**Minutes of the Wagner Society Committee Meeting**

**held on 10th April 2019 at 15 Gibson Square, London, N1 0RD**

In attendance: Tom Brown (TB)

Ray Godson (RG)

Meli Hatzihyrsidis (MH)

Henry Kennedy (HK) Events

Neil King (NK) Treasurer, Membership and Ticket Secretary

Alan Ridgewell (AR) Editor, Wagner News

Anthony Spooner (AS) Secretary

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| **1. Apologies for Absence**  Richard Miles (RM)  Isabella Pitman (IP)  **2. Minutes of Last Meeting**  Approved  **3. Matter Arising**  Taken within the items below  **4. Chairman's report** - deferred to next meeting (and to include an update on the meeting with Malcolm Rivers, and the possibility of Helen Beardsley returning to the Committee.)  **5. Secretary’s report**  a) 2019 Bursary commitment  We await confirmation from the Stipendien Office that our nominations are accepted. AS to call Stefan Specht if no response received by end of week.  b) Ballot progress  The ballot draw was completed in the afternoon, ahead of the Committee meeting, with NK and AS officiating. 77 ballot forms had been received and a total of 90 tickets were allocated (66 from the Box Office/RWVI, 14 from the Friends, and 10 from members). AS will email all winning members and will maintain and update a "reserve list" in the event that tickets are returned.  c) 2020 ballot forward planning  It has been suggested that the Society might in future delay the deadline for the closure of its ballot until after the date of the official Bayreuth box office on-line application process. This would allow members to participate in the on-line facility and then submit applications to the Society if they had not been fortunate in this draw. This suggestion met with Committee approval. *[Subsequent to the meeting and this approval, two members have returned their tickets from the Society's ballot as they managed to acquire tickets on-line this year.]*  **6. Treasurer's report**  a) 2018 Accounts  The 2018 accounts have been finalised and have now been approved by the auditors. AS should now forward the accounts to the Charity Commission.  b) Membership position  NK reported that, whilst membership numbers remain strong, the surge in new memberships is not quite up to the level of last year. MH suggested that perhaps we should ensure our Facebook page, inter alia, clearly lists the benefits of Society membership, as an aid to attracting new members, and volunteered to undertake a Facebook update.  c) 2019 AGM forward planning (this discussion brought forward from item 15 on the circulated agenda)  - 24th April remains the deadline for the submission of nominations, proposals and additional agenda items for the 2019 AGM. Another Chimp email should be sent to members to remind them of this date and deadline; NK will supply the relevant text to AR who will effect this mailing asap.  - Before the 1st May, an updated agenda will be prepared, circulated to members and published on the website.  - In addition to the annual nominations necessary for the Officers (RM, NK and AS), nominations this year are also required for committee members RG and TB. RG's have been supplied.  d) In anticipation of the Events report which follows, NK reported that income from events so far in 2019 would show a small net profit for the Society.  **7. Events report**  a) The Brindley Sherratt evening was a success, with an excellent Q&A session incorporated.  b) The need for a formal "Thank You" speech by a committee member, at the end of Society events, was discussed and it was recognised that there should always be a designated committee member nominated to present such a speech at every event. However, it was also recognised that each event was different and that, sometimes, intervening with a prepared speech could spoil an evening that had already finished on a high note where, for example, a good "thank you" had already been delivered by an interviewer. HK would ensure that a committee member would always be assigned to the task (as part of his overall responsibility for assigning tasks to every event) but that the need for such a "thank you" would be determined at the conclusion of each individual event.  c) 2020 forward planning  - The intention remains to have a full 2020 programme available by June/July 2019; Barry Millington is already confirmed as the speaker for the Eva Turner Memorial Lecture. Rachel Nichols and Sarah Lenton have also been approached as speakers for next year.  - The possibility of holding a Quiz Night and/or a Film Night was discussed; possible film night venues such as the NFT, UCL, Kings Place and the RAH were touched upon. HK will continue to explore these possibilities; the idea of a fun Society event was supported.  - While recognising that our regular event venue, Swedenborg Hall, continues to work well for the Society, it was recognised also that hall staff were not always *au fait* with audio/visual equipment and techniques, and that we must ensure we always advise the hall in advance when such equipment was particularly necessary.  - Discussion of the 2020 Annual Goodall Award was deferred to AOB, item 16 (q.v.)  **8. Wagner News report**  a) AR confirmed that edition 232 is imminent and expected to be printed and distributed around Easter time. A short article, with a photograph, regarding the 2019 Bayreuth ballot will be included in the September edition.  b) AR is acquainted with the Director of the Handel Festival, Samir Savant. Samir is extremely proficient and successful in the deployment of social media in the promotion of his festival. It was agreed that AR should invite him to attend one of our meetings so that he might outline his approach to us.  **9. Archive and Library report**   1. Printed items: 136 items have been requested by Wahnfried and a further four by the London Library. The possibility of all other items going to a single public library is being followed up but no decision has yet been made by them. If this idea falls through, the remaining items will be distributed to interested members. 2. Audio library: all ‘homemade’ items have now been checked and about 15% have been judged worthy of preservation, which is now taking place in Germany. The remaining tape cassettes and VHS tapes have been discarded. There are no remaining DVDs and the remaining CDs are being offered to interested members free.   b) RG has discovered a further three packing cases full of Bayreuth programmes. As these remain very popular with members he will arrange with NK to have them brought in to London for subsequent disposal to members at future events.  c) RM and RG are still to arrange for RM to collect the Wagner News archive material which RG currently holds.  **10. Social media/Marketing report**  TB reported that this was going well, with IP and MH, in particular, fully engaged. More than 1200 "likes" have been registered against our Facebook page. We will endeavour to be more forward- (rather than backward-) looking with our posts, using Instagram for example.  **11. Committee composition**  Committee members had had the opportunity to review the 12 suggested committee roles put forward at the last meeting. There was broad agreement that these roles covered the major responsibilities of the committee, but a recognition also that further explanations on some of the roles was also needed.  IP had suggested that someone was needed with a responsibility to promote young members in the Society and that this individual might also take responsibility for Bayreuth bursary recruitment and the promotion of young writers for Wagner News articles. IP volunteered to undertake this role within the committee.  The committee recognised that further, more in-depth, descriptions of these 12 overseeing committee roles was required and AS volunteered to draw up outline "job descriptions" as soon as he could.  **12. Singing Competition**  It has been decided that this year a video of competitors would be requested in addition to the usual audio recording; a YouTube or Dropbox link would be provided to prospective competitors. A £25 registration fee will be introduced for 2019. The Hall has been confirmed and the jury will comprise: Rachel Nicholls, Hugh Canning, Nicholas Payne, Isabel Murphy and Graham Clark.  **13. Website review**  Little activity this month. AR will move this forward once the upcoming Wagner News edition is complete.  **14. Constitutional Review**  This will not be completed before, or added as an agenda item to, the upcoming AGM. Work will begin in earnest following the AGM.  **15. AGM Planning**  Reported within item 6.c) above, q.v.  **16. AOB**  a) AR brought the Fulham Opera production of Meistersinger this coming August to the committee's attention. An advertisement would be appearing in the forthcoming Wagner News.  b) Further discussion took place regarding RM's recent promotion to the board of his Japanese bank. Members queried the degree to which RM would be able to sustain his position as Chairman of the Society with all the additional work and responsibility the promotion implied. While it was clear that the committee contained members willing and able to step into the Chairmanship role if required, NK and AS agreed to meet with RM as soon as practicable in order to clarify the position ahead of the AGM and to report back to the committee.  c) The Annual Goodall Award was discussed and the 2019 dinner reflected upon. This event had been a great success, but a large portion of the cost had been borne by generous individual committee members and it was recognised that this may not be sustainable for the future. It was agreed that this event should indeed be an annual event, but that future arrangements should look to ensure a more cost-effective affair, without losing the sense of distinction and exclusivity implied by the award.  Committee members were asked to think about nominations for the 2020 award and to come to the May committee meeting ready with their suggestions.  **17. Next meeting and schedule of future meetings** | **Action**  **RM**  **AS**  **AS**  **AS**  **MH**  **NK**  **AR**  **AS NK**  **HK**  **HK**  **HK**  **AR**    **RG NK**  **RM RG**  **TB**  **IP**  **AS**  **AR**  **NK RG TB**  **RM NK AS**  **All** |

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| **Event/Meeting** | **Proposed date** |
| Event – Wesendonck | 15th May 2019 |
| Committee | 20th May 2019 |
| **Annual General Meeting** | **22nd May 2019** |
| Event – Elgar | 18th June 2019 |
| Committee | 19th June 2019 |
| Committee | 10th July 2019 |
| Committee | 18th September 2019 |
| Committee | 23rd October 2019 |
| Committee | 20th November 2019 |
| Singing Competition | 23rd November 2019 |
| Christmas Party | 12th December 2019 |
| Committee | 15th January 2020 |
| Joint Societies Dinner | 28th January 2020 |
| Committee | 26th February 2020 |
| Committee | 18th March 2020 |
| Annual Dinner | March date to be confirmed |
| Committee | 22nd April 2020 |
| Committee | 13th May 2020 |
| **Annual General Meeting** | **20th May 2020** |
| Committee | 17th June 2020 |
| Committee | 8th July 2020 |
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