

## *Amersham Festival Society*

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2019**

**Held on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October at St Mary's Church Rooms, Old Amersham**

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Mrs Whaley, Mr Jones, Mr and Mrs Bradbury, Mrs McInnes, Mrs Cameron, Mrs Burkhardt and Mrs Walley. Iain had offered to attend the meeting but it was agreed that in view of the meeting being immediately followed by the first Winter Series concert and having had a full day of rehearsal, he should be excused.

#### **2. Minutes of the 2018 AGM (previously circulated)**

The minutes were accepted as correct and signed as an accurate record. Mr Wallis proposed that the minutes be adopted and this was seconded by Mr Burgess.

#### **3. Matters arising not on the agenda**

There were no matters arising.

#### **4. Chairman's Annual Report (previously circulated)**

Jane Partridge invited questions from the Friends but there were none. Mrs Weiss proposed that the report be accepted and this was seconded by Lady Howe.

#### **5. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts to June 30th 2019 (previously circulated)**

Jonathan Pegler thanked Richard Bolton, our independent examiner for his hard work. Lady Howe proposed that the report be accepted and this was seconded by Mrs Weiss.

#### **6. Artistic Director's Report (previously circulated)**

Jane Partridge said that Iain Ledingham is very much looking forward to next year's Festival and he is very excited about planning for the opera, *Così fan Tutte* which will be fully-staged. Mr Bolton proposed that the report be accepted and this was seconded by Mrs Gill.

#### **7. Friends' Activities and Bursary Report (previously circulated)**

Gill Walley (the Friends' secretary) is very keen to expand the number of Friends. The bursary scheme is going very well and a record number (15) of bursaries were awarded this year. We invite bursary recipients to attend concerts and tickets are also given to their parents. The scheme began in 2004 and over that time we have supported over 90 youngsters and approximately £20,000 has been distributed.

Mrs Vickers proposed that the reports be accepted and this was seconded by Mr Bowler.

#### **8. Election of Officers and Committee for 2018/2019**

Jane reminded the Friends that with our new constitution, we have to re-elect two of our six trustees (one third) each year. This is done in the order in which they took on the role and this year is the turn of Jane Partridge and Jonathan Pegler. Miss Sado proposed that they be re-elected and this was seconded by Mrs Brooke.

#### **9. Discussion and questions from the floor**

Miss Sado asked if the committee had thought about having a group booking rate for the opera. The U3A in Amersham and Beaconsfield both have opera appreciation groups and a group rate (of 10-15) might be a good way to attract the audience. This idea will be discussed in a future committee meeting.

Lady Howe asked whether anyone, other than the Festival Treasurer, had access to the bank passwords and other security information. Jonathan replied that both our investment accounts and bank accounts have three signatories on them and for most transactions two people are

required. Three people have online access.

Mr Purssell questioned whether the meeting should begin at 7.15 rather than 7.00. Jonathan replied that it was due to practical reasons as those on Box Office duty have to be on the door by 7.30. He said that this suggestion would be discussed at the forthcoming committee meeting. Mr Bowler suggested having a glass of wine before the concert.

#### **10. Any other business**

James Torr warmly thanked the committee for their hard work. He proposed a vote of thanks and the Friends gave a round of applause.

Hilary Thomas feels that the Festival doesn't market itself efficiently and would welcome feedback from the Friends as to how we could get more effective marketing. She was disappointed to find that the Record Shop had not sold any tickets for this concert. Mrs Weiss had noticed that emailed newsletters used to have an advertisement for the Festival but that there hadn't been anything recently. Jane Partridge explained that we are short of manpower for marketing and publicity, which she appreciates is very serious. We are indebted to Monica Sado for distributing boxes of leaflets to many locations as well as to members of the South Bucks Choral Society who kindly help with distribution. Jane also said that far fewer people read local papers and an advertisement in one of these costs £500 so is not financially worthwhile. The committee is very aware that increasing our publicity is an issue and we do try and keep the website up to date. The Festival did feature at the joint stall with other music societies at Amersham Heritage day.

Monica Sado suggested getting brochures out much earlier, as other music societies do. Jane Partridge explained that other societies only have one season per year whereas the Festival has the Winter Series to compile and then in January we have to send out the programme for April.

Linda Weiss volunteered to take on the role of sending out the material for the email newsletter. She suggested that the general dates of the following year's Festival could be advertised in advance on the website. Jane explained that some of the dates are only now being confirmed – for example one of the artists has only just replied. Mrs Secoy suggested putting 'tbc' on the website if a date was unconfirmed and Linda Weiss thought that the dates should be made available in September for the following April Festival. Jane explained that is a great idea and we will do our best, but practically it is impossible to get the committee together during July and August as many people are away. The matter will be discussed at a future committee meeting. Judy Gill suggested advertising in church magazines. Tony Burkhardt said that marketing had changed significantly in recent years, with the internet becoming extremely important. He said that there is a lot of competition with other musical events in the area and agreed that it is very important to get our information out via the internet, including Facebook. We also need to attract younger audience members which is a difficult thing to do. Lady Howe said that other festivals that she has been involved in have been governed by the availability of the venue and have had to set their dates a year in advance. The artists are not given any choice and if the artist is not available the date is offered to someone else.

The meeting closed at 7.28.