

DRAFT Minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting
of the Hertfordshire Philharmonia,
held on 27 September 2007 at Applecroft School, Welwyn Garden City.



Present: 30 members out of 45 eligible. (Quorum = 10%).

Sent apologies for being absent: four members.

Chairman's report on the 2006-7 season: Stuart Walker welcomed members to the meeting and reviewed his highlights of the season, including Shostakovitch 8, the improved carols concert and its narrator, and the Elgar-violin and Mozart-flute&harp concerti (both with stunning soloists). The Elgar was Adrian Brown's last, and best, concert with us.

In the current season, we were looking to improve ticket sales with an experimental £10-in-advance ticket (on-the-door will be up from £12 to a still-competitive £12.50). More violins, violas and even cellos were needed, and it was important for the artistic and financial future of the HP that all players play all concerts. In stepping down, he thanked the Committee for making his own job so easy, and presented gifts to Stef Fano, Jeremy Goggins, Stephen Latham, the Coxes and the Secretary. He also thanked the Section Fixers, but the loudest applause was for June Martin (rehearsal refreshments).

Minutes of the 2006 AGM had been circulated and were approved by the meeting as a correct record. The Chairman noted that our "GiftAid" scheme had started with that AGM, and that we had met two other targets set by that AGM: to perform in a new venue [Hitchin, March 2008], and to secure revenue-earning work.

Treasurer's Report: Jeremy Goggins distributed and presented the orchestra's 2006-7 season accounts, certified by an independent examiner. He observed that Ticket and Subscription income (our two main revenues) were each down £400 over the previous year, and the loss for the year was £740. Subscriptions had at one time been held absurdly low, but should (he recommended) increase each year by modest (~£5) increments. This was agreed in principle by the meeting. Subscriptions (now £100, earlybird £80) were better value than evening classes and lower than many other orchestras. Our first GiftAid reclaim [proceeding thanks to hard work by Ken Melbourne] was currently with HMRC and would be worth about £850. The Treasurer suggested that non-tax-payers (who could not themselves sign a GiftAid declaration) could legitimately have their subs paid by a tax-paying friend or relative, who could make such a declaration.

Our carried-forward reserves were being used to subsidise the current season's works such as Elgar 1.

To replace a player who opted to miss a concert could wipe out that player's entire annual subscription. The meeting agreed that a letter be sent out, reminding members of this.

Election of independent person to examine the 2007-8 accounts: Mr David Cantwell of Harpenden had kindly examined the 2006-7 accounts to general approval, and was understood to be willing to continue. There being no other nominations, he was duly elected by the meeting.

Election of trustees: Seven nominations were put forward, one for each of for the seven elected trustee positions, and the meeting elected them by acclamation as follows:

Chairman = Ian Brown; Treasurer = Jeremy Goggins; Orchestra Manager = Stefanie Fano; Publicity Officer = John Cox; Librarian = Stephen Latham; Secretary = Peter Neville; Seventh Trustee = Stuart Walker.

General discussion:

Punctuality at rehearsals: Players should make every effort to arrive on time, especially as the rehearsals were now ¼ hour shorter.

Rehearsal discipline: Chattering at rehearsals is discourteous to the conductor and wastes time.

Programme selection: The Committee picks too-difficult works, which drives our regular players away, forces us to buy in replacements, and cuts our paying audiences. This led to a lively debate, with rebuttals such as: player absenteeism is being wrongly attributed - three string players are recent/expectant mothers; players ask to play challenging works; this orchestra needs to carve its own niche away from hackneyed classics; and: as a symphony orchestra not a chamber orchestra, we must expect large difficult works.

Fixers were asked (to shed light on the above) to note why players were declining specific concerts.

Playing membership: We were continually having to make up natural losses in membership. We should invite our friends to join. Looking to the future, we should invite sixth-formers (free subs?) in the hope they will remember and come back to us after University.

There being **no further business**, the Chairman thanked everybody for attending and contributing, and closed the meeting.

Peter Neville, Secretary, 01438-714394