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

**WEDNESDAY 18 September 2019,** **18.30 – 21:00**

15 Gibson Square, London N1 0RD

**ATTENDEES:**​

**Alan Ridgewell (Chair) (“AR”), Neil King (Treasurer) (“NGK”)**​, **Meli Hatzihrysidis (“MH”) Richard Miles (“RM”) Henry Kennedy (“HK”) (part)**

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.

**Item 1: Apologies for Absence –** received from Isabella Pitman (“IP”), Tom Brown (“TB”)

**Item 2. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 20 June 2018 –** agreed

**Item 3. Matters arising:** there was a discussion about appoint as Honorary Members Gwynne Howell and John Lundgren, both of whom had been, or would be useful to the Society

**Item 4. Chairman’s Report**

Committee changes since last meeting: Anthony Spooner & Ray Godson had previously given notice of their resignation from the Committee, on [ ] & [ ], respectively.

Secretaryship: in view of Anthony Spooner’s resignation from the Committee, RM agreed to stand in as acting Secretary on a temporary basis, on the understanding that a permanent successor will be sought: RM made it clear that he does not wish to be appointed as Secretary on a permanent basis.

AR reported that he had received a letter from Horst Eggers re changes in the Bayreuth ticket allocation process, aimed solving the problem of tickets needing to be personalised after allocation.

AR had also visited Wahnfried. Their archive comprises only books in German – they were glad to have books in English; they would also like a set of Wagner News. AR had had been invited as an observer to RWVI Meeting to introduce himself as the new Chairman.

**Item 5. Secretary’s Report -** none

**Item 6. Treasurers Report**

NK reported that the Accounts for July & August had been completed.  The fall in the value of the Society’s investments (which had been queried at the AGM) has reversed.

NK will circulate a draft budget to the Committee for consideration. This prompted a discussion about what the Society’s financial goals should be. Should we aim to break even on current revenue & expenditure in each year? Or should we aim to generate a surplus each year to add to our reserves? What kind of investments should be permitted from our reserves – e.g. development of the website? It was noted that our biggest single item of expenditure is Wagner News (accounting for a substantial % of membership income); Events over time have broadly broken even, but as we are more successful in attracting members to attend, they are generating a useful surplus which can be added to reserves or used for sponsorship.

Formal resolutions

1. to open a second investment fund. COIF CHARITIES INVESTMENT FUND
2. To remove Anthony Spooner from the Bank Mandate.

NK requested that the Chairman should write introduction to the Annual Report (by the end of the calendar year).

**Item 7. Events Officer’s report**

HK reported that all events have covered their costs, with minor exceptions.

**Item 8.**  **Annual Dinner & Goodall Award**

The dinner will be held on Thursday 19 March – precise format to be discussed. It was agreed that the finances of the dinner are unsustainable at the current cost of £95 per ticket, and this would need to be reviewed.

**Item 9.**  **Wagner News**

Latest (Bayreuth) edition should be ready to go to Press by 21 Sept. The cover will be ‘Gateau Chocolat’. Future copy dates to be advised.

**Item 10. Membership Report**

Membership has recovered from a low of 1130 in April to 1200 in August.

Ideas for a membership drive were discussed: MH will propose a strategy (advertising – magazines? programmes?). There was a debate over what our targets should be – the conclusion was between 50 & 100 new members.

GDPR: NK has finished circulating members - good response.

**Item 11**. **Archive & library Report**

Wahnfried would like a full set of Wagner News, if a second full set is available.

Society Archives are at 15Gibson Square- can we get someone to archive it properly using free software ?

NK reported that the recordings have largely been given away to members.

To be considered at a future meeting: what should the Society’s policy be in case of future bequests ?

**Item 12.**  **Social media/marketing report**

Wigmore Hall will allow us to post flyers in the foyer between now & the Singing Competition (these are in a standard [A5?] format). MH to compose bullet points.

**Item 13. Bayreuth / RWVI**

NK & AR will attend the Venice meeting in November & will vote on the new Chairman.

NK will produce our ‘annual report’ for RWVI by January: this should be very brief & include a list of forthcoming events.

Donation to Gesellschaft: NK to investigate what level of donation would be needed to get an ad. in the programme

It was reported that the bursary had been much appreciated by recent graduates – in contrast to some of the older winners, who already had limited time to enjoy it – some past winner had even failed to attend.

**Item 14.** **Singing Competition**

HK reported that there are currently 18 candidates [who have each paid £25?]. There is a meeting with Dame Anne Evans on Tuesday 25 September. 146 tickets sold so far.

**Item 15. Website Development**

AR to investigate options for simplifying the website & improving functionality with some former colleague, then bring forward alternatives for consideration at a future meeting.

**Item 16. Constitutional** **Review**

To be considered in due course by TB & NK: while some changes would be desirable, query whether this is an immediate priority?

**Item 17. Proposal by Mastersingers**

HK reported that he has been approached by Mastersingers to consider supporting a concert performance of Rienzi at St. John’s Smith Square: proposed share of sponsorship for the WS share would be c.£16k., or possibly more, in HK’s estimation. This was agreed to be beyond our financial capacity, and it was agreed that we would respond offering £2000.

**Item 18.**  **AOB**

Sam [?] from the Handel Festival to attend a future Committee meeting to discuss ideas on fundraising.

RWVI Singing Competition – could we consider hosting this in London in September 2021 instead of our own Singing Competition?

Honorary members: [it was agreed] that we should offer honorary membership to Gwynne Howell; John Lundgren; Stefan Vinke; Brindley Sherratt. [Was this in fact agreed, and should it be in the minutes before hon. membership is offered?]

**The meeting closed at 21.00**