

Honorary President: Glyn Bragg



Dunbartonshire Concert Band

Minutes of AGM 2020

24th October 2020, 12.15pm – 1.00pm

Online meeting via Zoom

1. Attendance and apologies

The meeting was quorate, with 45 band members in attendance, which exceeded one third of the current membership.

Apologies were received from Jacqui McMahon, Lorraine Sherry and Jonathan Smithers (for part of the meeting).

2. Approval of previous AGM minutes

Harriet Fishley announced an amendment to the minutes of the 2019 AGM, requested by David MacDonald. Point 6, paragraph 17 has been amended to read that David would be in favour of an increase to MD fees.

The minutes of the 2019 AGM were proposed by David Welsh and seconded by David Brown.

3. Receive financial accounts

The accounts were published and sent to the band via email prior to the AGM.

4. Chairperson's report – Harriet Fishley

Welcome to the 47th AGM for DCB and thank you for joining us for our first online AGM. I can say that it has certainly been very challenging for me in my first year as chair and certainly not one that could ever have been predicted.

We have 62 members at the present time with approximately 30-45 people taking part in the online rehearsals which is really great to see.

I would like to say thank you to Robert our Musical Director and to Michelle, Associate Conductor for all the work that they put into the band throughout the year and especially to Robert over the last few months getting us back to playing in these very difficult times.

In order for the band to function, it relies on people giving their time and commitment and without this it would be impossible. Some great ideas for publicity, quizzes, meetings and enthusiasm has been in abundance over the last year, so I would like to thank the committee for all their support and hard work over the last 12 months. It has been very much appreciated.

2019/20 was fairly normal and on 25th October we returned to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, a great venue. We had another good audience who thoroughly enjoyed the evening. This concert is very much appreciated by the patients and staff and we had some really lovely comments such as “very humbling”, “amazing music”, “you brightened my day and brought a smile to my face”, “you helped me so much, thank you” along with many more on a similar theme.

On 3rd November we were back again for another concert at Gartnavel Royal with a slightly bigger audience this time, more great feedback and this was thoroughly enjoyed by patients and staff alike. Once again, they put on a fabulous spread of food for us so a big thank you to Fiona Sinclair for that.

This was followed by a concert at Erskine Home on 15th December, an event I know the band loves to play and the residents thoroughly enjoy.

We finished the year with our Christmas Concert at Cairns Church on 20th December, what an amazing evening of Christmas music, our famous raffle hampers, and lots of Christmas spirit. We had a great audience, even better that a good number of them were new to DCB! We also had some more great feedback.

The next big event to look forward to was the Valencia Tour. We hoped to do a fundraising concert around Easter time and planned to have sectionals in May to accommodate music for both the Summer Concert in June and Tour in July.

In the new year we heard about the emergence of a new virus, Covid-19 and gradually it became clear life was about to change. We managed to continue to rehearse until 12th March when Government guidelines prevented any kind of group meetings, so all rehearsals were cancelled for the foreseeable future. This was the right thing to do, but we had no idea at this point that the tour would eventually need to be cancelled.

We wanted to do something to keep people together and so the DCB Weekly was born. This would pop into everyone’s email address, or in some cases, by post, to every member of the band. Each week we included contributions from members in a ‘meet the band section’, top tips from Robert and Michelle, along with a weekly quiz, recipes and anything else we could

think of! Thanks to Glyn, Alan Cooper and Mike for the quiz questions, and to all those who contributed. Thank you to Susan for putting all the information together each week.

We then received cancellations of the booking for sectionals, followed very quickly by the cancellation of the venue for our Summer Concert.

Then the confirmation that the Valencia tour was cancelled. Whilst we had decided this would be likely, it was still none-the-less very disappointing news. So much hard work had gone into booking flights, hotels, administration, music etc. I want to stress that an enormous amount of time and effort goes into putting this together and I would like to express my thanks to the tour committee for all their time and hard work. Unfortunately, the work didn't stop there, everyone needed to be contacted and individuals/groups refunded, an enormous amount of work.

