

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH ON WEDNESDAY 30 April 2014

1. **Apologies for absence:** 28 apologies received. Members Present: 38
2. **Minutes of the AGM of 22 May 2013:** These had been circulated before the meeting; after a proposal by Tom Eddy, seconded by Fiona Martland, they were approved and signed.
3. **Matters arising:** There were no Matters arising.
4. **Chairman's Review of the 2013/2014 season:** After welcoming members, the Chairman reminded those present that last year he had spoken about recruiting new Committee members in order to ensure the future of the Society. Two new members joined the Committee (Isobel Cooke and Cherry Eddy) – however two members left the Committee (Pamela Hamilton and Anne Robinson) – meaning that new Committee members are still needed! In his experience, apart from lack of finance, one of the problems in ensuring the survival of small companies was the failure to deal with succession, and he believes that this is part of his job as Chairman. At a recent Committee meeting it had been suggested that each Committee member should approach a member and try to persuade them to join the Committee. The result to date has been a nil return. He urged that if members should be approached that they think positively – administrative ability coupled with mobility (the 5 or 6 meetings a year, lasting about an hour and a half, are held at members' houses), not musical knowledge, are what is needed!
He reported that OCMS had had another excellent season, starting with cellist Laura van der Heijden and ending with pianist Benjamin Grosvenor in March. Lucy Hall (soprano) gave us a dash of variety, and the Heath and Doric Quartets maintained the Society's quality chamber music reputation – with members particularly enjoying the Doric's Korngold after hearing about the piece from one of the performers. Our New Year Party was enhanced with Maiestra's performance beforehand, and made a good contribution to our funds. He thanked all the Committee and all members for their support and urged members to encourage friends and relations to 'taste our product'. A full copy of the Chairman's report is filed with these Minutes.
5. **Amendment to the Constitution:** In recent years the Accounts have been examined, not professionally audited, by an independent examiner. Nowadays a professionally qualified auditor is only required when the annual gross income exceeds £250,000, with the fees charged being substantial and likely to be prohibitive for a small organisation. Therefore Treasurer, Robert Thomson, proposed that **Article 8** of the Constitution should be amended to read "There shall be an annual examination of the Report and Accounts by a suitably qualified independent examiner, nominated by the Committee and elected by Members at the Annual General Meeting." The proposal was seconded by Chris Robinson and carried unanimously.
6. **Treasurer's Report on the accounts for the year to 31 March 2014:** The Income and Expenditure Account for the year end March 2014 was tabled, and a copy is filed with these Minutes together with a copy of the Treasurer's Report.
The Treasurer told members that it was a pleasure to be presenting the Society's accounts for the year to 31st March 2014. These show a surplus of £7,821. There are two significant sources of the increase in the surplus compared with last year. Suzanne has been even more successful in securing grants, which totalled £2,377 this year compared with £1,700 last year. The second source is the Benjamin Grosvenor concert last month, which coincided with the biennial Claygate Music Festival. The usual pattern is that we rebuild our reserves in these years in case there is a deficit in the following year. This year there was a record attendance at that concert – 208 visitors compared with 132 visitors for Simon Trpčeski. The ticket sales for the whole year, £6,170, were over £4,000 more than last year. Robert pointed out some minor changes. All this year's artists were UK based resulting in lower travel costs. The Claygate Music Festival gives OCMS free use of the church for the Celebrity concert, which reduced the hall hire charge – we donated the £220 saving to the Festival organisation. Postage looks expensive; our Secretary made a bulk purchase just before a price increase took place. The cost of the pre-concert talks was covered by a grant and members' donations with the result that the talks involved no cost for the general membership. The voluntary income which members contribute, whether as patrons, donors, buying programmes and refreshments or attending the New Year's Party, came to over £3,000 this year, which helps in keeping the subscription rate down. He thanked members for their support. This is only the second surplus year since 2009; the three consecutive deficits from 2010 to 2012 totalled £5,639. Contracts for next season's artists, booked a year ahead, are already in place with a cost exceeding £8,000 – an increase of nearly 10% - and Suzanne is already developing ideas for the year after that. Therefore reserves of two years' expenditure are appropriate. Finally, he said that this Report would be incomplete without thanking Suzanne for her continuing success in securing grants amounting to over £2,000. This was the result of catching the Elmbridge Mayor's eye, ingenuity, a lot of hard work, and especially in arranging, as always, a varied and interesting series of concerts by remarkable musicians.
There were no questions and Robert proposed the adoption of the Accounts, seconded by David Martland and the proposal was carried unanimously. The Chairman thanked Robert and Tom Eddy, the Independent Examiner, for producing the Accounts and Report so promptly after 31st March in readiness for an April AGM.
7. **Subscriptions and Non-Member Fees for the 2014/2015 Season:** The Committee proposes that:
 - i) The Membership subscription is increased, by just 4.8%, to £66 if paid by 1st September 2014, and £68 if paid after that date.
 - ii) Visitor ticket prices for both ordinary and celebrity concerts remain unchanged at £16 and £18 respectively.
 - iii) The minimum donation for Patrons remains at £45 for a single individual and £75 for a husband and wife.Even though this had been a good year, the Treasurer asked whether this was repeatable. He reminded members that as the Claygate Music Festival takes place in alternate years there is a two year cycle which means that when the Celebrity Concert comes at the end of the Festival we often have a very large number of visitors for that concert. That increases the Society's reserves for the following year. This year there were over 200 visitors – a record for a Celebrity Concert. Last year, a non-Festival year, the figure was 35. Our greatest expense is artists' fees. Next season the Society is already contractually committed to fees which are 9.9% higher than this season mainly for younger, less established musicians. Grants are another area of uncertainty. Thanks to Suzanne's skills we were fortunate to receive

some substantial grants in the last two years, but these tend to be for one year only. The Accounts show that in 2012/2013 the membership fees only covered 79% of the costs excluding pre-concert talks. For the latest year, subscriptions only met 72% of the costs. The rest being subsidised from other income, which is not predictable. The proposed increase of 4.8% will result in the subscription becoming an even smaller proportion of concert costs. We also know from recent experience that to have no increase then a large increase the next year is disliked by members. For these reasons, your Committee is proposing a small increase in the subscription, which still represents extraordinarily good value for the high quality of music experienced by members, without the costs and effort of travelling up to London! Following David Candlin's suggestion that the cost of tickets for the celebrity concert should be raised to £20, members were told that the Committee will be reviewing this price in the next Festival year 2016.

