

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH ON THURSDAY 2 May 2019

1. **Apologies for absence:** 15 apologies received. Members present: 35. No non-members were present.

2. **Minutes of the AGM of 30 May 2018**

The minutes of the previous AGM had been circulated before the meeting; after a proposal by Cherry Eddy, seconded by Judith Woods, they were approved and signed.

3. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. **Chairman's Review of the 2018/2019 season**

Chairman Chris Mapleton welcomed members present to the 77th AGM

Chris said we had had another season of wonderful, quality music and at the final concert the Dover Quartet provided some of the finest chamber music he had ever heard.

With regard to the Committee, as he had said last year, it was becoming increasingly difficult to find new committee members – a problem faced by most voluntary organisations. The Committee would be very grateful to hear of anyone who might be willing to join them as they were still short of members. Meanwhile, they were delighted that James Stringer had come forward to cover the Programme Writer role and also joined the Committee. He was sure all would agree that James was doing a wonderful job and his programmes had been an excellent feature of the season. Members present heartily endorsed this. He warned that the programme price could not be kept the same in future, however, as costs had increased.

Chris was pleased to announce that James had also agreed to take on the Webmaster role, which had been vacant for a while. The remainder of the Committee were willing to continue but no-one had yet come forward to take over as Chairman. He announced that Suzanne had therefore offered to take on the role of Chairman for the time being and the Committee had agreed to share some of the extra work, as Suzanne would also continue in her role as Artists' Liaison Officer. The members present warmly applauded this. He then thanked the other Committee members, Robert Thomson, Cherry Eddy, Jane Muir, Sara Fraser, Judith and Michael Woods and Anne Powell, who were all continuing, and they were given a round of applause. Chris invited members to speak to him during the break if they had any thoughts regarding filling the vacancies.

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

The Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending March 2019 was tabled, and a copy is filed with these Minutes together with the Treasurer's Report.

Treasurer Robert Thomson reminded members that income in the previous season (2017/18) had been exceptional due to the record ticket income generated by Sheku Kanneh-Mason at the first concert (over £4,600). Costs had also been lower as young musicians for two concerts had been provided through trusts and there was less expenditure on publicity than previously while a new sub-committee was formed to investigate ways of increasing awareness of our concerts.

In the financial year to 31 March 2019, your Committee was willing to use some of the surplus brought forward to experiment. This included the children's concert organised in November, which had provided useful ideas for the future. Regular advertisements were trialled throughout the season in two local magazines (*Your Elmbridge* and *Look Local*). To test the response generated, one item included a prize quiz but, sadly, there were no entries. Ticket sales did not increase significantly, so expenditure on these advertisements would be halved for 2019/20. Meanwhile, the sub-committee had sourced an inexpensive printer of A5 flyers to advertise the final two concerts (which were handed out to members and local organisations) and would continue to use them. Presence at three local summer fairs (Claygate, Esher and Cobham), which was not expensive, would also continue. Finally, the deficit was only £2,170 with an adequate amount remaining in the bank.

The final balance with HSBC was transferred to our new account with Barclays last month (April 2019). A Premium Business Account had been opened with Barclays in order to earn a little more interest. Robert explained the reason for having these seemingly large balances: musicians for the year just begun (2019/20) had been booked already and Suzanne was also working on the 2020/21 season and beyond.

Robert added that the accounts did not show the wide range of voluntary assistance which members contribute to enable the smooth running of the Society and he thanked everyone for their support, which was given in so many different ways (including our Patrons), bringing visitors and looking after our musicians, as well as serving refreshments during concerts). The Society also welcomed offers of financial support and he was pleased to announce that one of our members had generously donated the cost of a piano for our December 2019 concert.

Answering a question from the floor as to why we had made a loss on refreshments, Robert said there had been fairly low attendance this year, including among members. However, we had saved on the cost of professional musicians at this AGM, as Edward Howard and Chris, our retiring Chairman, were performing a skit based on Sherlock Holmes as our entertainment after the meeting.

Margaret Sale proposed the accounts be adopted, which was seconded by Mike Lambert and carried.

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

On behalf of the Committee, Treasurer Robert Thomson proposed a small increase of £5 in subscription fees to £85 (£80 if paid by 1 September) for the 2018/2019 season. Guest fees would remain at £20 (and £22 for celebrity concerts), which was already quite high for the area. He reminded members that the rates had remained static for three years; membership numbers were declining, so more income was needed to be able to provide such excellent programmes. Ray Smith felt the fees were very expensive for pensioners, and

a number of others present agreed. Joanna Rand queried the need for an increase when the Society's bank balance was so high. Chris reminded members that Suzanne required approximately two years' artists' fees in the bank to be able to confirm bookings, although he sympathised with the dilemma of those on pensions. Judith Wood pointed out that we were providing top London concert-hall quality without the need for travel and at lower prices. Edward Howard asked if we might consider payment in two instalments and Chris said the Committee could review this. Mike Lambert said fees were "fantastic value" given the quality of music, which he believed most people did not want to see reduced.

