

**"Worthing Music and Arts Festival"**  
**Minutes of Annual General Meeting**  
**Held at: Offington Park Methodist Church,**  
**South Farm Road, Worthing.**  
**On: Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 7.30pm**

The meeting was opened at 7.35pm by Helen Emery (Chair), who welcomed members.

**1. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received from Marcus Martin, Bob Smytherman, Margaret Avenell, Suzanne Logan, Mandy Chapman, Leslie and Jenny Cuer-Greene, Jackie Hetherington, Jane Ware, Judy Deverill, Therese Williams

**2. Adoption of 2018 Minutes**

Proposed by Paul Brownlee – seconded Debbie Smith

**3. Matter arising from Minutes**

None

**4. Chair's Report**

Helen Emery presented her report;

Welcome everyone to the Annual General Meeting of Worthing Music and Arts Festival. It is lovely that so many of you are here again in support of the festival although I know that several members are attending the Nicola Benedetti concert at the Assembly Hall instead. I don't know what appeal she has that we haven't!

The festival executive committee have, as always, worked hard throughout the year to keep the festival as efficient as possible and I would like to thank them all. No sooner does one festival end than we start work on the next. It really is a never ending cycle.

We are delighted that Katherine Mustafa from the speech and drama sub-committee was co-opted on to the executive committee meetings recently to represent the section. Her enthusiasm for the festival is a welcome addition to our dedicated volunteers who already serve on the executive committee.

The 2019 festival was once again a success with entries being maintained overall although they did fluctuate in some sections. Our section heads have had a challenging time to sort out the timetables so that the classes all occur out of school hours. This has made for some long evenings and weekends to accommodate them all.

We must also extend thanks to our team of stewards who help us at all our venues. It is very much appreciated and the festival as would not run as smoothly without their help. I would also like to thank Andrea Martin, our Festival Administrator, who's list of jobs seems to grow year on year for being very dedicated to WMAAF. We couldn't run the festival without you.

Here's to another successful festival in 2020.

**Acceptance of Chairmans report**

Jan Spooner-Swabey – seconded Julie Bird

## 5. Secretary's Report

Jan Spooner-Swabey presented her report;

I sit here, writing this on a rather grey day, with the remnants of hurricane Dorian, blowing the trees and plants with gusto.....It will be a chilly dog walk later I fear! And it has been a bit grey in the festival office this last week after we were broken into on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> Sept, when we fear the people were hoping for a lot of money being around following the closing of the dance entry. Luckily, due to our online booking system there is no cash left in the office....except Rosemary's collection of ten pence pieces! But some damage has occurred and our laptop was stolen. Luckily as this is password protected there was no breach of our data for which we are grateful.

Looking back, the festival now seems a distant memory. Dance began a little earlier and started with a mainly classical based weekend, before continuing, after a day's breather, with a busy modern section. Life was a little more complicated this time with new backstage rules meaning we had to use the Denton café bar as overflow after it had finished serving. It wasn't ideal but it worked and our thanks to the dance section for coming up with a solution to what could have been an insurmountable problem. The Piano and Instrumental section also had some changes, as Emmanuel Church is now not available until after 230 every Saturday. This year they went to Field place for Saturday morning but will try another venue this coming year, which already has a piano in situ. Singing was also in a new venue, the Chichester room, which was lovely but means our audience capacity is slightly reduced. Ben Costello proved to be a very popular adjudicator and the standard of singing was very high. There were no adult singers at all so after this year, we are unlikely to offer these classes again. Speech & Drama then filled the Dome to overflowing with several big classes and the finals were moved to Emmanuel on the following Sunday afternoon. The gala concert again had a good audience, but it is increasingly difficult to find performers from every section who are free to perform, as teenagers need to have weekend jobs and younger performers are often in another festival.....the road between Hastings and Worthing gets a lot of extra traffic that weekend! I am sorry to say that this coming year it has been decided not to hold a gala concert for many of these reasons.

There other changes ahead this year with solo and duet dances being held at Northbrook on their stage before we return to the Pavilion for a grand finale of groups in March. Speech and Drama is also moving to the Pavilion at Field place so do watch out for these alterations.

I thank our hard working administrator, Andrea for all she does , barefoot but with a smile at all times!

And there are other changes which I need to report on. Sadly this year we lost three wonderful life members , who had given a tremendous amount to the festival . Joyce Mitchell Harris had been a long standing supporter of the festival, taking much interest in the Dance section. She had been in a nursing home since last year's AGM and died earlier this year. Her large extended family organised a lovely remembrance for her, to which several of us went. Then, our former Vice chair, Patricia Edwards, who died after a short illness ,in Worthing Hospital. She had been a stalwart Speech & Drama teacher, with many successful performers being trained by her. Life had become more difficult in the latter years but until recently Pat could be seen at the festival, supporting her students.

