

Federation of Recorded Music Societies

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Best Western Westminster Hotel, Nottingham Saturday 4 November 2017

Ron Starling (Chairman, Wollaton RMS) welcomed delegates to the meeting. He explained that Wollaton had been a village some four miles from Nottingham but was now absorbed within the city. He gave his wishes for a successful meeting. FRMS Chairman Allan Child (Jubilee Music Circle, Derby) thanked him for his welcome.

1. Chairman's opening remarks – He enquired if the meeting was quorate. The Secretary replied that it was with 16 affiliates represented, 13 in person and 5 by proxy.

He had received a message from our President, Julian Lloyd Webber giving his apologies, offering his greetings and those of the Birmingham Conservatoire and also expressing his pleasure that new people had come forward to join the Committee; he added his hopes for a successful meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Secretary Jim Bostwick (Barnsley RMS) reported that apologies had been received from: Ramsbottom RMS, Esher RMS, Barnoldswick RMS, Bournemouth GS, Sheffield RMS and Wharfedale RMS.

3. Minutes of the Previous Annual General Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Bournemouth on 4 November 2016 had been circulated to all affiliates. Upon being put to the vote, the Minutes were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes – There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Review

The Chairman, Allan Child (Jubilee Music Circle, Derby), referred to his letter to affiliates concerning the cancellation of next year's Daventry weekend (due to falling attendances) and concern about a possible loss of continuity in running the Federation. Regarding the latter we have two new Committee members, but will still be under strength due to retirements. The problems facing the Federation are a reflection of the situation facing affiliates: a decline in membership and the unwillingness of people to take on the jobs of Officers.

What age group should we target? The younger citizens largely get their music via downloads and share their interests through social media. This leaves the older working population and the retired; the former will generally need evening meetings, the latter are frequently unwilling to emerge at night.

Since society members are predominantly elderly, this is probably the age group we should be looking at. The U3A is active and successful; is this because it is a well-known brand-name with a snappy title? Would a title such as 'music.net' attract more interest? (This web domain is available). Affiliates can promote themselves by using posters in their meeting place; using local radio; using local free magazines; creating a website or having a dedicated page on the FRMS website but it is essential that these are kept up to date.

6. Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer Paul Corfield Godfrey (Cardiff RMS) presented his report which had been circulated, and the salient points were:

- (i) A number of societies closed during the year and a larger number than usual failed to complete their census and invoice forms; this means that the FRMS is paying for licences and insurance for groups that no longer exist. Early returns show a continuation of this pattern; the shortfall in 2016/17 amounted to £3000.
- (ii) By careful management excess charges for unused accommodation at Daventry were avoided. The event still showed a loss of some £600; this was due to the free bus connection to Coventry station and a sharp increase in the cost of the piano hire. There will be no Daventry event in 2018.
- (iii) The Bulletin continues to be largely self-financing, mainly due to the heroic efforts of editor Paul Astell in securing advertising.
- (iv) The costs of the Committee and AGM administrative expenses are closely controlled and more than covered by affiliation income, despite affiliation fees not being increased for four years.
- (v) Although FRMS incurred an operating loss during the year, the amount is within the capacity of the organisation to bear, since more than £22000 is held in deposit. Since the interest generated by this account is negligible, the Committee resolved to amalgamate it with the general account, which will provide a healthy surplus for operations over a lengthy period.
- (vi) In view of his increasing musical commitments, he has advised the Committee of his wish to relinquish the treasurership from 2019/20.

- (vii) A statement from the auditors (Ruth Williams and David Brook) was appended stating that the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the state of the Company's affairs.
- (viii) Income and expenditure for 2016/17 were £27310.44 and £31357.94 respectively.
- (ix) Suggestions from the floor included a cut-off date for re-affiliation fees; AGM mailings to include a request for prompt advice of impending closure; costs incurred due to society closure have to be accepted.

The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for his report.

On the proposal of the Chairman, the adoption of the Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

7. Secretary's Report

The Secretary Jim Bostwick (Barnsley RMS) began his sixth and penultimate report by thanking Committee colleagues and fellow Officers for their support.

- (i) He reminded delegates of his intention to retire at the 2018 AGM. The Chairman's letter had advised affiliates of this.
 - (ii) Two observers had attended a recent Committee meeting and have since been nominated to the Committee; one has indicated an interest acting as shadow secretary.
 - (iii) There is still a vacancy on the Committee.
 - (iv) He returned to Bournemouth this summer to present a programme and do some coastal cycling.
 - (v) The highlights of the highly enjoyable Daventry music weekend were Judith Weir's presentation and the stunning recital of pianist Domonkos Csabay.
 - (vi) Correspondence has continued to reflect diminishing fortunes of an increasing number of societies. But there is occasional light in the gloom; advice from successful societies on how they do it would be welcome. There are currently 142 affiliates.
 - (vii) The Federation still has the financial resources to continue to provide its services to affiliates.
 - (viii) The website offers a platform for affiliates to publicise their activities more widely; George Steele offers efficient service through www.thefrms.co.uk.
 - (ix) In the previously circulated documents the composition of the new Committee was reported; with two retirements there is still a vacancy. He repeated his plea to members of affiliates to attend a meeting as an observer. These are held in November/December, February, May and August at a pub highly rated by Camra, with a free lunch and travel expenses. Anyone interested will receive good advice upon application to the Secretary.
 - (x) Correctly submitted nomination papers for Officers and Committee are available for inspection.
 - (xi) He expressed his thanks to Wollaton RMS, particularly to Bill Clarke and Ron Starling, for hosting the meeting. And there is a host vacancy for the 2018 AGM.
 - (xii) A comment from the floor pointed out that Ramsbottom society is very successful.
- The Chairman thanked the Secretary for his comprehensive report.

8. Confirmation of next year's Committee.

A schedule of the names of Officers and Committee members had been circulated and their confirmation was unanimously approved.

9. Appointment of Accounts Examiners.

The Treasurer reported that Ruth Williams and David Brook were willing to serve and suitably qualified. Their re-appointment was unanimously approved.

10. Any Other Business

- (i) The Chairman reported the death of Donald Rooksby, sometime member of Derby RMS and former senior executive of Hyperion Records.
- (ii) Tony Baines had pointed out that many societies do not meet in September and suggested moving the AGM to late November; this would not infringe the Constitution. The Treasurer advised that a date in January would be acceptable.
- (iii) Commenting on the Chairman's letter, Graham Ladley (Oswestry RMS) speculated on the possibility of FRMS becoming a branch of U3A. Philip Ashton (Radlett RMS) advised that he runs three U3A groups. Brian Godfrey (Radlett RMS) mentioned the possibility of a link with Making Music (formerly NFMS).
- (iv) Attention was drawn to a large selection of CDs which were for sale.

11. Closure

The Chairman thanked delegates for their attendance and complimented Wollaton RMS for the meeting arrangements and thanked the Committee for their support.

The meeting closed at 15.15.