

**"Worthing Music and Arts Festival"**  
**Minutes of Annual General Meeting**  
Held at: Offington Park Methodist Church,  
South Farm Road, Worthing.  
**On: Thursday 20th September 2017 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, Carol Suddaby, Jane Ware and Suzanne Logan

**2. Adoption of 2017 Minutes**

Proposed by Judy Deverill – seconded Mandy Chapman

**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. My report will be quite short as I know that Jan will have a more in depth one as secretary.

The festival executive committee have worked hard throughout the year to keep the festival as efficient as possible and I would like to thank them all. Jane Ware from Speech and Drama had to step down from the executive committee earlier in the year for personal reasons but is still willing to chair the sub-committee and help the executive wherever possible. I would also like to officially extend our sympathies to our Treasurer, Bob Smytherman whose mother passed away earlier this week.

The 2018 festival was certainly a success with entries being maintained overall although they did fluctuate in some sections. The continued pressure on parents and head teachers to not allow children absences from school, even though educational, doesn't seem to have affected 2018 entries. This may change in the future however. Our section heads work very hard with their timetabling and wherever possible make the classes for older students take place out of school hours and I know that this can be a challenge.

Thanks must go to all members of the Executive Committee for their attendance at meetings and ideas for the continued expansion of the festival. They all work very hard in their respective roles and the festival would not happen without them. I would also like to thank Andrea Martin, our festival administrator, who works very hard for us too.

**Acceptance of Chairmans report**

Jan Spooner-Swabey – seconded Debbie Smith

## 5. Secretary's Report

Jan Spooner-Swabey presented her report;

As I sit down to write this report, the season is changing from the beautiful summer we were fortunate to have had, to what I hope will be a glorious autumn. It reminds me of the changing times of the festival.....who would have thought ten years ago we would be managing entries online, living by e mail and social media and dealing with some fairly heavy handed legislation from an unthinking government.

The festival this year was another great event. The dance festival began with its usual razzamatazz. The tunnel entrance to the dressing rooms was quite a success although it is a difficult choice for stewarding as you cannot see any dancing...the Northbrook students found that quite hard and we need to make sure they are on shorter times for that door I think. The piano and instrumental classes ran smoothly although the concerto class was much smaller this year. We need therefore to look at the monetary prize for this now and are waiting to see how many entries arrive in the next couple of weeks. Singing also had a smaller entry this year but the standard of the younger singers was excellent. Again we are looking at the adult classes to see if they are really viable. Drama was as successful as ever with 30 seven year old performers in one class....this bodes very well for the future. The final gala concert was another great success and we were grateful to Paul Holden for his coverage in the Worthing Journal.

After the festival, we were sad to receive the resignation of Jane Ware as chair of Speech & Drama.....She continues to be involved in book and poem choices but feels unable to commit to a week of running the section along side her other commitments. We are grateful for the fresh ideas she has put into the section and wish her well in the future.

During the year we also lost two other notable names. Jo Hutchinson, widow of Frank Hutchinson passed away ....Frank had been a great performer in his time with Jo always by his side and although in recent years she had not been well enough to attend she will be missed. A very sad loss occurred with the passing of Sid Earl, a very reliable steward. An active man right to the end of his life, Sid was remembered in a celebration of his life arranged by Jane Vrettos and Brenda Churchman with lots of music and memories.

We also wish Joyce Mitchell Harris a comfortable time in her nursing home, which she moved to during the year after some bad falls at home.

Our new office was recently inspected by our landlords, which means that we have been in there for a year! It is lovely to have enough room for everything and we are very settled there.....although we do seem to have something of a problem with roofs! (Ask me if you don't understand!) We passed the inspection by the way.

New developments in our administration has been setting up an on line entry system, managed ably by our Administrator Andrea Martin. I am not going to say it has all been plain sailing but hopefully after this year we can sort out the glitches and smooth over some of the bumps and lumps.

We survived the dreaded GDPR changes, with much support and advice from John Logan, who also became a grandfather during the year. We are also using online banking much more which is saving some time and..... impossible now to imagine the committee without e mail!

