

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD MUSIC SOCIETY
HELD ON THURSDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2019, NORDEN FARM CENTRE FOR THE ARTS**

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| 1 | Apologies | Apologies were received from A Howarth; Mr & Mrs B Madge; Mr & Mrs E Sulley; Mrs R Russell |
| | Present | Present: 9 Committee Members, 12 Members; 22 proxy voting forms received. |
| 2 | Minutes of Previous Meeting | Minutes of the last AGM, 17th October, 2018, were read and signed as a true record of business transacted.
Prop: C Good; Sec: C Jones |
| 3 | Matters Arising | There were no matters arising. |
| 4 | Hon Chairman's Report | The Hon Chairman noted the AGM provided an opportunity to review the past and future year's activities, receive financial reports, and hear Patrons' and Members' views. |

The Society decided not to start its 72nd programme, 2018/19, with Barefoot Opera, but with the Temple Ensemble, performing Beethoven's Septet and Schubert's Octet, to open a richly varied season. Overall ticket sales were 919, slightly ahead of 2017, with 159 a peak audience for the Endellion Quartet's Celebrity Concert, and nearly 100 for January's 'Young Winners'. The 2019/20 season had opened with Barefoot Opera's well-received 'The Barber of Seville'.

Turning to finance, the Treasurer's report would give details. The season had ended with a modest surplus, less than last year but comfortable. Building up reserves allowed the Society to mount riskier programmes, if these would interest MMS's Members and audience. Total assets were now over £100,000, with investment strategy aimed at maintaining capital value and providing an income stream from which, since member/ticket income never covered direct costs, to subsidise the losses incurred by most concerts. He noted that the Accounts Examiner had not concluded his review, due to family business, but was confident the Examiner's report would be positive. Seat and subscription prices had again been kept unchanged, as the Society wished its prices to be competitive, with ticket income allowing engagement of top musicians, but concerts remaining widely accessible. Total membership was now 80, against 78 the previous year, and he was pleased to welcome 3 new members. 59 Members had purchased season tickets, 29 used the new online application form on MMS's website, and 13 individuals had joined the mailing list. He thanked Peter Griffiths for his work on all this. The 'Meet the Performers' feature had continued, Norden Farm's intimacy allowing relaxed post-concert chats.

With regard to the committee, this remained unchanged from the previous year. He thanked it, the Accounts Examiner Peng Lim, and other volunteers for many hours of unpaid and sometimes inadequately thanked work, especially Mike Holness for printing, Peter Griffiths for website redesign and Chris Good for raising useful extra funds by incorporating advertisements into MMS programmes. He noted he had himself taken over the design of leaflets. Finally he noted a review of the Constitution, last done in 2004, had been carried out by Christine Jones, and had confirmed it was still in line with the regulatory environment, and suitably met the objectives of the Society.

In response to a question he confirmed the failure of one advertiser to pay had been due to non-renewal its contract.

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| 5 | Concert Secretary's Report | <p>The Concert Secretary again reported a varied season of talented professional concerts, attracting high enough audiences to achieve a significant financial surplus. The opening concert by the Temple Ensemble presented two great chamber works for mixed wind and strings, Beethoven's Septet and Schubert's Octet. In October, established favourites, the Heath Quartet, played breathtaking renditions of Bach, Britten and late Beethoven. The Abingdon Wind Ensemble, starting out on their musical careers, followed in November, performing Ibert, Milhaud and Francaix with verve and precision. In January, though still at school, Harvey Lin (piano) and Alexandra Peel (violin), winners of the WMSO Young Musicians' competition, presented programmes of depth and complexity. As 'Duos with a Difference', Steve Bingham (violin) and Brenda Stewart (viola) brought a 'novelty' event in February. They created electronic 'loops' – repeated musical phrases – which they then built into symphonic effects. An interesting 'marmite' experience, not to everyone's tastes! Engaging a vocal artist for March was a risk – often the least popular type of concert – but was felt important. Mezzo-soprano Joanne Edworthy, much respected locally for her singing and for running a community choir, was joined by clarinettist Ben Aldren. Their virtuoso solo pieces, and their performance of Schubert's 'Shepherd on the Rock', were sublime. In April, the superb Linos Piano Trio were welcomed back to play a Brahms piano trio, Beethoven's</p> |
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arrangement of his second symphony for piano, violin and cello, and their own arrangement for this combination of Ravel's La Valse. Finally, June's celebrity concert brought back the popular Endellion Quartet, celebrating their 40th Anniversary, with Haydn, Puccini, Janacek and Smetana. It had been a good season: 32 performers across strings, wind, voice and piano; 34 composers across four centuries; and 45 pieces of music. For 2019/20, after opening with Barefoot Opera, and the Pelleas Ensemble, the new season had a European feel: the Czech Wihan Quartet; more local young winners; a Polish violinist; a chamber orchestra from Cologne; and a solo pianist from Belgium. The Heath would give MMS's celebrity concert in May, joined by Timothy Ridout (viola) and Bjorg Lewis (cello), for a Beethoven quintet and a Tchaikovsky sextet.

