



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Churchdown at 11.00am on Saturday 3 September 2021

Present: Martin Bussey (Chairman), Paul Ives (Vice Chairman), Ian Wadhams (Treasurer) Adrian Williams (Retiring Treasurer), Eric Hazelwood (Secretary), and Committee Member Geoffrey Allan Taylor.

Patrick & Kate Aydon, Christina Belloc Lowndes, Christopher Boodle, David & Maggie Brain, Kevin & Valerie Browning, David & Rachel Button, David & Marjory Cashmore, Alan Cudmore, Nigel & Julie Evans, Richard Hall, Pat Ives, Valerie Kirby-Ashmore, Martin & Diana Lee-Browne, Barry Lingard, Jennie McGregor-Smith, Joan McMahon, Diana McVeagh, Brian Midgley, Robert Moreland, Jim Page, Anthony Pinching, Edward Rigg, David Russell, John & Susan Risdon, John Sasportas, Adrian & Ruth Sharville, Paul Spicer, Philip Statham, Sue Thackeray, Nick and Dianne Turner, Edith & Peter Wallis, Wendy & Michael Walshe, Norma Williams,

1. Apologies

Colin Brookes, Astrid Hazelwood, Clare McCaldine, Gavin Roberts, Roderick Williams

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

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, Chairman's Report etc. as usual, for mailing to Members. These were prepared and issued on 27 September 2020.

Copies of the previous minutes were circulated and were accepted as a true record of Financial Year 2019/20 by all present.

3. Matters Arising

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

4. Chairman's Report

“It is very good to be able to hold the 2021 AGM in person. We continue to be subject to precautions and restrictions but better meeting within those than not being able to meet at all. We know that many musicians and other members of *Finzi Friends* continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you to all those who have enabled this meeting to take place ‘live’. Last year, our AGM was held remotely, via a mail out of key information through a Chairman's report and financial summary. There will be opportunities to raise matters arising from either 2020 or 2021 during this meeting.

We continue to enjoy the support and enthusiasm of our President, Iain Burnside, in particular in devising a stimulating programme for this afternoon's recital. Both of today's singers, and Iain, were due to perform at Ashmansworth in 2020 and it's great that all have been able to perform here today.

Lockdowns inevitably restricted our customary activities. We have been able to utilise the potential of our still relatively new website, with two particular methods prominent:

- I. Enhanced opportunities for communication through the newsletters and more frequent ebulletins.
- II. Online videos about Finzi's work. These now complement the provision of Podcasts by the Finzi Trust.

Data evidence from the ebulletins shows consistently high levels of response, at least in terms of opening the email containing the bulletin – not always the case with such mailouts.

It is pleasing to report that the level of membership remains consistently at that level of the last few years.

Our online provision owes much to the sterling work of Clare McCaldin in overseeing the rebuild of the previous website and to her ongoing work in maintaining the website through updates, troubleshooting and general development. Sadly, Covid has meant a readjustment of her working commitments for Clare and she has taken on a full time commercial PA role. Such that, as we speak she is in Bahrain. In combining this with her singing commitments Clare has sadly had to step down from the Committee from this point.

I'm very pleased to welcome Derri Lewis who has taken on a paid role on a very part-time basis to oversee the maintenance of the website. His understanding of 'the back of the computer' is going to be invaluable together with his enthusiasm for becoming involved in the work of *Finzi Friends*. Many of you will come across Derri as one of the Young Composers at this year's Ludlow English Song Weekend. It is good to have Derri with us today.

This summer has seen a re-awakening of our musical activities, through today's recital and through our partnership event with St Marylebone Festival, led by our Committee member Gavin Roberts. (Gavin is unable to be here today as this was the only week he could take a holiday!) This event in late July showed a potential way forward for fulfilling our aims to promote knowledge of Finzi and his music. There were three distinct parts to the event. In the afternoon Martin Bussey led a guided walk starting at Finzi's birthplace in Hamilton Terrace down through St John's Wood, passing Vaughan Williams' house near Regents Park and ending up with a viewing of the Finzi bust. We were made very welcome by the librarian of the Royal Academy. The second element was an introductory talk by Martin Bussey prior to the evening concert entitled 'Finzi, Town and Country', looking at Finzi's involvement in London set against his rural lifestyle. The culminating element was an invigorating and well-performed concert featuring the choir of St Marylebone in choral, solo vocal and instrumental roles. This included 'Lo, the full final sacrifice', settings of Christina Rossetti and Finzi's Oboe Interlude amongst other works. We invested substantially in terms of financial support for this concert and it was well attended in the context of opening up after Covid. Particularly significant was the attendance at all the events by newcomers to Finzi or non-members of *Finzi Friends*.

In planning for the future we continue to look at holding events such as today's; supporting other celebrations of Finzi's music; and supporting groups who are performing Finzi's music in interesting ways or visiting more rarely performed pieces.

