

Sunderland Symphony Orchestra

Formerly: City of Sunderland Millennium Orchestral Society (CoSMOS)

Minutes of Committee Meeting

7.15pm online via Zoom Video Link: Wednesday 1st April 2020

Chair: Ged McCormack

Present: Ged McCormack (GMcC), Louise Baxter (LB), Mark Greenfield (MG), John Lennox (JLen), Joy Lowther (JL), Brian Naisby (BN), Peter Chapman (PC), Lynne Dakers (LD), John Harding (JH), Dave Milner (DM), Matthew Burge (MB)

Also taking part: Judith Thompson (JT), Nikola Zalas (NZ), Sophia Pearson (SP)

Apologies: Emma Mapplebeck (EP), Sheila Rayson (SR)

Matters Arising, Comments, Agenda Items: (organised for easier reading links)	Points to Follow up
<p>1, 2 and 3</p> <p>Welcome, Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising (some in agenda items):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ged McCormack chaired the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance in this unusual, but welcome, setting, made necessary by the pandemic of March 2020 onwards.We welcome Ged's pragmatic approach at this time.JT was thanked for her service on the committee and for returning for tonight's meeting to support ways forward.We are grateful that other members of the orchestra with specific skills and interest in digital electronic possibilities also joined the meeting to give advice and guidance.The minutes of 27th February were accepted as a true record by all present.Many matters arising continue to be 'pending' due to the uncertain future	
<p>4</p> <p>AGM Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The AGM business was carried out electronically. Thanking MB for managing this efficiently and JL's minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record of events.32 respondents. This was two more than last year's attendance which included a rehearsal so it's good that engagement was maintained.	NB late postal response allowed- apologies for absence from Win Lundgren

5

Finance Report (2019 Report and Current Position:

- PC needs time to study the reports thoroughly and report more fully.
- The financial situation appears strong with the recommended two year back-up intact.
- There is a surplus to cover the immediate months, complete the ACE review and consider possibilities to keep the society in the strong a position reached by March 2020. See Item 6.
- PC is liaising with the former treasurer to set in place banking procedures. A mandate can be easily set up to do so as he already has accounts in the same bank chain.
- He favours an electronic transfer rather than the manual one which David and Kathleen Mills would prefer. It seems sensible to utilise the electronic method in the current situation.
- There are sufficient signature holders to the account currently – PC, JL and BN. GMcC is willing to be a fourth if and when this can be set up electronically.
- JH requested information on Performing Rights Fees for March concert. A figure of 154 paid ticket holders has been recorded. This differs from the audience number due to a large group of dignatories, patrons, friends, invited guests and helpers being present (around 50).

PC
Bank transfer to be transacted asap by electronic means if at all possible.
GMcC to be fourth signatory

Arts Council Bid Discussion:

- MB had sent out a paper detailing considerable progress and achievements realised through the current ACE Project which is now complete.
- Success due to enthusiasm, creativity and diligence of all concerned. Through this, and his expert guidance, impressive figures achieved in terms of meeting outcomes and many additional benefits. All figures and ongoing review materials to hand, ready to complete the final report, now due.
- Due to the national emergency, ACE funding has been redirected and all bids (including SSO's second bid) are now void. However, MB feels that SSO meets the criteria for the new Emergency Bids for sustainability; organisational development in readiness for restarting normal orchestra business and moving forward when we can; and developing schemes to keep members connected while engaging in new and exciting public facing projects which can meet the goals of the forthcoming strategy 'Let's Create'. MB has a lot of audio recordings of recent concerts which could be utilised on a variety of creative platforms.
- The month of April will be used to complete the ACE review, try out a variety of online and electronic interfaces and to explore and, if appropriate, make plans and present an alternative bid for ACE funding.
- GMCC asked everyone present to comment on the proposal to apply to ACE to keep the infrastructure going and be creative and dynamic.
- All present were asked to comment and their comments are expressed (not entirely verbatim) below:-
- Not really got the passion for it (possibly a lot of work for little gain or quality)
- I can help in a digital medium and have time right now. At present Social Media is not engaging a large following because it does not reach out to our audience demographic (but we want to expand that)
- Opportunity for departure from normal; tried ensemble recording but required a lot of takes to merge each part but could be ways to collate parts digitally. I have time to explore this. Short videos of no more than 2 minutes go down well
- Already at work devising small group lessons for schools so no time to help
- Interested in this but no personal time to get involved in organising or devising
- Keen to develop something that members want to use
- No experience to bring
- No time to give as on front line
- Keen to do anything to keep membership buoyant and support community
- It would be a lot of work to ensure quality but there are things we could do that are fun and just need a musical starting point and then people to interact and someone to collate it all – example of birthday video; good to extend the WhatsApp Group for socialising and sharing ideas and to share examples of good practice such as the Berlin Philharmonic's web link
- If we have the capacity to do this in the time available then it is time well spent and will keep us together. Developing the website's reach is worthwhile
- Use and add to our 'footage' to profile sections of the orchestra eg This is the percussion...
- WhatsApp can be used to keep us together socially eg an online music quiz
- Very keen to achieve some of our goals and have support to do this and feel it is important to contribute to those who rely on work in the sector
- While orchestral performances are daunting on line, singing seems to be one way that is easier – Acapella is a good vehicle for this, also Gareth Malone's online choir.
- MB outlined tasks the bid could encompass: policy review; incorporation agenda; educational remit; digital/public facing/member-engaging activity
- Use the good recordings from The Point, Christmas and Marching and Waltzing. The piece 'Ave Verum' (Christmas Concert) may be a good one to start

