

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH ON WEDNESDAY 30 May 2018

1. **Apologies for absence:** 20 apologies received. Members Present: 44.

2. **Minutes of the AGM of 24 May 2017**

These had been circulated before the meeting; after a proposal by Chris Robinson, seconded by Jerry Symonds, the Minutes of the AGM were approved and signed.

3. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. **Chairman's Review of the 2017/2018 season**

After giving out Health and Safety notices, **Chairman Chris Mapleton** welcomed members and guests to the 76th AGM – reminding guests that they would be unable to vote – telling everyone that after the AGM there would be a break for drinks and then everyone would move into the Church for the recital. Unfortunately the advertised guitarist had been detained in Australia as he had been unable to renew his visa in time; and once again Suzanne had come to the rescue.....

He told the meeting that he would speak mainly about the Committee, Treasurer Robert Thomson would report on the finances, and Suzanne Connor, our Artists' Liaison Officer will speak about next season's programme – however, no clips of next season's performers would be shown.

He announced that Suzanne's coup of booking Sheku Kanneh-Mason for the first concert (usually one of the least-well attended) had resulted in the largest concert audience the Society had ever hosted; he thanked her for all she does for the Society and members heartily endorsed this.

Chris said that just like every voluntary organisation, OCMS was finding it increasingly difficult to recruit new Committee members. Last year Glynis Kortright, Membership Secretary for more than 10 years retired, and the Society was very lucky to have Cherry Eddy available and volunteering to take on the role – which was a large learning curve for her, especially as both her and her husband have been unwell and the Society thanks her. This year we also lose Margaret Sale our Secretary and David Martland our Programme writer both after more than 10 years in these roles. He had a small gift to thank each of them. Fiona Martland, who has been helping with the Publicity Sub Committee, and Joanna Rand who has been a huge help with the manning of our tents at the various fairs we attended last year, as well as supporting our 'on the night' team are also leaving the Committee and we thank them.

He reported that people have come forward to cover the role of Secretary and the non-committee role of Programme writer. Other Committee stalwarts are continuing. The Chairman told the meeting that, having earlier announced that he would be standing down, he would continue for one last season; he urged members to consider joining the Committee, and maybe becoming Chairman. Another area needing urgent action is IT as David Kortright, who has been our Webmaster for more than 10 years, is now giving up this role.

This is not a Committee role and there is no necessity for society membership or musical knowledge. We need someone with knowledge of maintaining a Website and the ability to help the Society to use Social Media to better effect – perhaps a relation or friend....Chris thanked the remaining Committee members Robert Thomson, Suzanne Connor, Jane Muir (who has been covering part of the Membership Secretary role), Sara Fraser, Michael and Judith Woods and Cherry Eddy. He urged members to speak to him about filling the Committee vacancies.

Membership has remained steady last season 127 members, but the number of Patrons has fallen to 19 from 23. The Chairman said that following new Data Protection Regulation, the Society's Privacy Policy appears on the website and members will be asked to confirm that OCMS may continue to contact them. The Society will once again sign up for local shows to raise awareness of OCMS – Claygate Flower Show (14th July), West End Esher (25th August), and Cobham Heritage Day (8th September) – and he invited members to sign up to help.

It was with pleasure that he announced that OCMS will again receive sponsorship of £1000 for the second concert from Mark Liley of William Liley Financial Services Ltd who will be happy to speak with members at the concert.

A copy of the Chairman's Report is filed with these Minutes.

5. **Treasurer's Report on the accounts for the year to 31 March 2018**

The Income and Expenditure Account for the year end March 2018 was tabled, and a copy is filed with these Minutes together with the Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer Robert Thomson told members that these Accounts show an exceptional year with a surplus of £7,220. Once again the Society was indebted to Suzanne's expertise in assembling a series of attractive concerts by remarkable musicians.

At the start of the year the budget showed a surplus of just £112. Past experience has shown that the first concert usually suffers from low attendances as people take late summer holidays and that when the March concert coincides with a Claygate Music Festival extra tickets are sold. This year the first concert resulted in a record 234 tickets sold for **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** accompanied by his elder sister, while the March concert showed negligible benefit from coinciding with the Claygate Music Festival.

He went on to explain some of the expenses. The musicians' fees were about £1,000 less than the previous year. Suzanne had booked **Sheku** and his sister before their reputation had been established, the **Ensemble Mirage** had come from the Countess of Munster Trust at a reduced fee and **Daniel Lehardt** had come through the Young Concert Artists Trust also at a reduced fee.

Publicity focused on local summer fairs instead of print advertising – both outlets will be used this coming year. Pre-concert talks are net of retiring collections which met two-thirds of the cost.

He said that the Society had been wanting to introduce online payments but as our Constitution requires two signatures on payments and HSBC does not provide an online equivalent we had opened a current account with Barclays. This saves our suppliers from taking

OCMS cheques to their bank. The HSBC deposit account, paying interest of about 14p each quarter, has been closed by transfer to the HSBC current account. The Accumulated Fund represents two and a half year's normal expenditure by OCMS, which, given how far ahead Suzanne has to work to secure high quality musicians, as well as the unpredictable nature of our income from ticket sales, is a reasonable target. A fair indication of our normal expenditure is the budget for the year to March 2019 where the total expenditure will be £16,500. Musicians' fees are rising and larger groups are being engaged. October's concert includes a piano quintet, which will cost over £4,000, there are four members of the **Magnard Ensemble** and the season ends with the **Dover Quartet**.