The stimulus for our offering grants to groups was the blue-sky thinking of Adrian Williams as our Treasurer which led to the grant-making working party. When he took on the role of Treasurer, Adrian was clear that this was for a term of five years. As a man of his word, Adrian signalled his intention to step down towards the end of last year and this is his final AGM as Treasurer. Adrian's contribution has been very significant in moving the *Finzi Friends* forward. He has overseen the collection of subscriptions with punctilious efficiency; demanded that we actually use our finances to support performances of Finzi actively; overseen the financial outlay on the new website without demur; and tackled financial issues with a detailed and rigorous eye and kept the clearest records. We all owe him a debt of gratitude.

Faced with finding a replacement for Adrian, it was tempting to become downhearted. Treasurers are notoriously hard to find. We were delighted that in response to a polite enquiry in an eBulletin as to whether anyone might take on the role, Ian Wadhams offered, with the finest credentials. After discussions with Adrian and then Eric and myself, I am delighted that Ian accepted the role and we will be inviting you to confirm his appointment shortly, to take effect from this meeting. It is a great joy to welcome him here today.

This is a good point at which to thank all the Committee members, especially the other officer, Eric, for their unstinting work. We do have a vacancy for another committee member following Clare's departure and would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in supporting the work of *Finzi Friends*. One recent agreement we have made is to adopt the concept of a five-year term for all roles on the committee, renewable, but with the idea that a fixed term enables someone to consider if they wish to opt for a second term after five years."

Martin Bussey
September 2021

5. Treasurer's Report

Copies of the Accounts for Year Ending 31 March 2021 were circulated and our retiring Treasurer, Adrian Williams, gave the following report.

"I hope you are each able to refer to a copy of the Accounts for our latest financial year, ending 31 March 2021. I am able to tell you that they have been signed off as satisfactory by the Independent Examiner.

I am the Treasurer of three charities, and I act as the Independent Examiner for four others. In every case in the last twelve months, the Treasurer's statement has been on the same lines: "It is impossible to make any useful comparison with the Accounts of the previous year because our activities have been so disrupted by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic." So it is for the *Friends*. I will not therefore take your time in drawing comparisons between this year's Accounts and the previous year's – though I will of course answer questions if you care to ask them. I will make just two or three observations about the overall health of the *Friends*' finances over the past twelve months, as evident in the figures in front of you.

Having been prevented from meeting in person – either at Ashmansworth last year or in Committee, The *Friends* have had, on the face of it, a successful financial year. Compared with last year's operating surplus of nearly £63, this year we can record a surplus of just over £4,450. When you take disbursements on grants into account, we have moved from a deficit of just under £3,000 last year to a surplus of £3,300 in this latest year. (You can see that comparison at the bottom of the first page of the Accounts.)

But this is nothing to be pleased about or proud of. Rather, I draw your attention to the reduction in the amount that the *Friends* have disbursed by way of grants, from nearly £3,000 in the previous year to only £1,150 in this latest year. That reduction reflects not just a diminution in the number of applications for grant that we have received; it is also an indication of the extent to which grants we had made to deserving applications couldn't be taken up because the relevant performances couldn't take place; and, in one particularly poignant instance, an orchestra to whom the *Friends* had made a grant for the hire of orchestral parts had to return our grant at the same time as they returned the scores to the library that had lent them, because the performance they has been rehearsing for never took place.

There is just one flash of sunshine to mention: the amount appearing against this year's record of Donations. It's more than twice the size of last year's amount, which gives me the opportunity to express my fervent thanks, both as your Treasurer and as a *Friend* in my own right, to all those who have contributed a donation in the last financial year. We have a strong Balance Sheet, and we can look to the future as a going concern without donations -but donations do make a enormous difference to what we can do for the wider world of music."

At this point Adrian asked if there were any questions about the Accounts and none were forthcoming. Consequently Adrian went on to say:

"Then I propose that the Accounts be approved and adopted, and I invite someone to second that proposal – preferably someone not on the Committee."

The adoption of the Accounts was proposed by David Button and seconded by David Cashmore.

"Before I sit down, and shortly thereafter stand down as Treasurer, I ask you to indulge me while I make a short address of farewell to that office. I'd like to begin with a tribute to Jennie McGregor-Smith, who got me to take on the Treasurership five years ago. For years I had been accustomed to making brief interventions at the AGM on the subject of the Accounts; Jennie eventually nailed me by saying, "Stop being a poacher and become a gamekeeper." To my colleagues on the Committee I offer my grateful thanks for being such a splendid team to be a part of, and particularly to Eric Hazelwood, who has been even more helpful to me than he has been to you all. Thank you to all you members, and special thanks to Dr Laurence Whittaker, whose artless question at Ashmansworth five years ago: "What is the *Friends*' policy on Reserves?" led to the development of a programme of grant-giving that has given me enormous pleasure. Not that that programme has been without its critics. "Charity begins at home," my wife Norma has relentlessly urged me, to which my response has always been, "Yes, but it should not stop there." So it is that the *Friends* have received 38 enquiries about grants and have made 18 offers since our programme began, giving great pleasure to individuals and organizations throughout the land and also overseas while manifestly discharging our obligation as a Registered Charity.