<p>7</p> <p>SSO actions during Covid-19 lockdown:</p> <p>A. West Park rental: It was felt that BB should be consulted about his expectations regarding the ongoing rent of WPC. The orchestra needs this storage and office facility but cannot utilise the space in any other way at present. However, we are not keen to disadvantage our landlord who has been incredibly flexible and supportive. GMcC will visit the office and arrange to discuss this subject with BB asap.</p> <p>B. Membership Fees: There had been a plan to raise the membership fees from January 2021 (108, 63,75,38). This has been deferred for discussion at the next General Meeting in 6-8 months. Members pay fees in a range of ways, including annually and monthly. We want to allow flexibility for individual situations so we will suggest that each member makes their own decision regarding ongoing payment of fees. Membership of the SSO will not rely on payment of fees while the crisis affects ability to pay. However, SSO welcomes those who can pay continuing to do so to support the financial resilience of the orchestra.</p> <p>C. Whatsapp Group: This is seen as a great way for members to keep in touch socially and JL will send out a request asking members to sign up through LD's phone number. LD will manage this group. Everyone is to be encouraged to contribute ideas for musical exchanges between members while we are isolated.</p> <p>D. Digital Music Groups for members and public: This was discussed in detail in Item 6 and a group emerged to take it forward. They will meet on Friday 3rd April.</p>	<p>GMcC speak with BB re rent- done - agreed 50% reduction</p> <p>Who ? Email to be sent to all members asking that fees are maintained if possible but recognising that individual members can decide to suspend their fee payments if needed</p> <p>JL – share LD's phone number for joining WhatsApp</p> <p>MG, SP, JL, GMcC, NZ, MB planning Group to meet Fri. 03.04.20 at 6pm</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Governance and Administration Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMcC will attend the office and work through available documentation to assess any pressing admin requirements. • It is important to check insurance renewal dates • JL is content for her home address to be used as the official postal address for documentation (addressed to SSO Secretary rather than by name – assume financial papers would go directly to SSO Treasurer?) • New Committee members will need to be made Trustees in line with the current constitution. The current Trustees are DEM, KM, MG, JL, BN, LD, PC and JT (JT, KM, DEM will all be removed and replaced by GMcC, LB.) PC said he was able to make the immediate changes required. • It was pointed out that in the current terms of governance all trustees are legally responsible. • The proposed changes will alleviate them of this responsibility in law. 	<p>PC to notify Charities Commission with immediate changes</p>
<p>9</p> <p>AOB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None stated but JL meant to mention belated correspondence from Gareth Williams which has been sent to others by email. These concern free online events run by the organisation 'Making Music' and include the topics 'Making the Most of your Online Presence' (25th April and 17th May) and 'Growing Your Membership' with a focus on under 35s (21st April) 	
<p>Date and Time of Next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 30th April at 7.15 (Zoom meeting room open from 7pm) 	<p>Dates in diaries</p>