

# **BRISTOL CONCERT ORCHESTRA**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2014**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Ashton Park School  
at 7:30 pm on Monday 13 October 2013

Present: the Conductor, the Officers and 33 \* members of the Orchestra  
\* plus latecomers not counted

The Chairman, Wendy Lewis noted that we had decided we would experiment with having the AGM at the beginning of the rehearsal rather than at the end.

Apologies had been received from Christine Davies, Bob Pinniger, Vanessa Pinniger, Geraldine Roberts, Andrew Stephen and Gareth Williams.

### **1/14 Minutes of AGM held on 21 October 2013**

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.  
(Prop. Sue Tyley; Sec. Brenda Stacey; carried unanimously).

### **2/14 Matters Arising from Minutes**

None.

### **3/14 Conductor's Report**

On behalf of the orchestra Wendy Lewis expressed many thanks to Stefan for providing such excellent leadership and musical direction for the orchestra and for motivating, inspiring and challenging us. On behalf of the committee she thanked Stefan for all the time energy and enthusiasm he puts into working with us. She then called on him to give his report.

"Last season was a happy 'coming together' of our hard work in terms of productive rehearsals and tight teamwork.

I would like to thank Wendy for her incredible service to the orchestra for 20 years. We have never had a disagreement; we have always managed to find a way forward from any situation and Wendy has always made the time to look at personal aspects."

### **4/14 Chairman's Report**

Wendy Lewis started her report introducing the members of the committee present: Phil Ellwood, Tim Barrett, Andrew Coombs, Andrew Rees, Hilary Ross, Mike Organ and Sue Tyley.

She invited the members to feel free to speak to one of the committee for any matter they would like to raise.

She then presented the report that follows:

"The year has been largely successful both musically and financially. The improvement in ticket sales was maintained, as was the improvement in our financial situation; we are again showing a surplus.

As usual we put on three concerts at St George's and a Sinfonietta concert in Olveston. From all the positive feedback we've had, it seems that they were very well received.

There was no children's concert last season as we had decided to delay it until the autumn. This has proved to be a good move; tickets for both last Sunday's performances sold out within a few days of going on sale. The concerts went very well and were very much enjoyed. Being able to have retiring collections at two performances boosted the amount raised which helps to offset the cost of putting on a free concert.

This maintenance of improved in ticket sales resulted we think, at least in part, from the programme choices the committee made in February 2013 for the 2013-14 season. Of course,

BCO members also play an important part in ticket sales; keep up the good work in encouraging your family, friends and work colleagues to come and hear us play.

We are fortunate to have Brenda Stacey and Andrew Coombs managing ticket sales now and our online ticket facility is working well. I hope you are all *au fait* with how to go about reserving tickets online and paying for them at rehearsal - thereby avoiding the booking fee. Instructions have been circulated by email but if you are unsure about it, please speak to Andrew.

Behind all the concerts, rehearsals, ticket sales and so on is the work of the committee without which we wouldn't be doing very much playing! In this we are ably supported and guided by Stefan. So on your behalf, I give very many thanks to all the committee and to Stefan for all they have done over the past year.

Also many thanks are due to those members not on the committee who help us with such things as leading string sections, selling tickets, assisting the librarian and transporting the timps to and from concerts.

The committee held three meetings during the 2013-14 season and a short extra one last month to discuss the accounts. Also there was discussion and decision-making conducted by email between meetings.

In February we planned the three main programmes for the current season. These are based on suggestions made by BCO members and were chosen bearing in mind our financial responsibilities, our charitable obligations, and the need to offer our members sufficient challenge, potential for musical development and enjoyment in making music.

During the current season in a new venture for us, we will be performing at St Mary Redcliffe for our summer concert. This decision was made to enable us to do Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony. This concert was to have included a work for choir and orchestra specially composed by Phil Dixon. Sadly this is not going to happen now and Stefan and the committee are in the process of deciding what work/s will take its place.

You can find details of all the concerts on the BCO website.

Next February, the committee will be meeting to decide the programmes for the 2015-16 season. The suggestion list will be available in early November, both online in the Member's area of our website and a paper version on the committee table. We base our programme choices on members' suggestions; please give us plenty to choose from.

The committee, being the trustees of the orchestra, are responsible with regard to our charitable status. We are accountable to the Charity Commission and earlier in the year I submitted to them, as we are mandated to do, an Annual Return for 2013-14. This year our Annual Report and Accounts had to be submitted with the Return as our turnover exceeded £25,000 for the first time. These things have to be prepared each year but previously were only submitted when requested by the Charity Commission; twice out of four times in our case!

