**Minutes of the Wagner Society Committee Meeting**

**held on 19th June 2019**

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

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| **In Attendance:** Ray Godson (RG)  Meli Hatzihyrsidis (MH)  Henry Kennedy (HK) Events  Neil King (NK) Treasurer, Membership and Tickets  Isabelle Pitman (IP)  Alan Ridgewell (AR) Editor, Wagner News  Anthony Spooner (AS) Secretary  **1. Apologies for Absence** - received from Richard Miles (RM) and Tom Brown (TB)  **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting** - agreed  **3. Matter Arising from the Minutes** - RG reported that RM had successfully picked up the archive material (item [to follow] in the 20/5 minutes). All other matters taken within the current meeting.  **4. Chairman’s Report** - in RM’s absence, NK took the chair.  a) Matters arising from the AGM  The minutes of the AGM have been finalised and will be circulated in accordance with the Constitution ahead of the 2020 meeting, as in previous years.  Support to Fulham Opera was discussed at length. It was agreed that we will promote its Wagner-related productions through Mailchimp and social media channels, Wagner News will contain an update on the proposed cast and other information regarding Meistersinger and we will look to ensure mutual advertising for the future, e.g. in their programmes. It was agreed that we will make a one-off donation of £1,000 to the company.  **5. Secretary’s Report**  a) 2019 Ballot progress  We now have access to the Kartenbüro ticket allocation and the vast majority of tickets have now been personalised and emailed to members; Cormac Cawley has similarly had access to the tickets he passed over to us and he has personalised these tickets as requested and these, too, have now been distributed. The Friends ticket allocation was received in paper form and posted to the relevant members. There remain a very small number of members who have yet to supply personalisation details and they have been given a deadline. One member still has not paid for tickets and these will be re-advertised to the membership if payment is not received in the next seven days.  This being the first year when individual personalisation has been rigorously required, it has become apparent that some members have taken advantage of the Society’s ticket allocation process and passed their balloted tickets to third parties. For the future, we will make it clear that one ticket allocated via the ballot will always be made out to the winning member.  b) AGM Minutes - taken in item 4 above.  c) Committee composition  Committee members were asked to review and comment upon the recently-distributed “job descriptions” before the next committee meeting (July 10th). AS will incorporate all comments thus received and recirculate the finalised descriptions ahead of the meeting; the Chairman will then decide how we will proceed to fill the necessary roles.  d) Society’s minutes archive - addressed within 6e) below.  **6. Treasurer’s Report**  a) Financial report and the use of electronic banking  Five months into the year we are showing a small deficit against budget of c.£1,100. This is no cause for concern at this time.  NK raised the issue of the use of electronic banking. This is currently restricted by the existing Constitution, which stipulates that two signatories are always required for financial transfers. This current restraint means that we rely solely on cheques at the present time and this is becoming increasingly outmoded and tortuous. After lengthy discussion it was agreed that the Constitution would be modified in due course to allow the use of electronic banking and that, pending this update, the Treasurer is authorised to effect electronic transfers of sums of less than one thousand pounds; the Treasurer is to present these transactions for verification and signature by another Officer/signatory at each committee meeting. For sums of one thousand pounds and more, the Treasurer will contact an Officer/signatory (by phone, face to face or by email) before any electronic transfer is made and seek agreement that such a transfer can be effected. Again, such transactions will be listed and signed off at the next committee meeting.  b) New investment fund  The Treasurer believes it important that we diversify our current investment holding and open a second fund. Having studied this issue at length, NK’s recommendation is that we should use the Charity Investment Fund (COIF), a well-known and respected fund approved by the Charity Commission. The proposal was agreed.  c) Financial performance of events  A review of event finances for the first half of the year is showing a very positive trend. The majority of events show a small net profit after all expenses are paid, with one or two events showing a major return, offsetting any minor losses.  