

The Amersham Festival Society

Chairman's report AGM 2020

The past year has been a year like no other for Amersham Festival of Music. As usual we had been planning our April festival for a year. Artists and venues had been booked, brochures printed and publicity planned. We were just at the point where we could look forward to hearing all the wonderful music when the lockdown began and the full impact of Covid-19 became evident. This was a devastating blow for all of us, but most of all for Iain. He had already been rehearsing *Così fan Tutte* with the soloists for a term and rehearsals for *Elijah* with South Bucks Choral Society were underway. We had no option but to cancel the whole festival and as I write this report the general situation for the Arts is still very difficult and complex.

In our emergency meeting we decided that we would like to offer support to the orchestral musicians and singers due to perform for us. Their income and livelihood had disappeared overnight. May of you gave generously and we received heart-warming messages from those who took up our offer of support. They are all looking forward to performing for you when that becomes possible again.

We were, however, able to enjoy a full Winter Series before the Lockdown was in force. The concerts were very well received. Within the 4 concerts the orchestra performed music by Britten, Holst, Tchaikovsky, Bach, Handel, Boyce, Vivaldi, Corelli, Albinoni, Rossini and Mozart. What variety and what joy these concerts brought us! Once again we are very grateful to the Friends for your loyal support, both financially and in attending the concerts.

I want to record my thanks to all the members of the committee. Their many and varied skills ensure that events are planned, publicised and managed. Nothing could happen without them! In addition to the committee we are indebted to Jon Wallis for planning, creating and delivering the emails you receive. These emails are a vital and successful form of publicity. We are also grateful to Patrick Hudgell for the work he does in updating and maintaining the website, which is an essential form of publicity and information; also for his photography at festival events.

During the year we have also kept abreast of legal requirements. Our safeguarding policy has been finalised and 5 of the committee have taken part in online safeguarding training.

Planning for our 2021 Festival is going to be difficult because the regulations for venues and audiences keep changing as the fight against the virus continues. We will be making plans for events and very much hope that we can implement them! As you know we are hoping to put on one or two small scale concerts with a few performers in the New Year if possible. Currently none of our usual venues are open for external lettings. Publicity for any such events is likely to be by email.

To end on a positive note this situation will not last forever and all of us at Amersham Festival Society look forward to a time when we can invite you to a concert and we can, once again, enjoy live music.

With my best wishes,

Jane Partridge