

Opera South East – Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 22nd January 2017

Held at the Hastings and Rother Voluntary Association for the Blind,
Taplin Centre, Upper Maze Hill, St. Leonards on Sea, East Sussex



President	Vacant
Vice Presidents	Mrs A Norcross
Hon. Life Members	Mr R Bugden, Mr M Craven, Mr P Dengate, Mrs I Eton, Mr R Evans, Mrs B Muffitt, Mrs A O'Connor, Mrs S Pybus, Mrs B Spackman

Trustees present: John Rycroft (Chairman), Clare Calcott-James (Treasurer), Greg Solomon (Secretary), Julia Bovee, Karen McNally, Gillian Muhlemann, Kim Clarke

Other Members present: Sue Pybus, Betty Muffitt, Juliette Vane, David Thompson, Shirley Morter, Gerald Hewson, Maxine Wright-Moore

In attendance: Ken Roberts, Martin Hall

The Chairman opened the meeting at 4:18pm and thanked Members for attending.

1. Apologies & announcements of any conflicts of interest

Apologies received from Lesley Moore and Tina Goddard. There were no conflicts of interest reported.

2. Minutes of the last general meeting

2.1. Agreement of minutes of the meeting of Sunday 22nd January 2017

The Chairman read out the minutes of the last AGM, which included noting the desire for more social events and more members, and marking the passing of Bill van Draat, Jeremy Birch, and Doreen Fisher.

No corrections were recorded. Kim Clarke proposed that minutes be adopted as an accurate reflection of the meeting, Julia Bovee seconded, and the meeting unanimously agreed. They were duly signed.

2.2. Actions and matters arising from the last meeting

There were no matters arising.

3. Reports and accounts

a) Chairman's report

John reported the committee had reviewed the plans for one main production annually, which was still needed, and in the light of the extremely poor attendance of Macbeth in 2016, this years The Magic Flute had to be a success for us if OSE is to have a future. It was a shame more people did not experience our production, though praise was strongly expressed in the Letters column and in two letters John read out.

Carol concerts have long been our tradition but didn't attract the size of audience we had hoped for.

Upcoming events include the Holocaust Memorial Service, a screening of The Magic Flute, Julia's Cream Teas in July, Juliette's Fun Day in August, Gillian's Fun & Frolics, *singing with Julia, Barnaby and Toby*, Ken's Gershwin night at the Emmanuel Centre, two summer concerts, and our joining forces with Clash at Sussex Coast College.

One of our social events in 2016 was poorly attended and we need to be more productive in our participation in many areas of OSE work, including fundraising and helping. New members are needed.

John noted with sadness the death of Silvia Fletcher.

Finally, John thanked those Members who had lent OSE money, thanked Lesley for her work as Librarian (with support from Gillian and Julia) and thanked the Committee for their roles. More space was needed for the library filing and Members were requested to consider making space available.

b) Music Director's report

Ken commented on the apparent discrepancy between our artistic quality and the tragic number of tickets sold for Macbeth, as an example. If we had twice the number of Members then we would be selling more tickets.

Ken expressed gratitude to all for participation in Clash, and thanked members of the Committee.

c) Treasurer's report - Presentation of annual accounts and report of the charity trustees and the auditors

Clare distributed a summary of the management accounts, and presented the audited accounts for the year-ending September 2015 with a copy available at the meeting. The outcome was a £6,000 deficit on income of £11,000, leaving loans of £16,000 outstanding. However the Committee were still committed to The Magic Flute. Julia noted The Magic Flute budget was approved.

Karennina asked if we had explored funding. Maxine suggested referring to the Directory of Grant Making Trusts. Karennina offered to pursue, and to make a proposal on Crowd Funding.

Julia stressed the importance of getting our name out locally and just being seen, e.g. flash-mobs and the Fringe Festival. Gerry suggested we advertise the letter that John read out. Martin Hall had some of experience of marketing and may be able to help.

4. **Motion: Adoption of accounts**

Julia proposed the accounts and Juliette seconded. Members at the meeting unanimously agreed to adopt the annual accounts for year ending 2015. John noted the accounts were duly adopted.

5. **Motion: Future Subscriptions**

Members agreed to leave the annual subscriptions unchanged for 2016-17 on last year, i.e. £75 with concessions to £60 for over-18s in full-time education. (Non-members joining their first opera production were charged a £30 performance fee.) Clare proposed that in future years the fee rise by £5 p.a. and be reviewed again when it reaches £100.

Ken suggested asking Sandra for a list of target poster locations.

Shirley noted our concert ticket prices are cheap (£8) compared with other companies (£12).

Maxine suggested auditioning for new chorus using a competition or competitive approach.

Exit donations were suggested instead of ticket fees.

Shirley suggested Saturdays instead of Sundays for Christmas Carols.

Sue noted the word 'opera' could be a barrier to recruitment.

Kim supported Julia's proposal of advertising by public presentation/flash choirs.

Gillian noted the Claremont verses Vinehall rivalry may help us and it may be worth exploiting Vinehall now for this Christmas.

Ken suggested using the Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves for a flash choir or popular scratch choir day.

Discussed workshop ideas and approaches involving presented a piece of finished opera by experienced members of the company.

For 2017-18 subscriptions Clare proposed the £5 rise to £80 (concessions £65). Julia seconded. The company unanimously agreed these membership fees.

6. **Election of officers**

The Chairman summarised the Committee as being: John Rycroft, Clare Calcott-James, Greg Solomon, Julia Bovee, Karen McNally, Gillian Muhlemann and Kim Clarke.

a) **Election of Chairman**

John stepped down as Chairman and passed the meeting chair to the Secretary, who thanked John for his work as Chairman and asked if there were any other candidates for Chairman. No nominations were forthcoming and John was re-elected for the forthcoming year by the Members. John took the chair again and noted thanks to all.

b) **Hon. Secretary**

There being no other nominations for Secretary Members voted to reappoint Greg as Company Secretary.

c) **Hon. Treasurer**

There being no other nominations for Treasurer, Members voted to appoint Clare as Treasurer.

d) **Committee Members**

Karen was due for re-election under the rules of rotation.

Julia proposed and Clare seconded the motion and the meeting unanimously voted in favour.

7. **Appointment of independent examiner**

It was proposed by Clare that David Hawkins of Gibbons Mannington & Phipps continue in the role of Independent Examiner. Julia seconded the motion and Members unanimously voted in favour.

8. **Membership Discussion and Motion – Membership Numbers**

Adoption of a strategy for OSE growth was discussed based around:

'Proposed that Members actively support steps to grow membership numbers and the number of OSE events'

Maxine offered to produce something towards a strategy for membership growth.

Julia requested Members consider locations for flashmob events and advise her.

Whiles there was broad member agreement on the idea, no specific motion was voted on.

9. **A.O.B.**

John thanked Betty and Sue for attending.

Betty noted she had not heard of all our 2016 events and did not get a letter in the year. Gillian reported she has now taken over communications with Benefactors, which should help. Julia noted the financial benefits to OSE of encouraging people to get our opera tickets through our Benefactors scheme.

Gillian thanked Ken for his generosity and professionalism he encourages us to achieve, helping our strong reputation with our audience and with principals.

Julia asked if anyone knows of a shop window. Kim had a contact in Queens Road: Anne Lyon and Pat. Gillian mentioned Sue Kidd. Kim mentioned empty shops in Priory Meadow.

There being no other business to discuss the meetings was duly closed at 5:55pm.