

MINUTES OF THE 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WATFORD PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

HELD ON MONDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2021 AT 7.00PM AT WATFORD GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman, Pam Allanson, welcomed members to the meeting. About 60 members attended, and there were apologies for absence from Audrey Grey, David Pollak, Morfudd Wise and Lindsey St John Smith.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM HELD ON 8TH MARCH 2021

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as an accurate record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman, Pam Allanson, remarked how gratifying it was to see so many members attending rehearsals in person again. She was optimistic about the forthcoming concert, the Society's first for two years so a very special occasion, and urged members to sell tickets. Pam thanked the committee for their efforts and reminded members that extra help was urgently needed, particularly with publicity. There were special thanks and a presentation to Graham Wheeler, who was stepping down as Programme Planning Manager. There were no questions.

4. SECRETARY'S REPORT

A report written by Audrey Adams and detailing the rather limited activities of the Society during the 2020-21 season was approved by the meeting.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Paul Buckley presented his financial report which had been circulated before the meeting. The accounts had been forwarded to the Independent Examiner. Paul drew attention to the fact that income from subscriptions totalled £18,000, down from £27,000, because the number in the choir was down by a third. This shortfall made the need to sell tickets to the concerts, and ideally recruit new members for the choir, all the more imperative. Thanking Paul, Pam announced that Paul would be standing down as Treasurer next year and there would therefore be a vacancy. She appealed for suitable candidates to make themselves known.

6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Paul Buckley invited the meeting to re-appoint Mr Ronnie Jacobs of LPS Livingstone as the Society's Independent Examiner. The motion was passed unanimously.

7. MUSICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Michael Cayton spoke simply and briefly. He said he had very much enjoyed seeing everyone again at the recent Workshop, and was now looking forward eagerly to the opening concert of the season, the first for two years. Although the future remained uncertain, the Society had a total of four concerts planned. He urged everyone to come and sing and enjoy the experience again.

8. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Four nominations had been received for the six vacant committee posts. Judy Newton-Davies was proposed as Vice Chairman by Paul Buckley and seconded by Pam Allanson. Frances Pyatt was proposed as Concert Manager by Janet Fanshawe and seconded by Nikki Hind. Nikki Hind was proposed as Membership Secretary by Judy Newton-Davies and seconded by David Griffin. Tim Pettigrew was proposed as IT Manager by Audrey Adams and seconded by Graham Wheeler. All four were duly re-elected by acclamation. There were no nominations for the posts of Publicity and Marketing Manager and Social Activities Co-Ordinator, so both positions remained vacant.

9. LONG SERVICE AWARDS

The customary long service awards had not been presented in 2020, so there was a bumper list. Certificates were presented by Pam Allanson and Michael Cayton.

20 years: Paulina Dyason, Diane Livesey and Helen Walker. Liane Mallett, David Pollak and Gaynor Slaney were absent, but received their certificates at a later rehearsal.

25 years: Beryl Hendry, Anne King

30 years: John Mackenzie-Corby, Rosemary Mackenzie-Corby

50 years: Keith Champion, Michael Hussey

It was subsequently discovered that Gillian Williams had been a member for 55 years. She received her certificate at a later rehearsal.

10. QUESTIONS FROM THE MEMBERS

Members took the opportunity to ask a number of questions:

Q: Would rehearsals continue to be available on Zoom?

A: (Michael Cayton) About 6 members were attending rehearsals via Zoom (14 the week of the petrol shortages!) and feedback was good. However, attendance in person was essential for members who wished to sing in concerts.

Q: Was the Society in touch with those who had not renewed their membership?

A: (Nikki Hind) Members who had not renewed remained on the email distribution list but were not being actively pursued for now. It was hoped they would return when they were ready.

Q: Will the new venue in Bushey accommodate the usual number of choir singers?

A: (Frances Pyatt) Yes, the Grand Hall will have room for the usual number (about 120-130)

Q: What about orchestra numbers?

A: (Michael Cayton) The venue is smaller and more intimate, so the orchestra will be smaller too. This change will be reflected in the choice of repertoire.

Q: Will our concerts now be publicised more heavily in Bushey?

A: (Pam Allanson) Absolutely – hopefully we'll attract Bushey advertisers too.

Q: Will the Christmas concert include the customary children's choir?

A: (Frances Pyatt) No, this will not be feasible this year because of lack of space and complications with Covid regulations.

Q: What about staging a daytime concert during the winter months?

A: (Pam Allanson) Yes, something the committee will consider.

Q: What about a flashmob performance of, say, Messiah?

A: (Michael Cayton) I'd love to try this, but it's simply not possible in the present Covid climate.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None. There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.45pm.