the RWVI, and his role in forging stronger connections between the American societies and the RWVI. He also outlined the system for allocation of tickets from the RWVI to the non-European group of member societies. He explained that the American societies are given tickets for the last cycle of the festival and that they do participate in offering conferences and discussions to which all are welcome. An example of this was the Wagner Society of Southern California dinner which had been attended by NGK, JL, GG and CTC in 2017.

JB explained that a new board and officers of the RWVI would be elected at the Congress in 2019. He enquired whether any of our committee were interested in being considered for election, but no one expressed an interest. JB understands that Andrea Buchanan may be interested in standing for the role of Vice President. JB will be stepping down from this role in 2019.

Finally, JB confirmed that he was now the link between our society and the RWVI and that Andrea Buchanan would no longer have any role in that regard.

Item 1: Apologies for absence

Received from KC and HK.

Item 2: Approval of minutes of meeting on 20 September 2017

The minutes of the meeting on 20.09.2017 were approved with some brief suggestions and clarifications.

Item 3: Chairman's Report

RM explained that there was nothing which he needed to report to the meeting.

Item 4: Treasurer's Report & Budget

Before the meeting NGK had sent around the recent management accounts and the events financial summary.

Summarising the management accounts, NGK pointed out that the modest surplus at the end of September only existed due to the manner in which we account for movements in investment values (which have been positive this year); without this benefit, we would have been showing a small loss and he was concerned that this accounting treatment masked the real state of financial performance. He then outlined the alternative treatment, which is to book revaluations to a revaluation reserve and thus not show these in the Income and Expenditure statement. This would be a change in accounting policy and the prior year would have to be restated in the annual financial statements but would be clearer. RG pointed out that he felt, as a practising Chartered Accountant that this would be overly complicated and inappropriate for an organisation of our size. It was therefore agreed that the current accounting practice would not be changed.

While the management accounts therefore looked reasonable, NGK emphasised that we should not be complacent about the fact that we have a surplus at the moment particularly since large items of expenditure relating to the Singing Competition have not yet been booked.

NGK also noted that events continue to make losses and that this was unbudgeted. He also stressed that everybody must take responsibility for their budget areas as he compiles the 2018 budget; any input from committee members on their budget areas would therefore be very useful.

There was then a discussion about whether or not our aim should be to break even on events. The consensus of the meeting was that this was not strictly necessary, but RM suggested that we should aim for breakeven on most of our events. NGK stressed that while we might have £60K in reserves, it was not really acceptable to be dipping into reserves for losses on events.

NGK suggested that we set up a committee to consider amendments to the rules to make the operating of the bank accounts and the approval of financial expenditure a bit more straightforward.

AR suggested that the Strategic Planning meeting should consider our policies on maintaining our financial reserves.

Item 5: Written Decision Bye-laws

CTC reported that since the meeting in September Written Resolution Number 4 (agreeing that the Goodall award for 2018 be given to Catherine Foster) had been approved on 04.10.2017 and the meeting noted the making of the said resolution.

Item 6: Strategy Meeting

Since not everybody had responded to the Doodle Poll, it was agreed that CTC would resend the doodle poll so as to find a new suitable date for a strategy meeting.

Item 7: Bayreuth Ballot for this year

CTC reported that he had taken a poll of members to indicate the performances at the 2018 Festival for which they would like to get tickets. The following were the results: -

Parsifal	55%
Tristan	12.5%
Meistersinger	11.5%
Lohengrin	11%
Hollander	6%
Walkure	4%

Given that members had indicated an interest in at least 120 tickets it was agreed that we would apply to the GDF for up to 100 tickets giving due emphasis to the choices expressed by the members in the poll.

There would also be an allocation of tickets from the Verband. Since we were in the European group allocation we would receive an amount based on the proportion of our members to those of the other societies in that group.

We would expect ballot slips to go out as early as possible in January 2018 with the aim of the draw taking place at the February 2018 committee meeting.

Item 8: "Wagner 1900" Grant Application

NGK reported that he had passed on to Herr Cisek details of the bank account into which the RWVI's contribution of €1000 to the Wagner 1900 project should be paid.

Item 9: Grants Scheme

HK will look after this. Leave it to next time.

Item 10: JL Events Officer's Report

JL reported and confirmed that she, HB, GG & HK now constituted the events committee.

The Bayreuth Bursary Event had been a great success.

