

Amersham Festival Society
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2020
Meeting held on Zoom on Thursday 5th November at 8.00 pm

1. Quorum and apologies for absence

Jane Partridge thanked all the Friends who had logged on to attend the Zoom AGM. Members of the Society had logged in to the meeting from some 25 separate places, and the meeting was therefore quorate. Apologies were received from Mrs Basden, Mrs Baldwin and Mrs Weiss.

2. Minutes of the 2019 AGM (previously circulated by email link)

The minutes were accepted as correct and signed as an accurate record. Mr Bowler proposed that the minutes be adopted. This was seconded by Mrs Wallis and confirmed by a show of hands.

3. Matters arising not on the agenda

Jane is very grateful to Lesley Mathieson who offered to help with advertising following the 2019 AGM. She and Jane met with Katie Noakes who is a professional social media expert and we embarked on a whole programme of social media posts. However, due to the current crisis we were not able to get the full impact of this. We were able to obtain statistics and these showed that we had reached far more people and some of whom we hadn't reached before. There were no other matters arising.

4. Chairman's Annual Report (previously circulated by email link)

Jane Partridge invited questions from the Friends but there were none.

**5. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts to June 30th 2020
(previously circulated by email link)**

Jonathan Pegler thanked the Friends who had donated when the pandemic hit us. This allowed us to make a little over £12,000 advance payments to our community of musicians, against future performances.

The investments have increased by around £1,000 since the accounts dated 30th June 2020. We still have a little over £48,000 in the bank to add to our investments of £69,000 and we have the benefit still to come, of the advance payments we have made. We have a little over £120,000 of reserves and assets. Essentially most of our costs are either concert based or relate to promoting the Festival. This year all that has happened so far is that we have received the Friends' subscriptions, some generous donations and we have paid out our bursary amounts. He invited the Friends to submit any questions on Zoom 'chat'.

Jonathan thanked Richard Bolton who has been very helpful and has agreed to be re-appointed as our Independent Examiner. He was proposed by Jane Partridge and seconded by Jonathan Pegler. A show of hands confirmed his re-election. Mrs Hudgell proposed that the accounts be adopted and this was seconded by Mrs McInnes. There was a show of hands to confirm this. Jane invited questions from the floor but there were none.

6. Artistic Director's Report (previously circulated by email link)

Iain Ledingham thanked the committee and many other helpers for their hard work during the year. He considers himself to be very fortunate to have such wonderful support from so many people. He thanked the Friends for the support they gave to the concerts that we were able to have and for their donations. He said that the musicians were very appreciative of the financial support they had received with advanced payments. The musicians are very eager to get going again with future concerts. Before it is possible to return to live concerts there are plans to hold on-line concerts in March/April 2021 which can be offered to Friends and others who are interested in the Festival. A song recital, another organ spectacular with soloists and possibly one or two other projects. This is the best way to keep concerts going in a small

way. Mr Bowler asked whether it would be possible have piano and string chamber music concert in St Mary's. Iain asked him whether he envisaged a live or recorded event and Graham said that it could be either live or recorded, uploaded and then made available with restricted access. Iain thanked him and thought it was a good idea. Iain explained that initially we are going to try with one or two events to evaluate the response.

Mrs Secoy asked if there would be a charge for on-line concerts and Jane Partridge said there would be. Jane said that we have recently made contact with the person who recorded the recent Wooburn Singers' concert and he is prepared to record concerts for us. We have been investigating how much capacity we would need to have a live audience, what the Covid secure arrangements would be and whether it would be financially viable. At this point we cannot plan a live April Festival and by now our publicity would normally be at the printers and we would be getting ready to send it out after Christmas. Additionally, not all of the venues are available. Therefore we have decided to plan for 2 or 3 concerts in March and April, to sit where our normal Festival would be and to make these available on-line. We will aim for the charge to cover most of the costs and musicians' fees. The concerts will be properly filmed with high quality sound and several cameras. If things change between now and then we can react with some notice. The publicity or any updates regarding concerts will be via email in the normal way, organised by Jon Wallis.

7. Friends' Activities and Bursary Report (previously circulated by email link)

Steve Wilcock (Bursary Co-ordinator) was unable to attend the meeting. A team of three committee members met to consider the awards before sending the information to the rest of the committee. Jane held up a delightful thank you note from one of the bursary recipients who had attended two of our concerts. Due to the financial situation the bursary scheme has been more important than ever. Miss Sado asked if it would be possible to have more information about the recipients. Jane said that due to data protection we are unable to give the names. However, most of the money requested was for instrument tuition and for some children the request was to put the money towards the purchase of a new instrument. There is a wide range of instruments represented as mentioned in the report and ages ranged from 8 to 17 years. Some of the older recipients are at the top grades and the younger ones range from grades 2-4. They all have to have a supporting letter from their teacher. We don't always hear of their progress once they have left the scheme but this could be an area to develop in the future.

Unfortunately this year there hadn't been the opportunity to hold Friends' receptions and talk with the Friends. Jane said that our supportive Friends are what give the Festival its character and some of them have been coming to concerts for many years. Jane invited questions on the Friends' scheme but there were none.

8. Election of Officers and Committee for 2020/2021

Chris Foote has stepped down from his role on the committee. Jane thanked him for all the work he has done in publicising the Festival. He is one of the people who has done a lot with the advertising – for example the display of the banners and the roadside boards. Jane had previously delivered a card and gift to thank him from the Festival.

During the course of the year Lesley Mathieson and Christine Norton offered to join the committee and were co-opted. As already mentioned Lesley has been helping with publicity. Christine has helped Jane with the bursary scheme. Jane asked the Friends to elect them onto the existing committee and to re-elect the existing committee en bloc. This was proposed by Mr Wallis and seconded by Mrs Pegler. There was a show of hands from the floor to agree the election.

Christine Norton had also been appointed as a Trustee. Trustees take the formal decisions and are responsible for the governance of the Society. One third of the Trustees has to be re-elected each year (we have 6) which is done on a rolling programme. Trustees appointed during the year (in this case Christine Norton) must be re-elected and the other trustee to be re-elected by rotation is Gill Minikin. The re-election of Christine Norton and Gill Minikin

was proposed by Mr Hudgell and seconded by Mr Howse. A show of hands confirmed the election.

Jane thanked Lesley and Christine for joining the committee and Christine for agreeing to become a trustee.

9. Discussion and questions from the floor

Jane invited questions from the floor but there were none.

10. Any other business

Sadly this year we have lost a former committee member as well as some very loyal Friends.

Jane reiterated that we will have live music as soon as we can and there are plans in the pipeline. There is every reason to be hopeful.

Jane thanked our Patron, Countess Howe for attending the meeting.

Miss Sado thanked the committee for all of their hard work. Iain thanked Jane for chairing the meeting and for her hard work during the year.

The meeting closed at 8.40.