There will be many noticeable changes to the festival this year due to legislation meaning that performers cannot be taken out of school during school hours. We are grateful for the ease with which West Sussex have facilitated this change for us. Later nights and fewer mornings is going to change our stewards working schedules and may mean we lose some of them due to problems with transport and availability.

With this in mind please do think about volunteering to help. We will never ignore you, although depending on your availability we may not always be able to use you!

All festivals such as ours are going through massive changes , with technology and legislation, but it is vital we keep looking forward and building on the amazing heritage we have ...without becoming immersed in the past. We have to think of the new generation of performers who have always had computers, phones, and such like and expect us to use modern technology.....and also the new generation of parents who are coming to us for the first time, needing guidance and help.

With your continued support, this festival can survive well into the next decade, but we all need to be aware that there will be changes which have to be made.....and newer, younger people will need to be encouraged to join us to take over at an appropriate time.

Here's to the next few years. We have a festival to be proud of.

### **Acceptance of Secretary report**

Rosemary Hoyle seconded Jenny Cuer-Greene

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

In Bob Symthermans absence this was given by Helen Emery

I hope you have all had chance to see the accounts which have been on our website for the last month.

The first thing to notice is that these accounts are only for 11months as we changed our year end for them at the AGM last year. So although these are not a direct comparison, I hope you can see that we are trying to minimise our losses.

As we warned you last year, we are now in the commercial arena for renting our office space and therefore expenses have gone up.

We also had solicitor's fees for helping us with our due diligence when reviewing the lease for the premises, however, we now have ample room for all we need to do and store so we believe this is justified expense and no longer require to hire rooms for Executive meetings.

As a charity we are still eligible for business rate rebate for which we are grateful. These figures should all settle down now for the second year of our occupation.

You will notice that we also have a small legacy payment this was the final settlement from Mollie Denton's estate, which was divided between all her legatees.

The general running of the festival itself has maintained its position. Admission income has remained fairly static but due to the changes in our running this year, we may have to raise these.

We are fortunate however that our entry fees have risen mainly due to Dance and Speech& Drama. Membership has also risen and thanks must go to Rosemary Hoyle who administers this area so well for us.

You may think that venue hire may go down this year, but sadly we will still have to hire each venue for a full day despite only being able to use it from 3.30 pm.

I can assure that we are trying our best to resolve the licensing issues with support from BIFF to get changes made to the legislation which we are grateful.

But as Jan said, things will never be the same as they were.

All over the country festivals are closing which seems such a shame and we are determined to carry on our long heritage for as long as we can to find ways of putting our finances on a sustainable footing by looking at ways of investing our reserves which have for a number of years been held on deposit and with record low interests rate this has been disappointing I am most grateful to John for advising the committee on possible investment options which are actively being considered to maximise our investments by working with BIFF.

On a positive note, we would like to thank Ian Walker of Masters Fuller accountants for being our independent examiner, and I would like to propose that we re-appoint him for another year.

I would also like to thank Andrea for the diligent bookkeeping making the role of treasurer as straightforward as possible.

No questions have been received in advance and so I thank you for reading my treasurers report.

Unfortunately, I have a Council meeting in Shoreham this evening and can't be sure what time I will be able to get away, however I am sure many of the Executive Committee will be able to respond to any queries you may have or alternatively please feel to email me and I will get a response to you in due course.

### **Acceptance of Treasurers report**

Leslie Greene – seconded Jacky Hetherington

### **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 Helen Emery and seconded Judy Deverill

### **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 Mandy Chapman Seconded Brenda Churchman

### **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 with an addition of Julie Bird newly elected tonight.

Helen asked for proposal on block for the Executive Committee – this was voted on – no against

### **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 the festival for many years. This lady has been involved in the festival in many different ways, firstly as a parent, then as a steward for many years and most recently serving on the executive committee. She is always willing to help every section in any way she can often coming straight from work to steward after

school hours. I'm sure by now you will have guessed who I am talking about, but this year my choice to receive the Oliver Buckle Cup is our festival trophies steward since 2009 Debbie Smith.

Helen Emery also thanked Leslie and Jenny Cuer-Greene for providing the refreshments supplied at the AGM

Meeting closed at 7.53pm