d) Membership numbers  Overall membership numbers remain stable and positive. There is an uplift expected in June as a result of the advertisement placed in the Longborough Festival programme. (Further membership news in item 9 below)  e) Archive discussion  NK raised the subject of the Society’s own archive material (historical meeting minutes, financial accounts etc) and sought views on how best and where best they should be held. Whilst there were a variety of views on the importance or necessity of making historical Society material available to the membership at large, there was a consensus that such material should not be destroyed, irrespective of how held. On balance, it was felt that the existing on-line material (going back some years already) was sufficient and that it was not necessary to digitise further, older, material for uploading to the website. New material will continue to be added as and when available and older material will be held securely by the responsible Officers/committee members.  f) Mahler Society quiz night  NK asked if there was any interest in forming a team to compete in the Mahler Society quiz night, scheduled for September. There was considerable enthusiasm for this. NK was appointed Team Captain and charged with organising the Wagner Society Team.  **7. Events Report**  a) Elgar event: this had been a very good evening, although poor weather on the night had contributed to a disappointing turnout. It was recognised that we had not taken advantage of advertising the event through the Elgar Society - a lesson for future events.  b) New 2019/20 Events schedule  HK detailed the events schedule which would commence in September. The breadth and scope of the proposed schedule was warmly received by the committee and HK congratulated on an outstanding events list. Summary events list:  List  From  HK  To  Be  Added  Here  c) Young lecturer prize  It was agreed that prize money totalling £500 would be made available to the winner(s) of this inaugural competition. Two speakers would be appointed (by committee decision) and would speak on the night.  d) New recital possibility  HK was looking at the possibility of staging a recital for past winners of the Singing Competition and would revert with further plans in due course.  e) 2020 Goodall Award  RG reported that he had found an email address and that RM had been in touch with Norman Bailey. Mr Bailey, subject to date, would be willing to come to the UK to accept an award from the Society. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that Mr Bailey would be given the Goodall Award and a date should be set for the event. As we will be showing the Goodall film on the 10th March, a date of 17th-19th March will be offered to Mr Bailey. RG will coordinate. In the event that this annual dinner might fall short in terms of attendees and thus revenue, RG undertook to underwrite the cost to break-even.  **8. Wagner News Report** - next edition will be printed first week of July.  **9. Membership Drive**  MH and AR will meet next week to discuss and expect to launch the initiative in the Autumn.  **10. Archive & Library**  Little new to report. AR will continue in the Rose Bruford liaison role, in the hope that they will take the remaining items from the printed library.  **11. Social Media & Marketing** - no report submitted  **12. Singing Competition**  Applications are now arriving and are being processed. Advanced ticket sales for the Wigmore Hall are going well.  **13. Website** - nothing to report this month  **14. Constitutional Review** - nothing to report this month  **15. A O B**  a) A past winner of the Singing Competition - who no longer lives in the UK -asked whether we would wish to stage a recital for him. The offer was declined.  b) HK advised that the library at the Royal Academy did not have copies of Wagner News. NK will take care of this.  c) Committee roles: will be placed on Facebook once agreed and volunteers from the membership sought for vacant roles.  d) Grimeborn: a Society advertisement will be placed in the 2019 festival programme and a supporting donation of £500 will be made.  e) Promoting Wagner in schools: following a detailed discussion, in which various options and the desirability - or otherwise - of the Society undertaking such an educational programme, HK will discuss Polly Graham’s experiences at Longborough and report back further.  f) Wagner Journal - Wagner plaque  Barry Millington is keen to have a Wagner plaque erected at one of Wagner’s London residencies. Without knowing the details, or the cost implications at present, it was agreed we would assist if we can.  g) IP queried whether she is the main contact for the Bursary students, regarding details of the upcoming visit to Bayreuth. It was confirmed that she is. NK will cover any financial arrangements and also provide airline tickets if needed/possible. | **Action**  **AR**  **AR**  **NK**  **AS**  **AS**  **AS**  **All**  **AS**  **RM**  **NK**  **NK (RM, AS)**  **NK**  **NK**  **NK**  **HK**  **HK**  **RG**  **AR**  **MH/AR**  **AR**  **NK**  **AR**  **NK**  **HK**  **IP** |