A big thank you to the Tour Committee for all the work they put into this.

As we approached the end of June, there was a glimmer of hope that lockdown measures might be relaxed, but it would still be some time before we would be allowed back to rehearsals. We had a concert planned for Make Music Day on 21st June and even though this would be outdoors, it was not to be.

Time marched on and still no sign of being able to return to rehearsals. What could we do next, well, DCB Zoom Quiz, of course? Susan and Ruth put this together and hosted a Quiz Night. This went down really well so a second one was planned with Alison McCree as a Guest Host and we had another successful evening of quizzing. Meantime, our fortnightly Zoom chats were also going well. Again, these things don't happen without background work so thank for putting these quizzes together.

Robert set the challenge for the whole band to record Colin Suckling's piece 'Souvenir of Schladming' and he would put the recordings together. However, putting this together has been a challenge, mainly due to computer software, so it is still a work in progress. Thanks to everyone who sent in a recording.

Kessington Hall was also put on hold during the lockdown but the good news is that most of the work is almost complete and we hope to take occupation as soon as this is possible. We have also received Community Lottery Funding to help with set up costs which is great news. Kessington is our only realistic hope of getting back to 'in person' rehearsals, mainly because of its size and that we will be running it, but will, of course, be ensuring that Government Guidelines are followed.

We had our usual summer break from the end of June during which time we looked at options for resuming at the end of August. It was clear online rehearsals were the only option. Obviously, this is not like playing in person, but it is working really well and allows for everyone to play, if they want to.

Where are we now? Well, plans to get back to rehearsing have now been put on further hold. We will continue to monitor the situation and continue with our on-line rehearsals until it is safe and guidelines allow us to get back in person.

None of us know what the future will hold and recognise that this has been a very challenging time for us all, but particularly for those in the Performing Arts and in the hospitality sector.

In order for a band like us to exist, we rely heavily on income from concerts, donations and of course subscriptions. Due to Covid-19 we are not able to plan or hold any concerts, so almost all our income has come to an abrupt halt.

We are very lucky that financially we have been able to weather the storm, so far, but if the situation continues, this will become more and more difficult so your support has never been more important.

5. **Musical Director's report – Robert Baxter**

Robert began by thanking Harriet for her very detailed chairperson's report, and mentioned that it had brought to his attention just how much has been going on over the last few months.

It is very easy to think that the 2019-20 year was not successful. However, there have been many successful events. The December Christmas concert was packed, and the Kirkintilloch Canal Festival concert was also very well attended.

Robert reiterated thanks to Andrew McCafferty and the rest of the tour committee for the huge amount of work involved in organising the Valencia tour, and then dealing with the subsequent cancellation.

We have learned a large volume of new music this year – *Aquamore, Ladies in Lavender, 12th Street Rag, Get Happy, Laura, Singin' in the Rain, Lebuinus Ex Daventria* and *By George*. *By George* was the first piece that the band played online. There have also been two recent pieces that we have played online – *Rhythm with a Smile* and *Somewhere in Time*. Further new pieces will be started over the next few weeks. We should be very pleased with the volume of music that we have covered.

Kessington Hall will possibly be a lifeline in the current situation. We are in a very fortunate position in that we may have a rehearsal venue when we are able to rehearse together in person. Robert thanked David Broad and Alan Cooper for their continued work behind the scenes to move the Kessington Hall project forward.

Robert thanked the committee for their work and enthusiasm. Robert also thanked Harriet for organising the weekly newsletter, and Susan for putting together the various contributions.

Robert mentioned that there have been many new online experiences – committee meetings, the AGM and the *Souvenir of Schladming* recording.

Robert was very pleased that Laura Hunter invited John Holland, the conductor of her London band, to one of the online rehearsals. Kate Whitlock, director of the Scottish Schools Orchestra Trust (SScOT) also observed an online rehearsal last week, and wrote to Robert to

say how much she had enjoyed the session. Robert thanked all sections who had allowed guests to attend.