During 2013-14 the charity collections at our concerts raised:

Dec 2013	British Association for Music Therapy	£440.60
Mar 2014	Osteoporosis Society	£413.33
Jun 2014	Jessie May Trust	£554.49

The collection at the December Concert was in memory of Mike Parks, one of our longest-standing members. Mike's daughter and other family members attended the concert and much appreciated our dedication and the opportunity to collect for a cause of which Mike was very fond and which they had chosen in his memory.

For the present season the charities we will be supporting, chosen by the committee from members' suggestions, are:

Dec 2014	Great Western Air Ambulance
Mar 2015	Bristol Child Contact Centre
Jul 2015	Special Friends Club

The voting was quite close and if we haven't chosen your charity this time, please feel free to suggest it again next year.

I'd like to thank Phil, once again, for the excellent job he does with the BCO website. There is a wealth of useful information in the Members Area including 'Welcome to BCO', the 'Concert Planner' - which gives concert and rehearsal dates for two years ahead - and the 'Rehearsal Schedule' for the current term.

The Welcome document gives a lot of useful information and I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you of one or two points:

1. Please can you let someone know if you can't attend a rehearsal (and ensure a deputy has been arranged if you're a wind/brass player) and make sure you send your music in.
2. Please can you be proactive in selling concert tickets.
3. Please make sure that the Membership Secretary – Tim – has your contact details and please sign the register each week.

That's all on last season but I would just like to finish by saying that it has been an immense privilege and pleasure to serve as the chairman of BCO for the last 20 years. Things have changed quite a bit during that time; the quality of the music making has continued to grow and improve (largely thanks to Stefan's musical direction) and we have become a charity. I only once had to preside over the selection of a new conductor (!) and I think we were extremely fortunate to have been able to choose Stefan. I feel that Stefan and I have had a very good working relationship and that there had never been any friction. It has been a pleasure working with him.

Of course there is no way I could have sustained my role for this long without the support and hard work of the committee so I would like to thank every member of BCO who has worked on the committee during this time.

I didn't take the decision to stand down lightly but feel that now is the time for someone new. So, thank you for the past 20 years and I wish all the very best of luck to my successor."

[There was a warm round of applause and no questions from the members].

## **5/14 Treasurer's Report**

*Wendy Lewis said that she had realised that she wouldn't have her usual opportunity to say thank you to Phil Ellwood as she wouldn't be in the chair by the time we came to re-elect the secretary so she offered thanks at this point, for Phil's hard work, efficiency and excellent organisational skills that contribute so much to the running of the orchestra and for his work as BCO webmaster and in keeping us so well informed about BCO matters.*

Wendy then thanked Tim Barrett very much on the members' behalf for all his hard work and the very efficient way in which he looks after the orchestra's finances and for having the accounts ready in such good time. She also thanked him for the not inconsiderable amount of work he contributes in other ways towards the running of the orchestra. She then called on Tim to present his report and the annual accounts.

Tim opened his report by saying that we have had a good year again, probably thanks to a combination of positive factors:

- Our choice of programmes, leading to good audiences
- An increase in concert ticket prices
- Continued good income from subscriptions
- Gift Aid payments received from HMRC

Our overall standing is that we are around £6,000 better off than this time last year but that figure is inflated by Gift Aid payments for previous years. (The year-on-year increase is about £4,000).

Regarding the concert account, Tim explained the improvements, largely due to programmes / large audiences – combined with the ticket price increases.

Gift Aid is significant going forward, to the tune of around £1,200 per year. Tim encouraged those eligible members to sign up (Gift Aid Declaration Form). He also mentioned that as a society with certain charitable missions to we are able to claim 100% of member subscriptions.

Tim invited questions from the members.

Mary Ingram asked if we have a list of those members whom had signed for Gift Aid. Tim explained that we do keep such records (we are required to do so, by HMRC) but he didn't have them at hand.

Peter Collins asked if we could spend more on wine and flowers for soloists. Wendy replied that we would look at this at a future committee meeting.

Siân Rees asked why the performance fee for Nick Shipman was so low. Stefan answered that Nick charged only a 'friends' fee' for this concert. Tim added that the overall finances for the Olveston concerts are generally on a lower scale than our regular concerts and that these concerts were part of a fund-raising campaign for the church.

*The Treasurer's Report and Accounts were accepted by the members.* (Prop. Mary Ingram; Sec. Emma Clark; carried unanimously).

#### **06/14 Subscriptions for 2014-2015**

Tim Barrett explained that he had considered proposing a reduction in subscriptions this year but in the end agreed with the committee (discussed at the pre-AGM meeting on 29 September) that it would be best to maintain the current levels, at least for another year, to ensure that our reserves matched our policy (recommended by the Charity Commission and supported by Making Music) to have one year's worth of operating costs at hand. Currently our reserves are around £19,000 and our operating costs around £21,000 a year (average).

