

**MAWSON ROAD COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Sunday 29th September, St John's Church

Members Present:

Amanda, Lucia, Lorna, Liz W., Jasmine, Emily, Richard, Elisabeth, Mike C., Simon, Claire, Metta, Beate, Dave H., Gina, Aparimana, Gary, Jon, Dave T., Nuala, Neil, Teresa, Mansel, Eliot, Edmund, Bev, Mercedesz, Carol Thure, Anna, Vic (Committee) Michael (Director)

1) Apologies for absence were received from Tamsin and Liz H.

2) The Minutes of the AGM of 1st October, 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair. No matters arose from the Minutes which were not covered under listed agenda items.

3) Committee Membership: Anna, Thure and Vic stood for re-election in their current roles; it was not clear whether Daniel wished to continue on the Committee or not, as he is away at present. It was proposed that he should remain a member of the Committee and if he should wish to stand down, we could conduct the election of a replacement by emailing the membership. The election of these four Committee members was proposed by Gina and seconded by Aparimana and agreed by the membership.

Liz H. had given notice of her intention to stand down and members were asked to consider serving in her stead. Gary Stephenson was proposed by Bev, seconded by Amanda and duly elected to join the Committee.

Membership of the Committee will next be reviewed at the AGM of Autumn 2026.

4) Financial Report: Vic updated the meeting on the current state of the MRCO's finances. A summary of his report will be posted with these Minutes on the website. Vic commented that costs have risen; the Church has increased the hire charges for the concert venue and from January 2025, the cost of the rehearsal room will also be higher. Fewer subs have been collected this term; membership is slightly down on the summer term and on present projections, the MRCO will end this term £370 down on the summer term.

Vic explained that the MRCO fund is run on a cash basis, where the income for the year should cover all regular expenditure, such as room hire, subscription to Sibelius and payments to the Directors. Concerts fund themselves and profits are usually given to a chosen charity. The MRCO has recently been able to carry forward a 'cushion' of between £1,500 - £1,800 from year to year. This is considered prudent provision against any unforeseen expenditure. When asked to comment further on what kind of unexpected expense might arise, the example of a concert video, costing £250 was given.

A member asked if concert proceeds could be retained for the orchestra; there is nothing to prevent this but the membership expressed the opinion that the orchestra should continue to work with local charity partners in the community.

Additional concerts were suggested and Michael said that the MRCO had given more than two concerts in the year in some previous years. If we were to give additional concerts, proceeds from these could be kept for the orchestra. Ticket prices have remained the same for some time; they are attractive but we could consider an increase in future.

A question about the additional hire cost of the Wilkinson Room for the Silverwood Ensemble was raised. The members of that Ensemble were asked over a year ago if they would be prepared to pay an additional subscription; they were prepared to do so but a reasonable increase to their subs would not cover the full cost of the room hire, which in reality costs the orchestra an extra hour per week. All members of the Ensemble are orchestra members and pay subs. No viable alternative arrangement has yet been proposed.

5) Subscriptions: the Committee, at its recent meeting of 19th September, considered raising subscriptions to reflect the rise in costs. Subscriptions to the MRCO have remained the same since the beginning in 2012. The proposal is a rise of £10 per term for all adult members to £65; £15 per term for family membership to £95 and £32.50 for junior members who are not part of a family membership. This represents a rise of about 20% in subscriptions.

In the light of the financial update and the fact that there had been no rise in rates since 2012, the membership voted by a large majority of 29, with two abstentions and no votes against, to increase the subscriptions as proposed, from January 2025.

6) Venue: in response to some members raising concerns about noise levels at rehearsals, the Committee met and discussed options. Notes of the discussions are recorded. It was agreed to investigate the renovated Salvation Army Hall. This is a splendid venue, well adapted for rehearsing a large group but it would be more costly than St John's and the main issue was that they could not guarantee the MRCO a slot every Sunday; there would be some Sundays when the Hall would be used by others. This was felt to be a significant disadvantage.

Some other venues have been suggested (eg St Luke's Church off Victoria Road) and the Committee was asked by the membership to continue to look at alternatives. When considering any alternatives, we must keep in mind what we would be losing at St John's. The Church is an excellent organisation and their costs, even with the proposed increases, remain very reasonable. As a concert venue it is very good and becoming increasingly popular.

7) Concert Planning: plans are well underway for the forthcoming concert on November 30th. With the popularity of the church as a venue in mind, it will be necessary for Vic to book the summer concert as soon as possible. He will ask the Church what dates are available in June/July and then put this to the membership. Meanwhile, members are asked to let us know as soon as possible which dates are to be avoided. To date we have received two dates which would prove difficult: **Saturdays 28th June and 5th July.** Romsey Mill, a charity doing useful youth work, was suggested as a possible cause for a future concert.

8) There was no other business.

The meeting finished at 17.03; many thanks for your attendance.

Signed:

Date: