



Three Rivers Music Society
Rickmansworth

Registered Charity no.
1035666

DRAFT MINUTES

Annual General Meeting – Monday, September 2nd, 2024 at 5.00pm Venue - LPS Accountants, SUITE 3 WENZEL HOUSE OLDS APPROACH WATFORD WD18 9AB

Attendees: Cllr Raj Khiroya, Ash Patil (AP), Ronnie Jacob (RJ), Philippa Jacob (PJ), John Donegan (JD), Sue Howse (SH), Alistair Howse (AH), Denise Wellham (DW) and David Budge (DB).

Attending via Zoom: Ann Vernau, Mick Currey, and Beryl and Michael Baker.

Welcome: AP said he was delighted to welcome Cllr Khiroya, Chair of Three Rivers District Council, to the meeting in his capacity as president of TRMS.

Resignations: AP proposed that the resignations of longstanding committee members and trustees Steven Halls, Irvin Needle and Mick Currey be accepted. JD seconded. AP paid tribute to the ex-committee members, expressed sincere heartfelt gratitude for their dedication to TRMS for the past 8 years and said he was also extremely grateful to John Norris, a loyal supporter of TRMS, for hosting the society's website all these years.

Trustees: AP explained that SH, AH, JD and DB did not want to be trustees in future because of liability concerns. RJ and PJ were, however, prepared to become trustees, as was Owen Edis (OE), who was unable to attend the AGM because of his wife's illness (the decision on OE's trusteeship was consequently deferred). AP was also happy to continue as a trustee. AP proposed that, in view of the changes relating to trusteeship, TRMS should have a two-tier structure – a four-person group of trustees and an executive committee consisting of the trustees and JD, SH, DW and DB.

AH said he had no objection to AP's proposals but the society would have to be consistent in its language and avoid using "executive committee" in some places and "committee" in others.

AP said he would produce a recommendation on how to deal with the liability issue by the middle of October. RJ suggested that seeking the status of a "company limited by degree" might be the best way of addressing the liability problem. But public liability insurance would be needed too.

Finance

AP reported that TRMS had just £750 left in its bank account and would have run out of funds a year or two earlier if there had not been a £5,000 bequest from a former TRMS member.

RJ suggested that TRMS could ask for financial support from the county council's locality funds, which are sums of money that each councillor can spend on local projects that promote the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of their area. He said he had also informed AP of another funding source that might contribute £1,000.

Cllr Khiroya suggested approaching ward councillors and members of Batchworth District Council. They might be able to provide a few hundred pounds.

The accounts prepared by the former treasurer, Irvin Needle, were approved and RJ noted that they had been signed off by a chartered accountant in May 2024.

AH proposed that in future the financial year should end in May/June as most of the pre-summer concerts should have been held by then.

Appointments

AP was re-elected chair of the society and PJ was appointed treasurer. DW said she wanted to scale back her TRMS activities but would carry on acting as a signatory and collect concert admission money. SH indicated that she was prepared to continue taking responsibility for refreshments. AH, however, said he was reluctant to produce material for concert programmes as he believed it was better if the musicians themselves introduced the pieces they were about to play. In his opinion this helped to establish a better rapport between the performers and their audiences. AP said he politely disagreed. The programme, in his opinion, creates “not only a useful record but also the society can get some money beyond recovering the costs. Every penny helps. Besides the artists can still introduce their pieces the normal way as they may want”.

DB said he would continue marketing TRMS concerts but would welcome help with this task as it had become harder to attract free advertising in the diminishing number of local news publications. It was also no longer as easy as it had been to publicise concerts on Three Rivers District Council noticeboards. Cllr. Khiroya said he would do what he could to ensure that our flyers were displayed but he could not, of course, offer guarantees.

Future venue/s for concerts

AP reported that he had been investigating a number of potential venues: Our Lady Help of Christians RC Church, the Barbirolli Hall at St Clement Danes School, the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, and Church Gardens Harefield.

One complication was that TRMS no longer had a piano as the one we had used for our Baptist Church concerts had belonged to Steven Halls, the society’s former programme director. AP added, however, that some of the alternative venues, such as Our Lady, had their own pianos. Cllr. Khiroya said he had close connections with Rickmansworth School, which also had a piano. He had been a governor at York House School too for many years. He would therefore help if the society were interested in hiring premises at either school.

The society’s future

AP said that, despite the financial difficulties that had been outlined he believed the society did have a future, provided there was tight control on costs, sensible ticket prices, increased charges for refreshments and improved marketing.

JD believed it was vital to recruit younger members and there was some discussion on how to attract secondary, as well as primary, pupils to TRMS concerts. Additional grants would be key to securing TRMS’s future too, he said.

SH pointed out that music educationist Tim Smith, the co-founder of Kids Choir Harrow, had recently been appointed organist at St Mary’s, Rickmansworth. AP said the society would be keen to work with him.

SH added that we needed to attract a well-known name to bring people to our concerts.

Cllr Khiroya promised to help in any way he can – in particular through the district and county councillors from their budget for grants as well as facilitating introduction with the Rickmansworth School with a view to having their Assembly Hall as a possible venue for TRMS concerts; they do have a grand piano.

Next meeting

It was agreed that there should be a follow-up meeting before the October half-term to report on the progress that had been made regarding grants and the most suitable venue/s for future concerts.

ENDS/.....**Contribution by David Budge**