**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY**

**WEDNESDAY 20 June 2018 18.30 – 21:00**

15 Gibson Square, London N1 0RD

**ATTENDEES: Neil King (Treasurer) (“NGK”) (In the Chair)**

**Cormac Cawley (Secretary) (“CTC”)**

**Geoffrey Griffiths (“GG”)**

**Ray Godson (“RG”)**

**Alan Ridgewell (“AR”)**

**Henry Kennedy (“HK”)**

**Shirley Cully (“SC”)**

**Nick Kohn (“NNK”)**

**APOLOGIES Richard Miles (Chair) (“RM”), Isabelle Pitman (“IP”), & Meli Hatzihrysidis (“MH”)**

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. In the absence of the Chairman, the meeting was chaired by the Treasurer.

**Item 1: Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from RM, IP, & MH.

**Item 2: Approval of minutes of meeting on 14 May 2018**

The minutes of the meeting on 14.05.2018 were approved.

There were no matters arising.

**Item 3: Chairman’s Report**

In light of his absence there was no report from the Chairman.

Item 4: Treasurers Report, Budget & Annual Accounts

NGK reported.

He said that we had recently had a number of donations of CDs and memorabilia for which we had raised £1400. Members were clearly interested in acquiring such items and CTC suggested that we put lists of available items on the website which would be updated as items were sold. Members would thereby be able to see what items remained for sale and make bids or offers for them.

RG reported that he was intending to pick up donated items from a member when RG next visited Cardiff. Gary Kahn has also informed us that he had some items to pass on which had been donated by a deceased former member. It was suggested that all of these items could be put in one place such as Wagner News or on the website.

NGK reported that we were in surplus in relation to most of our events. We have spent more on catering, but SC reported that members were responding well to what we were providing. She also expressed the view that Jacob at the Swedenborg Hall had been fantastic. NGK reported that he always tips Jacob.

In response to a query from RG it was confirmed that the wine for events was not subsidised by NGK.

HK raised the issue of what we do with any surpluses on events overall and whether they should be hypothecated to particular purposes. It was agreed that this was something which should be discussed at the strategy meeting in September.

**Item 5: Wagner News including cost of advertising**

AR reported.

Copies of the latest edition of Wagner News were circulated.

AR reported that he was planning to get the Bayreuth edition out in September. He would like to increase the number of new writers and also to improve advertising.

NGK reported that we can go to 120 pages (128 grs for postage). NGK felt that it was better to do one large edition rather than a supplement. 1200 copies are printed on each run.

Item 6: Events Officer’s Report

HK reported as follows.

He said that events were being well attended and that the Igor Kennaway event had gone well.

Our next event would be on 12th July with Peter Conrad and David Nice. Peter has published a book about Wagner and Verdi.

HK is organising an event with Antonio Pappano and Keith Warner.

The Dame Eva Turner Lecture which would be given by John Deathridge (who has a new book about Wagner coming out) will be given on 3rd October. There was a discussion about whether this event should be free to members or whether we should charge a lower price than normal, e.g., £10. The meeting decided that we should splash out for the event and charge members £20 to include a slightly more elaborate reception than normal.

HK reported that we were going to provide a buffet lunch for the Stefan Vinke event on 6th October.

GG mentioned Prof Julian Johnson and suggested that HK might contact him with a view to him coming to speak to the Society.

The Bayreuth Bursary experience event would take place on 25th October 2018.

In December we would have the “Beast of Bayreuth” Event and the Christmas party.

The Musical Societies Dinner will take place in January 2019 and it was suggested that we invite Christoph Adolph to perform at that event on behalf of the Society.

SC reported on catering. Members were giving very positive feedback about the food and drink which was being provided. She explained that she was a pensioner and needed to sort out a financial structure for ordering food. NGK explained that the Society has a PayPal account she can use when ordering food. NGK also suggested that we should try to gear up and experiment with the food which we offered. NGK also suggested that there would need to be further discussion about the proposed lunch event around the Eva Turner Lecture. SC will e-mail NGK and HK with a view to discussing these catering issues in more detail.

**Item 7: Bayreuth Ballot Draw**

CTC reported that he had now received all of the tickets, some of them in hard copy, some of them by way of e-tickets. He had posted most of them to members by special delivery or e-mailed them. There were only a couple remaining to be sent out once the winners had confirmed their postal or e-mail addresses.

Item 8: Media, Advertising, Twitter and Facebook

NNK agreed to take on the social media role. He said that we would need to be giving something away in order to attract people.