And lastly: until now it has been my belief that a general appeal to the membership of any organization to engage someone to take on the office of Chairman or Secretary or Treasurer is bound to fail. And in this belief I am mistaken because, when the appeal was made for a new Treasurer, someone actually put his hand up and said, "I'm willing to have a shot." So my heartfelt thanks go to Ian Wadhams, who has volunteered to take up the reins that I shall let fall before the end of this meeting. Thank you, Ian, and to everyone else I commend Ian to you as my successor."

6. Election of Officers and Committee

Following the retirement of Adrian as our Treasurer, as has already been mentioned, Ian Wadhams responded to the request for a replacement and no other applications were forthcoming. Also, as

mentioned in the Chairman's Report, Clare McCaldin has stepped down as a Committee Member leaving a vacant post which is open for nominations. The remainder of Members already serving on the Committee in various roles were therefore offered for re-election. This was proposed by Martin Lee-Browne and seconded by Nick Turner. 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)

7. Any Other Business

Appetite for Events

In order to give the Membership an opportunity to express their opinion on the type of Event they appreciate or prefer Martin asked the gathered company to spend five minutes talking amongst themselves to develop ideas. Some that emerged were as follows:

Martin Lee-Browne believed that the level of Events and frequency was about right.

David Button feared Events become London centric and as a northerner requested an occasional visit to northern locations. Martin reassured him that we had been to Chester before, an attractive town, and future Events there were always in our sights.

Ruth Sharville was conscious we should always consider activities for younger members and the 2019 'Come and Perform' Event was potentially an ideal platform. Other Events for younger people should always be considered in our planning however.

Paul Spicer reinforced this by suggesting younger people be encouraged to join the Committee when their opinion and thoughts could be appropriate. We are, however, lucky to have Gavin Roberts and Ian Wadhams in that category.

Martin and the Committee are keen for another 'Come and Perform' Event anyway and Committee are determined to encourage another Event at Tardebigge in 2022.

David Brain suggested filming Events for distribution to the Membership.

Following the AGM Christopher Boodle sent an encouraging letter to Martin stating his pleasure at our worthwhile and enjoyable events. He further suggested the idea of commissioning a set of 'Variations on a Theme of Finzi' for performance at a festival, opening up the possibility of repeat performances at different festivals.

Martin thanked everyone for their contributions and assured them that we would always welcome more suggestions as Members felt inspired.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.

Attachments:-

Summary Reports and Accounts for year ending March 2021.

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Finzi Friends
Charity No. 1089033

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021

<u>OPERATING ACCOUNT</u>	2020		2021	
INCOME	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions	4,549.43		4,058.65	
Donations	805.65		1,968.64	
Event income	2,044.00		277.00	
Gift Aid – tax refund	701.45		746.68	
Bank interest	93.74		18.28	
Sales	299.94		–	
TOTAL INCOME:		8,494.21		7,069.25
EXPENDITURE				
Committee expenses	614.90		90.00	
Newsletter and Journal	2,743.56		1,956.35	
Event expenditure	2,980.52		279.00	
Purchase for sales stock	375.55		–	
Insurance and Performing Rights fee	245.54		231.00	
Website maintenance and development	1,100.00		–	
Postage, printing, stationery and miscellaneous	371.15		62.79	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE:		8,431.22		2,619.14
Surplus of operating income over expenditure:		62.99		4,450.11
<u>CAPITAL ACCOUNT</u>				
EXPENDITURE				
Grants and disbursements		–2,922.00		–1,150.00
TOTAL SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) (Operating and Capital):		–2,859.01		3,300.11

Cash flow: 1 April – 31 March

	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Accumulated Fund at 1 April	21,356.63	18,497.62
Surplus or (deficit) across the year	(2,859.01)	3,300.11
Accumulated Fund at 31 March	18,497.62	21,797.73

Balance sheet at 31 March 2021

Assets		Represented by	
	<i>£</i>		<i>£</i>
Lloyds Bank current account	5,891.84	Operating reserve	10,000.00
Paypal	497.94	Reserve for sponsorships	3,000.00
COIF Charities Deposit Fund	15,407.95	General reserve	8,797.73
TOTAL:	21,797.73		21,797.73

Adrian Williams, *Treasurer*

I have examined the above Statement of Income and Expenditure and the Balance Sheet, and confirm that they are in accordance with the books and information supplied and the information given to me.

Ronald P.J.Sonneborn, *Honorary Examiner*