



FINZI  
FRIENDS

# Finzi Friends

## Annual General Meeting 2020

Due to the prevailing Covid 19 Coronavirus pandemic throughout the 2020/21 financial year and the National restrictions on holding events and meetings, the *Finzi Friends* Committee decided it was not possible to hold a public AGM but would instead follow the Charities Commission guidelines on holding an AGM under these circumstances. It was, therefore, decided to prepare the Reports and the Accounts as usual, for mailing to Members. Any ratification of issues and approval of Accounts would, however, be finalised at the 2021 AGM.

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### Item 1. A Rationale for a Distanced Meeting

One effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the inability to hold face-to-face meetings since March 2020, both of the Committee and of the membership. This prevents an Annual General Meeting in 'real time'.

The advice from the Charity Commission is as follows:

*Coronavirus is having a major impact on charity events and the government's health advice may lead to some charities having no choice but to decide to cancel or postpone their AGMs and other critical meetings.... trustees of any type of charity can decide it is necessary to cancel or postpone any meeting, but you should record this decision to demonstrate good governance of your charity. [We will do this]*

The full guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector#agms-and-other-meetings-postponing-or-cancelling-meetings>

We have decided to provide members with both the anticipated Chairman's report and Treasurer's Report and Accounts. The latter will be filed with the Charity Commission as expected, in line with a request to do so in a latter part of the Charity Commission guidance. In the absence of a meeting it will not be possible to:

- accept these reports by vote;
- confirm Committee members, including Office-holders for 2020-21;
- raise items of business of concern to members.

The first point will be dealt with, in a delayed fashion, at the 2021 AGM.

Anything relating to the other two points can be communicated to the Secretary, Eric Hazelwood in the meantime, for consideration by the Officers or Committee:

[erichazelwood888@btinternet.com](mailto:erichazelwood888@btinternet.com)

We undertake to provide a written response to any concern raised within 28 days.

Martin Bussey  
Chairman, Finzi Friends

## **2. Chairman's Report**

Looking back to the Chairman's report for 2019 it seems almost a cliché to comment on how different our current situation seems to be. Yet such comment is pertinent. We know that many who are members of *Finzi Friends* have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some, because they are in the vulnerable categories which have been shielding, others because as performing musicians they have seen their livelihood disappear as live music making ceased. All of us have missed the opportunity to gather to enjoy music, particularly that of Finzi. Another consequence has been the inability to hold our AGM physically, so that this report comes to you via post or electronically.

Last year, our AGM was held at Churchdown, with a stimulating talk by Professor Jeremy Dibble and a high quality recital by Gareth Brynmor John and Gavin Roberts. Sadly, the equivalent event in 2020, our biennial visit to Ashmansworth, had to be cancelled.

However, we were fortunate to be able to hold our inaugural Members' Concert in October 2019. This was a well-received initiative, driven very much by Eric and Adrian in their enthusiasm to provide a showcase for the musical talents of many members. To comment on individual performances would be invidious, but no-one who was present will forget the sheer joy of being able to hear our Vice-President, Roderick Williams sing songs from Finzi's *Let us garlands bring*. We are fortunate to have such enthusiastic support from such a renowned performer. This is a good point at which to express gratitude for the similar support and enthusiasm of our President, Iain Burnside. Iain was due to play at Ashmansworth in July 2020 and had 'curated' a lovely programme with two young singers. In common with many organisations, we have undertaken to invite both singers, and Iain, to perform at Churchdown in June 2021, so that the work they lost can be restored. And because we very much want to hear them!

Another event which did take place before lockdown was one organised to showcase the talented Kantos Choir, with their director, Ellie Slorach, together with baritone, Peter Edge. This took place in Emmanuel Church, Didsbury, Manchester and attracted an audience of

around 40, including some of our Northern members. The choir, all in their twenties and mostly graduates from Manchester's fine Conservatoire and University, performed the Bridges Partsongs and *Lo, the full, final sacrifice* expertly. Peter Edge, a graduate of the RNCM and a post-graduate of the RCM in London, gave fine performances of songs from *Earth and Air and Rain* and *Let us garlands bring*. The idea of the event was to give a little focus on *Finzi Friends* in the North, where we have fewer members. It also served to introduce some of the repertoire to younger performers, though many showed themselves to be Finzi fans already!

Widening of our membership has also continued through the website, which was introduced in the Chairman's report in 2019. There has been a steady flow of new members, both as subscribers but also in the new category of online members. We have taken advantage of the electronic communication facilitated by the website to send electronic bulletins more frequently to those who have email. It has also saved on costs significantly by enabling us to send the bi-annual Newsletters electronically to this group as well, which numbers roughly half the membership. We remain committed to posting the Newsletters to those who are not on email, and the Journal remains a published, printed volume.

Of the other website elements highlighted in last year's report, several have flourished. The archive of Newsletters and Journals has been well used. To provide an additional resource during lockdown, we placed the 2019 Journal in the online archive earlier than planned. There is evidence that the introduction to Finzi and his music which the website provides has prompted newcomers to wish to learn more and sign up to be a member of *Finzi Friends*. This has been accompanied by a gradual development of a *Finzi Friends* page on Facebook and the continued success of @finzifriends on Twitter, now approaching 700 followers. Twitter enables us to keep in touch with many professional and amateur performers who love Finzi, as well as with groups who promote other British composers.