He told members that, for the fourth year, the Committee is proposing no increases in the membership fee.

As Robert pointed out, the Accounts do not report on the wide range of voluntary support given by members - at concerts, the New Year's Party, looking after musicians, bringing visitors to concerts – all of which contributes to the smooth running of the Society. He thanked them and thanked Suzanne for her continuing success in providing us with a wide range of chamber music presented by very talented musicians, a distinguishing feature of this Society.

Answering questions from the floor, Robert said that the Scottish Widows Account was an interest only account and that, for the time being, the HSBC account would be kept as a reserve. At the moment, online members' payments will not be introduced as more detailed information is often required.

Treasurer Robert Thomson then proposed the adoption of the Accounts which was seconded by Helen Westcott and carried unanimously.

6. Subscriptions and Non-member Fees for the 2018/2019 Season

On behalf of the Committee, Robert Thomson proposed that the subscriptions, visitor tickets and Patrons' donations for the 2018/2019 season remain unchanged. Sue Robinson seconded the proposal and it was approved.

7. Election of Officers, Committee Members and Independent Examiner

The re-election of the current Officers and Committee members - Chris Mapleton, Suzanne Connor, Robert Thomson, Cherry Eddy, Sara Fraser, Jane Muir, Judith Woods, and Michael Woods - was proposed by Anita Wilkins, seconded by Dr Meacock and unanimously agreed. The election of new Committee member Anne Powell, Secretary, proposed by Chris Mapleton and seconded by Ken Hibberd, was approved, and the re-election of Tom Eddy as Independent Examiner, proposed by Mike Lambert and seconded by Ken Hibberd, was also approved.

8. Artists' Liaison Report and 2018/2019 Programme

Suzanne began by expressing her pleasure that, after some years of uncertainty, the Society's bank balance now showed a much more secure foundation, enabling her to spend more on planning future programmes without being anxious about a possible loss in one particular season. She announced that for the first time there would be two Celebrity Concerts, and that due to the surplus produced by the **Sheku** concert there was the opportunity for some new ideas.

The first of the Celebrity concerts, on **October 6**, featuring **Alexei Grynyuk** and the **Heath Quartet**, will be preceded by Roy Stratford's introduction to **Beethoven's String Quartet op.132** which will be performed by the brilliant **Heath Quartet**. **Alexei Grynyuk** will play some Liszt transcriptions before he joins the **Quartet** in the second major work of the evening, our first ever performance of **Schumann's Piano Quintet**. For the second concert on **November 10**, three members of the **Merlin Ensemble**, who also belong to the **Chamber Orchestra of Europe**, arrive from Vienna, with the unusual combination of Violin, French Horn and Piano. The programme will include **Beethoven's Sonata for Horn** and a **Brahms Violin Sonata**. The third concert, on **November 24**, supported by the **Tillett Trust**, will be given by the **Magnard Wind Ensemble** who have included pieces by **Barber, Danzi and Nielsen** in their programme. After Christmas, on **January 12**, there will be a baroque concert, given by **Spirito – 2 trumpets, strings and harpsichord** – they come highly recommended and include members of the **Academy of Ancient Music** and **The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment**. This season, on **February 23**, our Patrons' donations assist a young pianist, **Tyler Hay**, winner of the Liszt competition, and also the Royal Overseas League Piano Section Final. Finally, at our second Celebrity concert on **March 23**, the American **Dover Quartet** make a return visit. The Chicago Herald Tribune heralds them "as worthy successors of the **Guarneri Quartet**".

Suzanne told the meeting of her grave concerns about the dearth of young people attending our concerts and about the lack of school Music education, both instrumental and class music lessons, arising out of Government cutbacks. She spoke from her own experience as a teacher, being concerned that these cutbacks were letting young people down and that knowledge and enjoyment of classical music will die. She said that she would like to redress this in a small way locally – first, with Family and Children's concerts. The first fun concert will be in November, revolving round the **Magnard Wind Ensemble** and Roald Dahl's book "**Revoltin' Rhymes**" and should attract young people, aged 4 to 11 years, and the fun experience is something we can build on, enticing the young to come for a musical experience that gradually builds their knowledge, and perhaps their desire to make music. Recent educational research from the Boston Children's Hospital supports the view that problem-solving, processing and remembering information are more active in musically trained children. It may actually set up children for a better academic future, building up self-confidence, co-ordination and communication skills as well as the ability to be creative and to analyse. She wished this was better understood in this country and invited members to produce ideas to help raise awareness of this matter. Asked about possible contacts with schools, she said that although she had written to local schools, Head teachers as well as Heads of Music Departments, there was rarely any response. It was suggested that other organisations such as the Scouts and the Yehudi Menuhin School should be contacted and that a letter to the Daily Telegraph would highlight the matter.

After the AGM, members and guests enjoyed a delightful guitar recital given by Laura Snowden, who had been handpicked by Julian Bream to give a recital at the Wigmore Hall in 2015. She is the winner of many prizes and currently teaches at the Yehudi Menuhin School where guitar tuition was made possible by a donation from the Rolling Stones.