The Dame Anne Evans event has been set for 30.11.17 and it was agreed that CTC would do a Mailchimp to members.

The Christmas Party was set for 07.12.2017 and was expected to raise £1,000. This is only possible because of the generosity of NGK in agreeing to host and subsidise the event.

JL reminded the committee that in 2019 we shall be organising the joint societies dinner in January.

JL mentioned the possibility of an event with Michael Volle in January 2018 being organised by HB.

In February 2018 we would have an event with Dr Carnegie. Catherine Dobson has agreed to do the catering.

Anthony Negus wants to come in March to do an evening about Der Fliegende Holländer.

In either April or March there was an opening for Renato Balsadonna to do an event for us. He conducts and has his own chorus. HK also knows him

Further events which JL had in mind were one with Klaus Florian Vogt. With Pappano – JL said that she (JL) had sat next to Donatella Flick, who had agreed to have a word with him

JL also mentioned the possibility of an event with Sian Bicker.

RG raised the question of replacement of the events organiser as JL had only agreed to resume temporarily when HB retired.

At this point AR agreed to join Events subcommittee – JL (acting Chairman), HB, HK, AR & GG.

Item 11: HB Events Officer's Report/Singing Competition Update

HB reported on the progress with the Singing Competition.

The auditions had taken place on 15.10.2017. The applicants were very impressive, there was a great turnout and some great voices. HK had attended and was very impressed.

DGJ will be seeing Samuel Sakker separately.

Kelvin Lim accompanied in the morning and Rob Keely did the honours in the afternoon.

The meeting agreed that the master of ceremonies for the finals should be HB.

There will be a post event dinner at Getti restaurant on Jermyn Street, to which the judges and their other halves would be invited. Any committee members attending would pay for themselves.

On the recommendation of CTC, the meeting expressed its thanks to Dame Gwyneth and HB for all their hard work in getting the singing competition to this stage.

Item 12: Media, Advertising, Twitter & Facebook

HB offered to send a mailchimp to see if any members were interested in helping in relation to these issues. HC also agreed to produce some ideas in this regard so that we had a joined-up approach to social media and the website.

Item 13: Membership Report

NGK had provided a report by e-mail to the committee on 11.10.2017. The numbers were very encouraging and showed an increase of 50 on the previous year including 15 in the last month. NGK offered the view that the interest in joining may have been as a result of Bayreuth requesting applicants for tickets to state whether they are members of a local Wagner Society.

Item 14: Website Report

This item was not addressed at the meeting.

Item 15: Wagner News

KC had informed NGK by e-mail that the Bayreuth edition of Wagner News was ready to be printed. It was a bumper edition running to 96 pages and featured a picture of Catherine Foster on the front page.

Item 16: Goodall Award Winner 2018

NGK reported that he had informed Catherine Foster's agent that we had awarded her the Goodall prize. He has agreed to pay for her flight over and hotel accommodation so that she can attend the dinner at which she will be presented with the award. NGK is hoping that the winners of the Singing Competition 2017 will sing at the event. He is considering inviting Michael Bousfield to make the presentation as he is a friend of Catherine Foster.

Item 17: Date for the 2018 Dinner

The dinner will take place on 21.03.18 at the ROSL. NGK will pay for the wine and corkage and RM will pay for the entertainment. We need someone to pay for the flowers. JL has agreed to pay for the Rosebowl again.

Item 18: Covent Garden Lohengrin

It was agreed that the events committee would look at what events might be feasible to coincide with staging.

Item 19: Covent Garden Ring Autumn 2018

Booking for this event opens 02.10.2107. The events committee would look at what events we might put on to coincide with this Ring.

NGK suggested that we try to coordinate diaries and go to the same cycles.

Item 20: Baden Baden Parsifal

JL said that she was possibly going to this as is NGK. There are going to be three performances in all.

Item 21: AOB

1. AR reported that he had arranged to meet the gentleman who was putting on the Ring project on this coming Friday. He thinks that he may simply be looking for advertising from us and you will report to committee after the meeting.
2. It was agreed that we needed to clarify what is happening with event catering and whether or not Catherine Dobson was still going to be able to help out.
3. It was also agreed that the events committee would look at venues where a piano was available given that St Botolph's was losing its piano.

MEETING CLOSED AT 21:00

NEXT MEETINGS

Wednesday 15 November

2018

Wednesday 18 January

Wednesday 21 February

Wednesday 21 March

Wednesday 18 April

AGM 16 May 2018