**Minutes of the Wagner Society Committee Meeting**

**held on May 20th 2019**

**at 15 Gibson Square, London, N1 0RD**

**In attendance:** Richard Miles (RM) Chairman

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1. Apologies for Absence** - received from Isabella Pitman  **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting** - agreed  **3. Matter Arising** - taken within the meeting  **4. Chairman’s Report**  RM began the meeting by introducing Marina Abel Smith to the committee; Marina works with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Marina outlined a number of the initiatives she is currently working on and hoped that the Society might find synergy with these events. The committee was happy to have Marina present and would look to work with her wherever possible.  a) AGM preparations  NK reported that all arrangements with Swedenborg Hall were in hand and that responsibilities had been assigned to committee members for the event.  NK apologised for the minor description error which has come to light within the accounts. The error had been pointed out by our President and NK has worked assiduously with Dame Gwyneth to rectify the position. This also required a proposed amendment to last year’s minutes, which had already been made available to the membership, and the inclusion of the full 5-page statement Dame Gwyneth delivered at the AGM last year. These additions have now been effected and the membership advised of the alterations.  The meeting recognised the work that NK had put in to set the record straight and thanked him for all his efforts.  NK advised that Adrian Mumford has kindly volunteered to give a vote of thanks to the committee at the conclusion of the AGM.  **5. Secretary’s Report**  a) Bursary: we have finally received the Bursary invitation certificates and 2019 arrangement details from the Stipendien office in Bayreuth. AR will forward the four packs to our candidates.  b) 2019 Bayreuth Ballot: all but three of our allocated tickets have now been assigned to members. The remaining three tickets (along with any others which might be returned to us in the next few days) will be offered to the membership on a “first come, first served” basis shortly via a Chimp. Payments are currently outstanding from two members, otherwise all monies have been received. Increased security at the Festival this year has meant that all tickets must be personalised with the name of the holder; seven members have yet to respond with personalisation details. We received a late offer of additional tickets from the RWVI and NK undertook successfully to assign a further three tickets for our members - this takes the total tickets allocation for the Society this year to 93. AR has secured the ballot photograph he was seeking for the next edition of Wagner News.  c) Committee Composition: AS reported that no progress had been made since the last meeting but hoped movement may apparent ahead of the June committee meeting.  **6. Treasurer’s Report**  a) The 2019 management accounts are now on the website as far as April 2019 and, whilst still early in the year, we are fractionally ahead of budget. The Singing Competition (November) tends to be a major cost later in the year and so we need to improve performance ahead of that event. Ticket sales for this event are already going very well, even before we begin any major promotional push. Ticket sales for other Society events have been extremely successful to date.  Overall membership numbers are slightly down but, whilst we must not be complacent, they are expected to improve as the year wears on particular when the 2020 Bayreuth application forms have gone to out as this always drives membership higher.  There was a major discussion regarding membership payment methods and the desire to make such payments as simple as possible. The merits and demerits of standing orders, direct debits and credit cards were fully discussed; the Treasurer’s belief is that credit cards are the simplest and most convenient mechanism for the membership for the future.  b) The Annual Goodall Award: committee members came to the meeting with the names of individuals they believed were worthy of the 2020 award. The resultant shortlist comprises: Sir Mark Elder, Norman Bailey (NB), Nina Stemme, Richard Farnes and Mark Wigglesworth. RG undertook to make contact with NB to ascertain whether or not he would be able to travel to the UK to accept the award if it were offered. The Chairman will now prepare and circulate a simple voting mechanism for the committee through which these nominees can be narrowed down to a prioritised list.  Discussion also took place on the possibility of making an award to NB (over and above the Goodall Award) for his services to the Wagner oeuvre. These discussions to be concluded once the contact through RG has been established/completed and the priority shortlist finalised.  **7. Events**  a) Recent events: HK reported on the success and good turnouts of the latest Society events and outlined a number of fine events currently being scheduled for the end of 2019/early 2020, which would include luminaries such as Humphrey Burton and events such as a summer drinks party at Richard’s home in Surrey.  b) The Milan Book  c) Young Wagnerian Lectures: the meeting fully supported HK’s idea of offering lecture positions/events to a handful of student Wagner aficionadi, with a possible £250 prize on offer. HK to develop further.  **8. Wagner News**  The meeting congratulated AR, yet again, on another fine edition of Wagner News distributed recently. AR made it clear, however, that he needed additional writers for future edition in order that the current high standard might be maintained. This was accepted by the committee who will do all within their power to assist.  **9. Membership Drive**  MH’s recent email with suggestions for a membership drive was reviewed in full. MH remains committed to undertake this initiative on behalf of the Society and was applauded by the meeting. AR and HK volunteered to assist with social media usage wherever they could, along with Wagner News and MailChimp input where relevant. HK made the point that students, in particular, would respond to “drinks and nibbles” invitations. MH undertook to develop a plan for next steps.  **10. Archive Activity**  RM and RG have yet to liaise to ensure the transfer of the final items from RG’s storage. Both undertook to finalise this.  **11. Social Media/Marketing:** no progress to report  **12. Singing Competition**  HK and AR were keen to determine/finalise the prizes available for this year’s competition. It was agreed to maintain the prize money at last year’s levels, with the proviso that for 2019 this might be a combination of cash *and* tuition fees. For the winners, in addition, an event and/or concert would be arranged (possibly engaging HK’s outstanding Resonate Symphony Orchestra).  **13. Website Development**: no progress to report  **14. Constitutional Review**: no progress to report  **15. AOB**: no items proposed | **Action**  **AR**  **AS/AR**  **AS**  **RG**  **RM**  **All**  **HK**  **All**  **MH**  **AR/HK**  **MH**  **RM/RG** |