**FEDERATION OF RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETIES**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held by Zoom on Saturday 2 November 2024.

**1.** Chairman Tony Sanderson welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for participating. He ascertained from the Secretary that the meeting was quorate, 14 affiliate societies being represented at that stage (this increased to 15 later in the meeting when Ian Bailey from Orpington RMS joined). The Federation’s two Vice Presidents were also present.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** The Secretary reported that apologies had been received from the following affiliates: Milford-on-Sea RMS, and the Vocal Arts Society.

**3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM** held by Zoom in 2023 had been circulated to all affiliates. They were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record.

**4. MATTERS ARISING.** All items for discussion were on the meeting’s main agenda.

**5. CHAIRMAN’S REVIEW.** Tony Sanderson (Northampton RMS) gave his first report as Chairman. He reported that he had hoped to complete two main tasks during the year: visiting a number of affiliate societies, and producing a Newsletter. In the event, the first aim had been thwarted by a period of very serious illness and long hospitalisation, making visits impossible. He hoped to rectify this by making some telephone calls when he was well enough.

However, the Chairman was pleased to report that the second aim – the production of a Newsletter – had been achieved and the Newsletter had been distributed in September, receiving very positive feedback. He had used the Newsletter as a way of introducing himself to affiliate societies, writing about his musical interests and recent concerts. The Newsletter has also provided an opportunity for FRMS Treasurer, Paul Godfrey, to update members on his composing work. It was planned to have another Newsletter published by the end of March 2025 and it was hoped to include an article contributed by someone outside of the FRMS eg something celebrating the LSO’s 120th anniversary, or a piece by music journalist Norman Lebrecht or composer Joanna Marsh.

The Chairman reported that overall this had been a more stable year for the FRMS and there had been fewer society closures. He registered his disappointment that the music weekend is currently in abeyance which means there remain very few opportunities for social interaction. The Torbay weekend is now the only music weekend taking place but the future even of this event is in question. However, the Federation is now relatively secure and it was hoped that this would continue for many years.

**6. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND TREASURER’S REPORT.** Paul Corfield Godfrey (Cardiff RMS) referred to the papers that had been circulated in advance and reported that he had received no queries. He reported that the Independent Examiners had certified the accounts as correct. The burden of financial work had reduced over the last few years as there were no longer large expenses such as the music weekend or the Bulletin, and all meetings were being held by Zoom. With support from the Secretary who assisted in sending out annual invoices, the workload was currently manageable. In spite of the Treasurer’s best efforts, no-one had come forward to take on the role so, as his composing responsibilities continue to increase, this still remains a priority.

One major logistical problem was the closure of local bank branches. The majority of societies still pay by cheque rather than by bank transfer and this necessitated a trip to a bank branch to deposit them. The Treasurer aimed to do this on a monthly basis when he was visiting Cardiff but could not guarantee that this would happen more regularly.

The Chairman recommended that the report be accepted and this was agreed unanimously. David Wherrell also proposed a vote of thanks for the work of the Treasurer and the Secretary in keeping abreast of the Federation’s finances - this was seconded by Paul Astell and accepted unanimously.

Clive Millman (Northampton RMS) asked about the possibility of using banking hubs, but the Treasurer reported that all of his local banks have now closed. Liz Brereton (Carshalton and Wallington RMS) suggested using the Post Office, but this option is also not available.

**7. SECRETARY’S REPORT.** Adele Wills (Street and Glastonbury RMG) reported that this had been a quieter and more settled year. This time last year, there had been 75 affiliates which had reduced to the current number of 69 – a steady trickle of closures but nothing as significant as the years following the Covid pandemic. Some societies remained at risk and Rochdale RMS is due to close on 13 December, but generally numbers look stable.

However, the greatest risk to the Federation is the loss of committee members. With George Steele stepping down, the committee now stands at 5 members – the constitution allows for 10 members, so we are operating at half capacity. In addition, the loss of a key officer could be catastrophic, particularly with skilled roles such as the Treasurer or the Website Manager. With the help of the Website Manager, a shared cloud storage area has been established where key documents are kept and are accessible to all members. This means that, should anyone be incapacitated, others would have access to information needed and business could proceed on a temporary basis. This does not, however, provide a long-term solution and the committee needs more flexibility with new members who might be willing to provide an ‘under-study’ for key roles.

On a more positive note, the committee has been delighted with the recent Newsletter which is a high quality and interesting publication. The Secretary recorded her gratitude to the Chairman for producing this in very difficult circumstances. The committee and other attendees also wished to register their thanks to the Chairman. This is, however, another example where a key responsibility – production of the Newsletter - has been distributed among remaining members rather than a new member taking on the responsibility. Similarly, David Wherrell has assumed George Steele’s role as Vice Chairman – and George has taken on one of the vacant Vice President roles. We are probably now stretched as far as is possible without breaking!

The Secretary reported that the new committee for 2024/25 would be as reported in the committee report and she finally thanked everyone again for their attendance.

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks for the Secretary’s work which was seconded by Liz Brereton (Carshalton and Wallington RMS) and unanimously agreed.

**8. CONFIRMATION OF COMMITTEE AS PER COMMITTEE LIST 2024/25.** The following committee members have been confirmed for 2024/25:

* Tony Sanderson (Northampton RMS) – Chairman
* David Wherrell (Letchworth RMS) – Vice Chairman
* Adele Wills (Street and Glastonbury RMG) – Honorary Secretary
* Paul Corfield Godfrey (Cardiff RMS and Committee Nomination) – Honorary Treasurer
* Ron Mitchell (Leicester Music Society) – Website Manager and Committee

The committee for 2024/25 was unanimously approved.

It was also agreed that George Steele would take on the vacant role of Vice President. The Chairman gave a speech of thanks to George for his service to the FRMS which was followed by committee members voicing their own gratitude, particularly in relation to the Federation’s website whose design remained largely George’s work. The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks for George which was seconded by David Wherrell and unanimously agreed.

**9. APPOINTMENT OF ACCOUNTS EXAMINERS.** The Treasurer reported that Ruth Williams and David Brook were willing to serve and suitably qualified. Their reappointment was unanimously approved.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

a. Gavin Mist (York RMS) asked the Website Manager if it would be possible for individual societies to have an access code for their section of the website for updating information without having to trouble him. The Website Manager thought not but he would reflect on this and report back.

b. David Wherrell (Vice Chairman) and Ian Bailey (Orpington RMS – who had now joined the meeting) gave an update on the Torbay Music Weekend. Clive Millman (Northampton RMS) suggested that consideration could be given to holding a biennial event rather than annual. This would be raised at the next Torbay AGM. Gavin Mist (York RMS) gave information on the CLPGS weekend held in Malvern in October which had been well attended. It was agreed that the organisations would work together to promote events.

**11.** The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and hoped to see everyone at next year’s AGM. He declared the meeting closed at 2.45 pm.