In response to questions, the Concert Secretary noted the Audience Survey carried out had confirmed MMS was doing what the audience wanted, but was just a snapshot. She confirmed she had not rated the Temple Ensemble's performance because they had played accurately but without distinction. She felt there was a case to argue for a larger budget for performers overall. Given MMS's resources, it was not necessary to engage such groups, who cannot make a living solely as a chamber group from these low fees (£1000, ie a mere £100 each), and therefore cannot concentrate their effort to the highest standard. The view of Mr Roscoe from the floor was also that it had been a tragedy the pieces performed had not been heard at their best. Mrs Griffiths thanked the Concert Secretary for her work. Mr Williams praised the increased variety in composers offered, and the value of their spoken introductions to the music from the stage..

- 6 **Hon Treasurer's Report** The Hon Treasurer noted the Committee's objective: to plan a regular series of seven instrumental and vocal concerts within its resources, relying on a membership of about 80, and a similar number of non-member concert-goers. A specific grant from the Prince Philip Trust supported a Sunday morning concert for WMSO Young Musicians' Competition winners. Valued support from the local Kidwells Park Trust and the Louis Baylis Charitable Trust was maintained. In addition, dividends of £3,481 from the invested Fund provided by Winifred Law provided MMS with the confidence to plan a varied musical programme. He drew attention to the gap in 2018/19 between concert revenue of £15,253 and expenses of £16,955, requiring alternative Win Law revenue to fill it. Overall a small surplus for the year of £1,093 had been achieved, after taking into account the investment income.

In response to a question, the Hon Treasurer noted he would clarify sources of donations including EasyFundraising; also local bodies did award grants, despite MMS's large resources, because it was recognised as providing a distinctive resource within the community. In response to a specific request from Mrs Griffiths that MMS make an enhanced spend, the Treasurer noted that MMS had maintained itself over 75 years through prudent management. But he confirmed he and the Chairman would re-examine the budget issue for the next season. The Concert Secretary strongly endorsed this commitment.

The Report was unanimously accepted, pending the Independent Examiner's approval of the Accounts. Prop: C Jones; Sec: P Fairbairn

- 7 **Election of Officers and Committee** **Officers were unanimously elected or re-elected as follows:**
Philip Ratcliffe: Hon Chairman
Bill Fone: Hon Treasurer
Mavis Gregson: Hon Secretary
Peter Griffiths: Membership Secretary
Deborah Behrman : Concert Secretary
Committee Members were unanimously elected or re-elected as follows:
Judy Schwarz; Chris Good
(Christine Jones and Rudi Sheldon were elected in 2018 for a 2 year period)
Prop: R Roscoe Sec: M Fone

- 8 **Any Other Business** **8.1 Amendment to the MMS Constitution** *Resolved:* that in Item 8 of the MMS Constitution 2004 the wording "The financial accounts for each financial year shall be **audited** and submitted to members at the next Annual General Meeting after that date." shall be amended to read "The financial accounts for each financial year shall be **examined by an independent examiner as provided by the Charities Act 2011** and submitted to members at the next Annual General Meeting after that date." The Treasurer explained formal audit was inappropriate to MMS's size. The amendment was unanimously adopted.
Prop: C Jones Sec: P Griffiths

8.2 Circulation by email

It was unanimously agreed that use of email to circulate MMS documents to Members would be acceptable. The Membership Secretary confirmed concert tickets would still be delivered personally. However, he would investigate electronic ticketing as done by other societies.

The Meeting closed at 8.15 pm, and refreshments were followed by a performance by the Keble Road Ensemble.