



**Minutes of the Wagner Society Committee Meeting
held on July 10th 2019
at 15 Gibson Square, London, N1 0RD**

In attendance: Tom Brown (TB)
Ray Godson (RG)
Henry Kennedy (HK) Events
Neil King (NK) Treasurer, Membership and Ticket Secretary
Isabella Pitman (IP)
Alan Ridgewell (AR) Editor Wagner News
Anthony Spooner (AS) Secretary

Action

- 1. Apologies for Absence** - received from Richard Miles and Meli Hatzihyrisidis
- 2. Minutes of the Last Meeting** - agreed
- 3. Matter Arising** - taken within the meeting
- 4. Chairman's Report**

In the absence of the Chairman, NK assumed the Chair, and stated that the Officers had now formally received RM's resignation from the position of Chairman of the Wagner Society. RM's current work commitments are such that he feels he can no longer give the Society the attention it needs and deserves and that he must now stand down. RM's contribution over the last few years was fully recognised and praised by the committee.

NK sought views on a replacement for RM, suggesting that a new Chairman ought, ideally, to come from within the existing committee complement. Following a full round-table discussion, AR emerged as the candidate the entire committee felt should be appointed to the position (a decision supported by the views obtained, in advance, by NK from the two absentee committee members). On a show of hands, AR was confirmed unanimously as the Chairman of the Wagner Society, to serve in this position until a formal members' confirmation can be made at the 2020 AGM.

RM had stated that he would be very happy to remain on the Committee if required. Again, on a unanimous show of hands, this was agreed by the Committee.

AR assumed the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

5. Secretary's Report

a) Ballot: AS confirmed that the Bayreuth ballot was now almost complete, with just a couple of outstanding security "personalisation" issues yet to be completed. He did not foresee any problems with these, and mentioned that a number of positive "thank you" communications had been received from members. Given the increased security position at Bayreuth, however, it was recognised that stronger Society wording would be necessary from 2020 onwards as we offer Festival tickets to the membership. Members applying for tickets would absolutely be expected to attend themselves.

AS

It was recognised that the allocation of two *gratis* tickets to students this year - i.e. tickets paid for by the Society - had been greatly appreciated, and a debate followed regarding the number of students tickets that should thus be assigned in 2020. No decision on numbers was made at this meeting, but further discussion would be held ahead of the 2020 budget process and, specifically, at the September committee meeting.

All

b) Review of Committee job descriptions: taken within point 9. below.

6. Treasurer's Report

a) Accounts: the up-to-date position is available on the website and NK reported that we are currently showing a small deficit against budget of £2k. The Treasurer confirmed this position was no cause for concern.

b) Membership: our membership numbers have recovered, as expected, to our start-of-year position. Following a discussion at the meeting regarding the annual appointment of Honorary Members, it was agreed that this topic would be discussed and resolved at the next committee meeting and that committee members would attend with considered views and prospective nominees.

All

7. Events Report

a) Goodall Award: it was unclear what progress had been made in securing Norman Bailey's attendance at the 2020 award. AR would follow up. As the Goodall film evening was scheduled for viewing on March 10th, the Goodall dinner would best be scheduled for the third or fourth week of April (see, also, point 14 below).

AR

b) Summer party: recognised as being a good initiative for the membership, no progress had been made regarding a possible Surrey-based location (discussed further within AOB point 17b).

c) 2019/2020 schedule: all relevant events and dates have been confirmed at Swedenborg Hall.

d) Eva Turner Memorial Lecture: Barry Millington is confirmed as the speaker and fees have been agreed.

e) Event confirmations: following issues experienced with a very small number of previous speakers, it was agreed that a "confirmatory email" should be sent to future speakers, to confirm the terms and conditions of these events. TB would suggest the wording for such a communication and send this on to HK.