AR explained that he was dealing with a new graphic designer and discussing structure style and branding for the website.

Item 9: Written Decision Bye Laws Update

CTC reported that no Written Decisions had been made since the last meeting.

Item 10: Membership Report

NGK reported that the number of members had increased by 40 from April to May.

**Item 11: General Data Protection Regulation**

CTC reported that the reaction of members had been very positive to the notification that we would be processing on the basis of “the contract of membership”.

We still need to obtain consent from non-members to whom an e-mail had been sent out before 25 May 2018. Responses of non-members with their consent to us processing their data were slow in coming in.

CTC explained that there was a Mailchimp list of members who were “contracted”. For the moment emails should only be sent to those members until we have an updated “non-members list” of those who had provided GDPR consent.

NGK reported that he was still working through older or cancelled members with a view to sending them a letter or an e-mail inviting them to re-join and offering them the incentive of having an extra period of free membership

Item 12: Society’s Libraries of Recordings & Books and Donations

This item was discussed briefly following up on previous detailed discussions over several meetings:

It was proposed that:

1. Bequests and legacies were only to be accepted in future on the basis the Society was likely to offer such items received for sale to members so that the Society benefitted financially from these gifts;
2. Given the extremely low number of members borrowing items from the audio and video library at present, the Society would dispose of this library to members over the next few months via adverts in *Wagner News* and by email in a manner to be agreed; and
3. A decision on the future of the main library (printed books and scores etc.) would be made subsequently.

This proposal was passed unanimously.

**Item 13: Archive Catalogue from GG**

RG agreed to go and collect the archive materials held by GG at his house and RG also agreed to catalogue those materials

**Item 14: Singing Competition**

NGK proposed that we should postpone the Singing Competition for 2018 as it was now too late to organise one. This proposal was carried by majority with one abstention.

It was agreed that we would still invite applicants (including singers) for the Bayreuth Bursary for 2018 with a view to sending up to 5 winners to Bayreuth in 2019.

**Item 15: Bayreuth Bursary Application Forms & Rules**

CTC agreed to report to the next meeting on this item.

**Item 16: President’s Masterclass**

CTC had circulated the following proposal to committee members in advance of the meeting in accordance with the Society’s Byelaws: -

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION: -**“The Committee will use all reasonable endeavours to agree with the President and Mr Adrian Müller a basis (including a budget) for the presentation by the President of her 2017 Masterclass Prize to Michelle Alexander and Adam Music at a public event in London within the next 12 months.”

**REASONS: -**

1. There is a need to end the discord which has arisen around the failure of the Committee and the President to agree terms about the presentation of her Masterclass Prize for 2017.
2. Such a decision will allow the singers to receive their prize at a location which is accessible to most members.
3. Holding such an event accords with the Society’s objectives and is in the interest of members.

CTC introduced the resolution and invited members to support same for the reasons stated in same.

NGK referred to the e-mail which had been sent by RM in advance of the meeting in which he had stated that he did not support the resolution, but he invited members to vote on same with their consciences. NGK also read an e-mail from MH in which he explained his reasons why he would not have supported the motion if he had been present at the meeting and also that he had seriously considered resigning over the issue. No response to the motion had been received from IP.

There was then a full and frank discussion of the resolution by the meeting.

Those against the resolution felt that the committee’s authority could not be undermined by pressure being applied or by matters being discussed in the press without us being able to provide detailed responses for fear of further recriminations. It was because of the fear of such further recriminations that the committee had decided not to make any comment on the paper which the President had presented about this issue to the AGM.

Those in favour felt that it was better to resolve matters and to move on but particularly to allow the singers to receive their prizes.

The meeting then voted on the resolution but was split with four in favour and four against. NGK held the casting vote as chairman and voted against the resolution, which meant it was rejected.

**Item 17: AOB**

NGK, in the chair, proposed the following resolution:

“The Committee considers that in her actions concerning the ‘President’s Masterclass’ leading to press reports critical of the society, the President has not been acting to ‘enhance the standing of the society’ as she is required to do by the constitution.”

This resolution was passed with 7 votes for and 1 vote against.

No further business was discussed by meeting and the meeting was closed at 9:32pm.

**Future committee meetings:**Tuesday 17 July

Wednesday 19 September

Wednesday 17 October

Wednesday 21 November

**2019**

Wednesday 16 January

Wednesday 27 February

Wednesday 20 March

Wednesday 17 April

**AGM - Wednesday 22 May**