The proposal was seconded by Mike Lambert and approved. The Treasurer further proposed that Patrons' fees (which had not increased for some years) be increased by £5 to £50 (individual) and £80 (joint). This was seconded by Pat Smith and approved.

7. Artists' Liaison Report and 2019/20 Programme

Suzanne thanked everyone who had helped over the past season. She was proud that the Society went beyond the basic requirements when looking after performers and felt that the exceptional kindness we showed, such as offering drinks, meals, lifts (even on occasion to the Wigmore Hall for a concert the following morning) and accommodation, was very much appreciated. Volunteers should not underestimate the value of the smallest job they did for the Society. People were not always aware of what might have preceded the artists' arrival, and she cited the example of a musician from Poland a few years ago whose plane had been diverted twice because of snow and who arrived at 7pm, just before his concert; he was so grateful to find a hot meal awaiting him. Reviewing the past year, Suzanne explained that she tried each year to provide a season of music above the norm, but had not expected the "stratospheric" effect of the Dover Quartet's performance in the final concert in Claygate, which was world-class, exciting and moving; she wished London critics could have been there. She praised the excellent acoustics of Holy Trinity Church, one of the assets of our venue, which had noticeably enhanced the clarity of individual instruments on that occasion, and urged members to tell their friends about our excellent concerts. We had had a superb season over seven months, which included: the Heath Quartet, playing the giant Beethoven Opus 131 and the wonderful Schumann Piano Quintet with Andrei Grynyuk; the Merlin Ensemble from Vienna; the exciting children's concert, based on poems by Roald Dahl, and the wind ensemble music, both by the Magnard Ensemble; the New Year Baroque concert featuring two early trumpets – an unexpected delight for some; then Tyler Hay performing a new programme including a Schubert piano sonata for the first time, which pleased many people, and ending with the superb Dover Quartet.

Suzanne urged members to help publicise our concerts next season and encourage new members to join (especially younger people) to help us keep our society going. The new season's brochures would be available in July and she asked members to take them to their GP and dental surgeries, local societies, clubs, shops and friends, and even further afield as people would travel for good music. She explained that tickets sold on the night helped to defray our additional costs beyond the artists' fees (eg hall hire, piano, publicity) and pointed out that fees were the same for all promoters. Membership was very good value even if one or two concerts were missed. The next season revolves around ensembles of various sizes and some of the most wonderful music in the repertoire, including modern pieces and compositions we have not had before, especially for piano. Suzanne also expressed thanks to member Celia Wannan for her generous piano sponsorship. She outlined the new season's programme, which is summarised as follows.

19 October – (Patrons' Concert) Pixel Ensemble 360 piano quartet: Schumann, Brahms and Mozart.

9 November – Trio Con Brio (Denmark): Haydn, Arensky and Beethoven's Archduke Piano Trio. (Accommodation is needed.)

7 December – (Celebrity Concert) Eric Lu: Schumann's Ghost Variations, Brahms Op. 118, Chopin's 24 Preludes. Sensational young American and winner of the 2018 Leeds International Piano Competition. (A suggested Christmas-gift idea for friends and family.)

25 January – Ensemble Mirage: clarinet quintets by Mozart and Brahms, Glazounov's Oriental Reverie, Penderecki.

22 February – (Celebrity Concert) Wihan String Quartet (Czech Republic): Smetana, Borodin, Dvořák. Prestigious prize winners and long overdue for us. (Accommodation is needed.)

28 March – Castalian Quartet: Haydn - String Quartet in F, Op. 77, No 2, Janacek - String Quartet No. 1 in E minor, "Kreutzer Sonata", and Brahms - String Quintet No. 1 in F, Op. 88, with American viola player Hannah Shaw.

Chris congratulated Suzanne on her programme and all present gave her a warm round of applause.

8. Election of Officers, Committee Members and Independent Examiner

The election of new Committee member James Stringer was proposed by Chris Mapleton, seconded by Cherry Eddy and unanimously approved. Chris also announced that Tom Eddy was stepping down as Independent Examiner and that we were lucky to have Edward Howard to replace him. Edward was then proposed by Tom Eddy, seconded by Michael Lambert and unanimously approved. Chris thanked Tom for his help to the Society over the past few years and presented him with gifts on the Society's behalf.

9. Any Other Business

It was mentioned that the New Year Party (a fundraising event for the Society) was under review. We will also try a summer event, but need to find something people will like at no extra cost. There are tentative plans for a daytime coffee or tea event featuring James Stringer and a musician friend, and members were asked for other ideas.

Suzanne then thanked Chris for his 14 years' service since becoming Chairman, and previously as a Committee Member. She said we had been lucky to have him, and the success of the Society was due to his steering it so well and all his work for us. We owed Chris a huge vote of thanks and would mark his retirement with all the members at our first concert on 19 October. There was warm applause. Chris said he had enjoyed his time – and particularly the "lunch-club" aspect, which he had encouraged. He thanked all Society Members and Committee Members, past and present, who had made the Society what it was today and ensured that we survived when many local societies did not. He was happy to remain on the Committee as an ordinary member. There was a further round of applause.

After the meeting, members enjoyed refreshments and an amusing skit based on Sherlock Holmes, performed by Edward and Chris.