TB

f) Christmas party: recognising the popularity and success of the Society's Christmas party (and NK's generosity in its hosting) it was agreed that the attendance level would be raised from 50 participants to 60 but with the price remaining the same.

g) Season ticket issues: it was clear that the offer of a discount to member(s) wishing to attend all of the Society's lectures for the year had not been a great success. However, it was also clear that our current purchasing and discounting website facilities are restricting us from properly offering and promoting our events. The need for on-line "basket" and "discount" facilities was recognised and AR will contact a known website expert to obtain a budget for ensuring the inclusion of these essential facilities for the future.

AR

h) Lecture prize: it was confirmed that the young persons' lecture prize would be called "The Wagner Society Lecture Prize"; the prize fund having been previously agreed.

i) Singing Competition Recital: the recital would be scheduled for May 2020, i.e. six months following the award of the Competition itself.

8. Wagner News

The July edition is currently with the printers and will be delivered to the membership before the end of the month. The next edition will feature, of course, 2019 Bayreuth Festival reports. While AR will provide substantial material for this edition, an article from a Wagner Society Bursary participant would be particularly welcome and AR will liaise with IP to enable this.

AR

AR/IP

9. Committee Role Descriptions

AS had previously circulated a draft of the job descriptions and had sought comment, and particular comments/suggestions had been received from NK. It was agreed that Charity Commission communication should be led by the Secretary but that the Marketing Coordination and Webmaster (Content) roles would remain separate.

AS

AS

A discussion regarding the need to promote more "younger members" ensued, and it was seen that this responsibility would be placed, ftb, beneath the Membership Secretary's role description.

AS

Whilst there was broad support for the job descriptions provided, it was also recognised that "in the real world" a flexible arrangement would be essential if the Committee was to continue to operate effectively. It was recognised that many of the current committee members undertook tasks and responsibilities way beyond their specific role descriptions and that this would have to continue in order that the committee might continue to operate effectively in the short-to-medium term.

Two specific roles, however, were clearly not covered by the experience base of the current committee: Webmaster (Technical) and Social Secretary. The need for members to step up to these roles, and to join the committee, would be advertised in due course and pursued assiduously.

AR

10. Membership Drive

AR and MH met recently to review the 6-12 month membership drive proposal prepared by MH, based on MH's previous experiences. AR was positive about the suggestions provided, which look to increase Society paid membership by 100-200 over the next 12 months, and will circulate MH's paper, and his own positive comments, shortly.

AR

11. Library & Archive

a) We have still yet to have a response from the Rose Bruford College regarding our proposals and AR will make contact to establish their current position.

AR

b) It was confirmed that the expression Wagner Society Property related to Wagner Society archive material specifically associated to the Society itself, i.e. Wagner Society minutes and associated papers, accounts, Wagner News editions etc and that this material should be held in a centralised location. He confirmed that none of this material would ever be destroyed but would be held in a centralised location.

RG

RG confirmed that he currently holds copies of all Wagner News editions since its inception and that he would deliver this material to NK shortly.

12. Social Media/Marketing Report

No report received.

MH

13. Singing Competition sub-committee

Ten competitors have registered to date and 130 tickets have already been sold for this Wigmore Hall event in November.

14. Goodall Award

AR

AR will contact Norman Bailey (NB) to confirm his acceptance of the award and his attendance at the event. It was suggested that NB might speak/be interviewed at some point on the night ahead of the award itself, and this was agreed as a fine idea, HK to follow up.

HK

15. Website Review

No report received.

16. Constitutional Review

No report received.

17. A O B

NK

a) Mahler Society Quiz Night: the committee confirmed it would be involved and that NK would be team captain; an advertisement has been placed within Wagner News.

HK

b) Summer Party 2020: agreed to be a fine initiative for the Society. HK will contact the ROSL and confirm our desire to book their garden for the event.

AR

c) Funding ideas: AR has a contact, currently engaged within the Handel Festival, with good experience in funding initiatives. He will make contact to see if we might benefit from this experience.

d) Rienzi 2020: it was noted that HK would be intimately involved with this upcoming production in 2020. This led to a general discussion on the desirability of the Society financially to support such events, and organisations such as The Mastersingers. Committee members were asked to finalise and form their views ahead of the September committee meeting in order that the committee's considered opinion might be incorporated within the 2020 Society budget.

All