Slightly less rapid in growth has been the use of the members' forum for ideas, news and comments about Finzi and the work of *Finzi Friends*. This has, of necessity, been hampered by the total absence of concerts to list there since March 2020. There has been a steady trickle of online CD sales and a welcome interest in the book *The Clock of the Years* which we are able to sell through the site.

At last year's AGM I commented that the 2018 AGM had highlighted that the number of *Finzi Friends* members is declining but that we had been able to assess that the membership sat at comfortably over 200. It is pleasing to report that the level of membership remains consistently at that level in 2020.

Of course, we are sadly unable to meet face to face. However, the website has enabled some fresh presentations on Finzi which I have enjoyed presenting via video. These are all available on the website, with the most recent hosted on the front of the website. Interest in these has been healthy, with two of the videos having had over 100 viewings. It appears that presentations about Finzi's songs gain the most interest. There will be a few more of these appearing as the nights draw in to hopefully provide some interest and spark curiosity, possibility even argument!

The Committee remain vigilant in looking for opportunities to hold events in 2021. Currently, we plan to hold a Churchdown event in June 2021. We are delighted that the St Marylebone Festival event planned for July 2020 is planned to take place in July 2021. This

will be an evening concert featuring members of the choir of St Marylebone Church, preceded by a walk around neighbouring streets in St John's Wood and Regent's Park, to include Finzi's birthplace in Hamilton Terrace and other musically significant places. This is a good point at which to thank all the Committee members, especially the other officers, Eric and Adrian for their unstinting work. It has been a great pleasure to welcome Gavin Roberts, Director of Music at St Marylebone, and a renowned pianist, to the Committee during the course of the year.

Martin Bussey  
September 2020

### **3. Treasurer's Report**

This year, I have presented the Accounts in a way that more easily enables the reader of the Accounts to see how *Finzi Friends* have disposed their assets financially. Specifically, I have separated our expenditure on Grants and Disbursement from our operational income and expenditure across the year. As a consequence, it is easier to see whether our operations are running a surplus or a deficit.

In this latest financial year, the *Friends* made a small operational surplus of £62.99 (compared with a surplus in the previous year of £805.41). An analysis of the various components of the Income and Expenditure items in the Operating Account shows that, broadly speaking, the level of activity against the various headings in 2020 was similar to that in 2019. The one area of expenditure to which I will draw attention is the increase in Committee expenses, from £218.10 to £614.90; this increase is a consequence of the Committee's change of practice in meeting, now, in London (entailing room hire and rail-travel expenses), in contrast to its former practice of driving to and meeting in the homes of Committee members.

The expenditure on Grants and Disbursements in the Capital Account shows that we have continued to make a number of grants, totalling £2,922.00, albeit at a lower level than in the previous year (£6,703.00).

In consequence, our Accumulated Fund has reduced across the year by about £3,000. This reduction is in line with our policy of using reserves to discharge our obligations as a Registered Charity. The Committee reviews its policy on reserves annually, and keeps a careful watch to ensure that any gradual reduction is compatible with the long term financial security of the I. We have set a reserve of £3,000 for sponsorships in the current year; it is likely that, next year, we will trim that figure back.

A comparison of the amounts donated by members this year (£805.65) with the amount of our subscription income (£4,549.43) shows that members' generosity has been a substantial factor in enabling the *Friends* to support deserving endeavours. If the impersonal money-figure is thought of in terms of musical projects, £800 can be seen as, typically, support for three enterprises such as a concert, a recording or a research grant. It is therefore a great pleasure to recognize the importance of those donations by thanking those members who have made a contribution in addition to their subscription.

I was honoured to be elected Treasurer at the AGM in 2016. The hardest part of any Treasurer's job is to find his successor. Knowing this from past experience, I said at the time that I would hope to serve for five years before passing on the task to another. Public appeals to the membership of any organization are seldom fruitful; I nevertheless make one, in the hope that there might be a member who would consent to take on the Treasurership from me in about twelve months' time.

Adrian Williams  
Treasurer

#### **4. Representation on the Committee**

Circulated with the April 2020 Newsletter was a request that if anyone had an interest in joining the Committee they should submit their application. No such application has been received. The existing Committee Members have, however, shown a willingness to continue serving and we are grateful that the following Members will remain in post until next year.

One Member did, however, express an interest last year and has been under consideration and has attended a Committee Meeting. The situation is still under review and a decision will be made shortly and the Membership informed of the outcome.

We would, however, draw your attention once again to the forthcoming vacancy in the Treasurer's post.

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

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| Martin Bussey (Chairman)                         | Clare McCaldin (Committee Member)        |
| Paul Ives (Vice-chairman)                        | Gavin Roberts (Committee Member)         |
| Adrian Williams (Treasurer)                      | Geoffrey Allan Taylor (Committee Member) |
| Eric Hazelwood (Secretary and Newsletter Editor) |  |

#### **6. Attachment – Examined Accounts**