Stefan expressed that rather than considering a future reduction in subscriptions, should we not modify what we spend our money on... choices of music, for example?

Roger Levett suggested a show of hands to gauge the support for the Stefan's sentiment. After some discussion on what the show of hands would actually represent, it was carried out and the result was a majority in favour (none against; a few abstentions\*, citing the need to understand the conditions at the time of such a future decision). This subject will be discussed at future committee meetings, especially the ones focusing on programme planning.

\* Mary Ingram recalled what had happened last time that type of idea was voiced about expenditure and therefore was abstaining from this gauging of support.

Wendy Lewis remarked that whatever music we chose to perform we should try and avoid the risk of not attracting sufficient audience.

*Finally, by show of hands, it was agreed unanimously to keep subscriptions for 2014-2015 at the current levels: £45 per term (concs. £30), each with a £5 reduction if a full year's subscription is paid in the Autumn term.* (Prop. Roger Levett; Sec. Siân Rees).

#### **7/14 Election of Chairman (Secretary in chair)**

Wendy Lewis stood down and Phil Ellwood took the chair. Phil gave many thanks to Wendy for her excellent leadership of the committee over the last 20 years, echoing the sentiments already expressed by Stefan, in particular for her great care over the members' interests.

Phil then presented Wendy with a gift (a £40 book token) and a card, on behalf of (and funded by) current and recent members of the committee. Wendy expressed her sincere gratitude for these kind thoughts.

Only one nomination had been received for the post of Chairman: Brenda Stacey. *Brenda was elected unopposed.* (Prop. Wendy Lewis; Sec. Vanessa Pinniger).

Brenda Stacey then took up her position as the new Chairman of the Committee.

#### **8/14 Election of Secretary**

Brenda Stacey informed us that Phil Ellwood had agreed to stand again as Secretary.

Only one nomination had been received for the post of Secretary: Phil Ellwood. *Phil was re-elected unopposed.* (Prop. Rob Bartlett; Sec. Andrew Stephen).

## 9/14 Election of Treasurer

Brenda Stacey informed us that Tim had agreed to stand again as Treasurer.

Only one nomination had been received for the post of Treasurer: Tim Barrett. *Tim was re-elected unopposed.* (Prop. Jo Walker; Sec. Mary Ingram).

## 10/14 Election of Committee Members

Brenda Stacey noted that we had two committee members - Andrew Rees and Sue Tyley - who had come to the end of their three-year term of office. Happily, both Andrew and Sue had decided to stand for re-election. It was recalled that we had an unfilled vacancy for a committee member carried over from last year, so three positions were open this year.

We received one more nomination than needed this year and after some discussion the committee decided to accept all nominations and increase the base committee strength by one. (This is allowed in the constitution, which requires that we have *at least* nine committee members, plus three officers and conductor). The rationale for this decision was that we wished to encourage new prospective committee members; and also ensure that we have an experience base covering all sections of the orchestra. Of particular concern was the risk of not having any representation from the woodwind section, whereas strings, brass and percussion would still be well covered.

As we had decided to adjust the posts to the nominations received, Brenda proposed a block vote:

Wendy Lewis (new)	Prop. Robert Watson; Sec. Hazel Woods
Tsehai Mineur (new)	Prop. Siân Rees; Sec. Andrew Coombs
Andrew Rees (re-el.)	Prop. Liz Bagshaw; Sec. Julia Kraus
Sue Tyley (re-el.)	Prop. Jane Beck; Sec. Melanie Arnot

*By show of hands, the members voted to accept the four candidates as elected unopposed.*

Brenda congratulated all four electees and welcomed Tsehai to the committee. She also welcomed Wendy in her new role as committee member representing the woodwind section; and to provide helpful continuity, as our previous chairman.

In addition to the elected members declared above, we also co-opted Christine Davis to the committee for a further three years, as the BCO Librarian. We very much value her sterling contribution to the running of our concerts.

Phil mentioned that the next committee meeting is on October 27<sup>th</sup> (half-term week).

## 11/14 Any Other Business

Tim Barrett reminded everyone to check the new membership / contact list.

Tim also declared that this week would be Week 1 of 4 for paying this term's subscription.

à Reminder: £45 per term (concs. £30), with a £5 reduction if you pay a full year in Autumn.

Brenda Stacey said that the committee is here to serve the members. Bring ideas and concerns to us as soon as you have them. Don't wait for the next AGM.

The meeting was closed at 8:06 pm.

Date of next meeting (proposed): Monday 12 October 2014, starting at 7:30 pm

Compiled: Phil Ellwood

Approved: Wendy Lewis & Brenda Stacey

21 October 2014