



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Ashmansworth at 10.30am on Saturday 9 July 2022

Present: Martin Bussey (Chairman), Paul Ives (Vice Chairman), Ian Wadhams (Treasurer), Eric Hazelwood (Secretary), and Committee Members Gavin Roberts and Geoffrey Allan Taylor.

Ian & Francesca Bingham, Christopher Boodle, David & Maggie Brain, Nick & Flora Brook, David & Rachel Button, Hugh Cobbe, Nigel & Julie Evans, Pat Ives, Barry Lingard, Tim Marshall, Jennie McGregor-Smith, Brian Midgley, Sue Parker, Jim Page, Edward Rigg, Sue Thackeray & John Sasportas, David Townend, Nick and Dianne Turner, Adrian & Norma Williams,

1. Apologies

David & Marjory Cashmore, Alan Cudmore & Hazel Thompson, Astrid Hazelwood, Doug Mears (USA), Ruth Sharville & Arian, Diana McVeagh

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous AGM – Financial Year 2019/20

The minutes of the previous meeting held at Churchdown on 4 September 2021 were circulated for review and were accepted as a true record of the proceedings. Acceptance was proposed by Barry Lingard and seconded by Paul Ives.

3. Matters Arising

There were no issues from the previous minutes that needed clarification or resolution.

4. Chairman's Report

“Looking back seems slightly invidious at a time when we all need to be looking forward to re-energising musical life in the coming months and years. We are not over Covid yet, of course, but we need to support artists, composers and promoters as they pick up the pieces of much disruption and seek to encourage audiences back to live music making. It is good to be able to hold a ‘live’ AGM in sequence, following on from last year’s meeting held in Churchdown in September. Then we were able to celebrate in some style the publication of Finzi’s letters in Diana McVeagh’s volume which continues to stimulate and inform us all. Sadly, Diana has had to give her apologies for today, but the impact of her work continues, as witnessed in the Finzi Letters concert at Ludlow, due to be repeated at Wigmore Hall in October.

At Churchdown we also enjoyed a stimulating recital built round the letters, the forerunner of the eventual programme just mentioned. The readers on that occasion, Paul Spicer and Martin Bussey, gave way to alternative speakers at Ludlow in Kate Kennedy, Donald Macleod and Ian Skelly! We enjoyed the energised and accomplished singing of Florian Panzneri, of whom we heard more at Ludlow and will do in the future. The presence with us that day, as President and performer, of Iain Burnside, reminded us of the strong support he gives to Finzi Friends.

Pursuing a cautious approach, our other activities since September 2021 have focused on the written word. The 2022 Journal again focused on the Finzi Letters volume, including reviews and commentary from around the world., as well as a very interesting article about Ernest Farrar, Finzi's first teacher and some initial material from Matthew McCullough's research into World War 1 composers, principally Alan Gray. It is good that the Journal continues to encourage and add to research into the musical and social background to Finzi's work as well as his music. Already underway for this year's Journal are commissioned work focused on the 1953 Coronation part-song anthology 'A Garland for the Queen', to which Finzi contributed, of course; some consideration of Walford Davies, a somewhat neglected figure in mid-twentieth century music; and a review of a contemporary composer who recently celebrated his 70th birthday. The Newsletter, edited by Eric Hazelwood continues to provide stimulus in the earlier part of the year, enabling reflection on events held and reviews of other occasions attended by members and, sadly, an opportunity to mark the deaths of notable figures associated with the interests of Finzi Friends.

The Journal and Newsletter are sent by post to those members who are not on line and we are committed to continuing that arrangement and to publishing the Journal in book form for all subscribing members. What our increased use of electronic communication has allowed us to do is to communicate with members more frequently and more promptly. In this way the most recent eBulletin carried committee-member Geoffrey Allan Taylor's review of the Ludlow English Song Weekend not long after that event, as well as advertising a concert later this month about which a member sent us information. It also makes considerable savings in postage which, together with printing costs for the Newsletter came in at under £500 in 2021, excluding the Journal costs. The website costs us £665, most of which is the cost of retaining Derri Lewis who sends out material both promptly and with an eagle eye for errors I may have missed in the bulletin. He and I will undertake some updating of the website this summer in terms of the archive materials.