On behalf of the Committee, Robert Thomson proposed that the subscriptions, visitor ticket prices and patrons' donations for the 2014/2015 season be adopted; Anthony Killikelly seconded the proposal and the proposal was approved.

8. Artists' Liaison Report and 2014/2015 Programme: Suzanne began by thanking everyone who had contributed to making last season such a success, from the member who has undertaken to open and close the door into the church for the artists as they enter and leave to the two members and our non-member from Northumberland who contributed a large sum to start up a fund to support talks before concerts which meant that we were immediately able engage speakers. Although there was a difficulty at our final concert, the talks generally proved very informative and were appreciated.

She reminded members that following money constraints and a decline in the membership there had been a real need to rebuild the Society's funds. Apart from asking the R.C. Sherriff Trust to underwrite a concert, we have never had input from other Charities and have paid our way through fund-raising and subscriptions. Last year the decision was taken to offer a **once only** special subscription for new members. OCMS was also successful in persuading the Humphrey Richardson Taylor Charity to support our season as well as the Mayor of Elmbridge, who offered to help with our publicity, and the Elmbridge Leisure services who supported the pre-concert talks.

Last season had a wonderful start with the 2012 BBC Young Musician Laura van der Heijden and culminated in the performance of Benjamin Grosvenor our Celebrity performer at the Claygate Music Festival.

The 2014/2015 season will feature a number of rising stars, people who have won important competitions, and who she is confident will be really appreciated. The season opens on 4th October with a special piano recital given by the young Ukrainian/British pianist Alexei Grynyuk. Members may have heard him as the pianist of Nicola Benedetti's Piano Trio. He began concert-giving as a six year old prodigy, performing concertos with the Ukrainian Symphony Orchestra, before winning First Prize in the Sergei Diaghilev All Soviet Union Competition in Moscow at the age of thirteen. He already has a considerable record of prestigious performances, and Suzanne recommended members to cancel all other plans for that night in order to attend this concert! The second concert on 1st November will feature the flautist Katherine Bryan who on graduating from the Juilliard School at age 21 years was appointed to her first and only job as Principal Flute of the Scottish National Orchestra. She has now decided to concentrate on building her career as a soloist. Her programme will feature two of the most exciting and popular flute compositions of the twentieth century. The third concert on 29th November will be given by the Cavaleri String Quartet; in 2012 they won First Prize at the Hamburg International Chamber Music Competition, as well as the Brahms and Mendelssohn Prizes offered on that occasion. Winning competitions plays a great part in showing the worth of musicians and also helps to make their names known. This Quartet is about to take part in the Osaka International Chamber Music Competition in Japan. All the concerts for the season will contain a work by a Russian composer with Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Prokofiev's *Flute Sonata* and Shostakovich's *Quartet No.8* in the first three concerts.

Preceding the Party on 10th January 2015 the early evening concert will be given by the advanced students of the Royal Academy, playing in the unusual combination of 2 violins, 2 violas and 2 cellos. The Russian content will be Tchaikovsky's *Opus 70 Souvenir de Florence*. On 28th February the Celebrity Ensemble will be the Fibonacci Sequence who are noted for their inventive and varied programming of music including unusual combinations of instruments. The Russian contribution will be some rarely performed music by Gliere, *8 pieces for violin and cello*. The final concert on 28th March will be a return visit of Kammerphilharmonie, the orchestra which caused such a stir in 2013. Comprising 17 nationalities 7 of whom were Russian – Suzanne has yet to receive the full programme but has been assured that the Russian theme will be featured.

9. Election of Officers, Committee Members and Independent Examiner: The re-election of current Officers and Committee members was proposed by Tom Eddy and seconded by Tom Connor and was unanimously agreed. The election of Cherry Eddy to the Committee, proposed by Bronia Snow and seconded by Margaret Sale, was approved, and the re-election of Tom Eddy as Independent Examiner, proposed by Fiona Martland and seconded by Ray Blues, was also approved.

10. Any other Business: Bronia Snow asked whether the Society should make more of the opportunity to engage musicians from the Yehudi Menuhin School. Suzanne Connor said that at the last performance of the school orchestra it had been difficult to obtain details in advance, but she did not rule out future appearances.

David Martland asked whether the difficulty with the piano apparently experienced by Benjamin Grosvenor at the celebrity concert had been explained. In spite of writing to his agent 3 times, Suzanne has still not had a reply; she said that as difficulties seemed to be associated with Steinway instruments she assured members that Fazioli pianos had been reserved for next season!

Fiona Martland said that she had met visitors at the Celebrity Concert who had been interested in joining OCMS and she suggested that application forms should have been available and that offering 2 year subscriptions, at a slight discount, might prove popular. She also asked whether the time had come for all mailing to be electronic. The Chairman said that although the Society does currently send information to members for whom email addresses are held, some mail is returned as the addresses have not been updated, and there is a significant number of members who do not use the internet.

Mrs Meacock proposed a vote of thanks to Suzanne and this was heartily endorsed by all present.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.55 pm and the Chairman invited members to join the Committee for a drink.