And then, very recently Deirdre Farquharson passed quietly away after several years in Highgrove Nursing home. Deirdre was a wonderful steward for the Singing section for many, many years and I have fond memories of shared jokes and looks, followed by excellent chocolate cake in the office ! Could I ask those of you who are able, to stand in memory of these three hard working ladies, whose presence graced us for so many years.

And so the generations shift. The festival always needs fresh blood, so to speak, so do encourage people to take an active interest. It sometimes feels that our pool of **active** supporters is always diminishing, but we can always find a job for you to do!

I give thanks to all committee members, for doing what is a thankless job, and in particular I would like to acknowledge one person who has been on the executive committee for well over twenty years. She puts an enormous amount of energy into not only her own section, but all aspects of running the

festival with clear thinking and new ideas. I am glad to call her a friend too, so Mandy, please accept these flowers to say thank you for all the work you do.....don't worry she's not allowed to retire yet!

And so onto the future. It will be different, we hope it will be exciting.....but there is a future, which may be very changed from how we started.

Thank you for listening

### **Acceptance of Secretary report**

Brenda Churchman – seconded Carol Suddaby

### **6. Treasurer's Report**

In Bob Symthermans absence this was given by Jan Spooner-Swabey

I hope you have all seen the accounts which were displayed on the website for the last month. Some comments which we would like to make. Venue hire has gone up as both dance and speech & drama had extra days due to large entries. Adjudicators' fees were up but expenses were down as two adjudicators did not need hotel accommodation, but stayed with friends and family. Although the festival itself made a profit but overall the festival accounts show a loss. Office expenditure is about the same as we have a three year lease but administrator's cost rose due to many complications with the entries, which necessitated extra hours of work. Plans are afoot to try to improve this situation. No questions have been received, so we assume you are all content.

As the festival is still making a loss overall, although some sections are clearly in profit, following a meeting focussing on our financial situation, it was decided to try to find three or four major local sponsors. Discussions are still underway for this but if any of our members is involved with a big local firm please do encourage them to support us. We are a valuable asset to the town, giving a platform to hundreds of local performers, but commercial rates of hire rise all the time and we need to have some support. In a smaller way, individuals can sponsor a page in the programme....please see our website and facebook page for details or contact the office. We also hope to find a way of using the 'dead' time in our venues with perhaps workshops and the like

The festival thanks our independent examiner, Ian Walker, of Mastersfuller and we would propose that he is asked to continue in this position for another year

### **Acceptance of Treasurers report**

Paul Brownlee – seconded Katherine Mustafa

### **8. Election of Examiner of Accounts**

Ian Walker FCCA, Masters Fuller Chartered Certified Accountants was thanked for examining the accounts and stated that they were happy to examine accounts next year. Proposed Jan Spooner Swabey – seconded Gary Mobsby

### **9. Election of Officers**

The officers, Helen Emery Chair, Bob Smytherman Treasurer, Jan Spooner-Swabey Secretary were happy to stand again for the year

Proposed Katherine Mustafa – seconded Melvyn Bird

### **11. Election of Executive Committee**

Members of the Executive Committee have agreed to re-stand.

Debbie Smith, John Logan, Judy Deverill, Leslie Greene, Mandy Chapman, Rosemary Hoyle, Susan Fisher Julie Bird with an addition of Katherine Mustafa newly elected tonight

Helen asked for proposal on block for the Executive Committee – this was voted on – no against – proposed to accept Paul Brownlee - seconded Carol Suddaby

#### **10. AOB**

The Oliver Buckle Cup awarded annually to Stewards of the Festival

Helen Emery – This year the recipient of the Oliver Buckle Cup is someone who has been associated with our festival for many years. She has been a General Steward in excess of 10 years. At Dance she braves the Denton Lounge door for many hours, constant comings & goings while efficiently dealing with administration. At Speech and Drama she serves as announcer when required but mainly manning the door as the first point of contact for large numbers of excited children and anxious parents and at Piano and Instrumental she is one of our regular stewards, usually to be found announcing the entrants. This year the Oliver Buckle cup is being awarded to a very lovely lady, Carol Suddaby.

A question was raised regarding the rising costs of Venue Hire during the Festival by Gary Mobsby - Jan Spooner-Swabey addressed the question stating that we do look at the cost of Hiring Venues every year but due to the time constraints given by Government regarding the Festival can only be run in term time after school hours the costs are high as we have to pay for all day but only use from 3pm - this year the possibility of running workshops or similar during the hours when the Festival is not taking place is being looked into.

**Meeting closed at 7.55pm**