The videos made during the pandemic by myself and Gavin Roberts continue to be available on the website and to be viewed, Only last week I received a message from a professional tenor who had viewed my video on 'A Young Man's Exhortation' when preparing for a recital. Currently top of the charts is the video about the Cello Concerto, with 340 views.

A new departure last year for us was the hosting of a Finzi Walk, led by me as part of the St Marylebone Festival. We met up outside Finzi's birthplace on Hamilton Terrace and walked at a leisurely pace down the road, stopping to note the residence at one time or another of divers musicians before going down through Regents Park past Vaughan Williams' house and on to the Royal Academy of Music. There we were made most welcome by the librarian who showed us and talked about the Finzi bust, before we enjoyed tea and cake at St Marylebone Church. As well as entertaining some members, the walk enabled us to talk about Finzi to some not in the Friends who showed much interest in Finzi and his circle. I then gave a presentation prior to the evening concert as part of the Festival focusing on Finzi in Town and Country. The Letters volume had shown a different perspective than we sometimes hold about how much time Finzi spent in London, particularly when enforced to live there during World War II. These events, together with our grant-giving activities, keep Finzi Friends as a dynamic participant in musical life nationally.

A similar though smaller contribution was made when Finzi Friends gave a small amount of financial support to the Barnes Festival in March 2022, covering the travel expenses of the winner of their composition competition. The competition focused on Howells as participants were asked to take Howells' piano piece 'Chosen' as a starting point for their piano piece, played by Matthew Schellhorn. Martin Bussey, Paul Spicer and Edwin Roxburgh adjudicated the entries. Martin and Edwin gave their thoughts to a promising and very receptive group of young composers in an afternoon workshop which was well attended. Matthew Schellhorn is due to record his next volume of piano music in December, highlighting further music by Howells and also the aforementioned

composers. Through the grant-giving working party Finzi Friends will be contributing to the costs of that recording.

The success of the Finzi walk last summer has prompted the committee to plan another, similar afternoon walk under the aegis of the Friends for next summer, on Sunday June 4 2023. The rough plan is to walk in the opposite direction, starting at the RAM if we can get in on a Sunday, through Regents Park, up Hamilton Terrace and then conclude with an afternoon recital in St Mark's, Hamilton Terrace and, of course, tea and cake.

We also plan to return to Churchdown next year, on September 9 2023. The shape of this day is not determined as yet, but it is likely to include the AGM, as in 2021. One factor for consideration is audience numbers. We are by no means alone in needing to plan cautiously as audience numbers have not returned to normal as yet. One particular aspect in planning is that, understandably, people are less inclined to book for events in advance currently. It was unfortunate also that some members had to pull out of today because they rely on train services to come from some distance and the uncertainty around rail strikes meant they could not commit. We take these factors into account in our planning, be assured. We had the very good fortune of a considerable sum of money which one of the Friends, John Sammons, gave us and asked us to use for an event. The high cost of today relative to the numbers we can normally accommodate at Ashmansworth made his gift extremely welcome and we are very grateful to John. We do have to consider these points despite our relative comfort financially. It may well prove practical to engage with other groups for our Churchdown event in 2023, as we have done previously. The Howells Society has recently started a busy Facebook page under the guidance of Jonathan Clinch and that may be a fruitful avenue for co-operation on Churchdown.

Of the most immediate note is our second Members' Concert on September 18 2022 at Tardebigge, in the afternoon. This is a well-received and successful initiative and details are on the front of the website. The first event was driven very much by Eric, and Adrian Williams in their enthusiasm to provide a showcase for the musical talents of many members. Please support them by coming as performers or audience – we need both. I am hoping to persuade Geoffrey to accompany me in some songs by renowned baritone John Carol Case which have recently been transcribed, so there will be something new and very much connected with Finzi to enjoy.

This is a good point at which to thank all the Committee members, especially the other officers, Eric and Ian for their unstinting work and to Gavin for heading the grants working party. On a personal note, I am giving notice that I intend to step down as Chairman at the 2023 AGM. I will have served either 8 or 9 years by then and I have growing commitments in other areas to which I need to give a little more time and space, including, I am pleased to say a growing number of compositional commitments and performances. I am also minded that all organisations need fresh vision and leadership regularly. I will be working with the Committee to consider who may be persuaded to take the chair from that point and what Finzi Friends seeks from a chairman. I have indicated to the Committee my willingness to remain as a trustee of Finzi Friends and to continue my work on the Journal and on media communications if that is amenable to a new chairman and to them.”

Martin Bussey July 2022

The report was approved by Pat Ives as representing the activities that had taken place since the last AGM

5. Treasurer's Report

Ian Wadhams, our new Treasurer had, by the nature of his Accountancy profession, been inundated

with year-end business affairs and had not had time to prepare the *Finzi Friends* Reports and Accounts for year ending April 2022 as yet. He was, however, able to report that our accumulate finances presently stood at £23,409.

Once again, little demand had been placed on our Reserves Deployment Working Party for grant funds due to the insecure nature of holding events in the Covid restricted climate. Whilst the offer is always there for those seeking support we will continue to restrict grant giving to ensure our overall reserves remain secure. We are aware that our own events may need some funding in the future as inflation takes hold.

6. Safeguarding Report

The *Finzi Friends* holds and maintains a ‘Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults’ policy currently at revision ‘October 2018’. This Policy is available to Members on application. Committee Members are, however, in possession of a copy and are aware of the content and their responsibilities. *Finzi Friends* takes their responsibilities for Safeguarding seriously and it is and will remain an Agenda Item at meetings and at our AGM

Both the Chairman and the Secretary have been DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Checked and have clean records. In addition, they make each other aware of their duties before Events and are therefore equipped for any eventuality that could present itself at the Event, being prepared to raise any issue as it occurs.

We are also aware that it is our duty to record any matter as it occurs and then bring it to the attention of the Committee at meetings. For this purpose an ‘Incident Register’ is maintained and made available for scrutiny as required, any incident being continuously reviewed until it is resolved.

The nature of our activity and the age profile of the people and Members it attracts means that we are unlikely to need to make provision for children and our attention is focussed on vulnerable adults.

The rigours surrounding the Covid Pandemic which required us to complete an additional and dedicated Risk Register during 2020 to demonstrate our preparedness for such emergencies, was maintained throughout 2021. Naturally, this centred on procedures for the care of all attendees at Events by the advice for social distancing and the provision of PPE and sanitisation.

There have, however, been no safeguarding concerns reported during the year ending 1 April 2022. Our only Event at Churchdown on 4 September 2021 took place on a sunny day and apart from the provision of PPE, the social distancing possible in a large Church and Church Hall, more than adequate ventilation was maintained throughout the day. In addition, guests were invited to bring their own sandwiches to avoid cross contamination.

Our resources and financial circumstances restrict the frequency of Events we organise, currently a maximum of two per year. Nevertheless a register of attendees is maintained for recording purposes and ‘track and trace’ for Covid, should this situation occur. Audience numbers are limited to enable us to maintain social distancing were possible with the venue capacity in mind, they are reminded of their responsibilities, rapid exit points identified and the Committee remain vigilant throughout.

Eric Hazelwood July 2022

7. Election of Officers and Committee

Eric reported that he had not received any applications from anyone wishing to be considered for a Committee Member. The remainder of Members already serving on the Committee in various roles were therefore offered for re-election. This was proposed by Norma Williams and seconded by Hugh Cobbe. It was also accepted by all present.

The Committee, therefore, consists of the following members with offices as indicated:

Martin Bussey (Chairman)	Eric Hazelwood (Secretary)
Paul Ives (Vice-chairman)	Gavin Roberts (Committee Member)
Ian Wadhams (Treasurer)	Geoffrey Allan Taylor (Committee Member)

8. Any Other Business

Chairman

At this point Adrian Williams took the opportunity to thank Martin Bussey for his many years of commitment to the *Friends* and for the success of his guidance of the *Friends* in this role. The audience warmly showed their gratitude also.

Finzi Trust

Martin explained that after many successful years Robert Gower had now retired as Chairman of the Trust and his place had been taken by Stuart Ritchie QC. In addition, for many years the public face of the Trust has been Liz Pooley but she has also chosen to take the opportunity to step down and will be replaced by Milla Cameron as the new administrator.

Future Events

Following the success of the Finzi Walk in London at last year's Marylebone Festival the *Friends* are planning a similar walk with some different but equally interesting highlights in London on 4 June 2023.

We propose to return to Churchdown again next year with another focus on the Howells connection but in broader terms with the aim of attracting a wider audience.

The meeting closed at 11.40am.