Robert thanked the band for being so engaging, and for their patience during the online rehearsals. This reflects the band ethos of looking after each other.

Online rehearsals will continue for the time being, as there is still no indication of when rehearsals in person will be able to commence. The online groups will be mixed up, for example possibly the lower brass joining the upper brass.

Robert thanked Harriet, mentioning that this year has been a difficult one to take over as chair.

Anne Dunbar proposed a vote of thanks to Harriet, the committee and the tour committee. This was seconded by Alan Cooper.

6. Treasurer's report – Fiona Ross

Main account

Our constitution requires payment of full subscriptions by the end of November. As a result, subscriptions that were paid have been retained, despite rehearsals ceasing in March this year.

Prior to lockdown, we took part in five non-ticketed concerts, making only a small loss of £36.51 in total.

Our 2019 Christmas concert was a huge success, generating a profit of over £1,500.

We have been very fortunate to receive donations from band members. All entries in the donations and grants entry in this year's accounts were donations provided by band members.

The committee opted to pay MD fees of 80% of their usual level during the period when we were unable to rehearse. The band was in a good financial position, and the figure of 80% was in line with Government furlough recommendations.

Other expenses included the cost of the Zoom account, and postage costs to allow band members without online access to receive the weekly newsletter earlier this year.

Tour account

Most tour participants lost money as a result of the non-refundable group hotel booking. The deposit paid towards the group flight has been reimbursed in the form of a voucher. The value of the voucher should be repaid to us if we have not booked another flight by April 2021. However, this will depend on the airline's financial situation.

A small overall loss was made on the tour account, as two band members did not pay their full share of costs.

Subscriptions for the coming year

The committee has discussed subscriptions for the coming year. It is quite possible that we may need to rehearse online for the whole session. There will be significant costs involved in the purchase of new music, as there is a limit to the amount of work that can be done on each piece without being able to play together.

Costs of our Making Music membership, PRS fees, the Zoom account and MD costs will amount to at least £6,000.

The committee has agreed that half of the usual subscription can be paid now, with the position revisited after Christmas. If band members are able to pay the full subscription now, this would be very gratefully received. Band members who are not able to participate in the online rehearsals due to living or technical arrangements will not be excluded from membership if they do not pay. Subscriptions for anyone severely affected by the Covid restrictions can be reduced, in discussion with the treasurer.

If all band members only pay half of the full subscription, we would expect to make a loss of around £3,000. Gift aid, which is a significant amount each year, would also be substantially reduced.

Monika Mihm Carmichael asked if we continued to pay Cairns Church for storage costs during the lockdown period. Fiona explained that we have not been paying Cairns for storage costs, as we only pay Cairns for our rehearsal venue costs on a week by week basis. This may also be because we contributed to the cost of the new garage.

John Carswell mentioned that churches have lost a significant amount of their income as a result of the pandemic. Would a token gift from the band to Cairns be an option?

Alan Cooper asked if the projected costs included any potential Kessington Hall letting costs (costs that DCB would be required to pay in order to use Kessington Hall as a rehearsal venue). Fiona explained that projected costs do not allow for these costs, but do allow for the cost of our Zoom subscription which is minimal compared to the hire of any venue.

John Carswell mentioned that the church hall within his own church has recently re-opened, and would be available for small sectional rehearsals with appropriate social distancing. Alan Cooper stated that Kessington Hall will potentially provide the same option, once we have taken occupancy of the hall, and when Government guidelines permit rehearsals in person.

The subscription arrangements for the coming year were proposed by David Welsh and seconded by David Broad.

7. Elect committee members – none standing down this term

Harriet stated that none of the existing committee members are standing down this term.

8. Elect an honorary independent financial examiner

Harriet explained that Robert Thomson is happy to continue as independent auditor of the financial accounts. This was proposed by Fiona Ross and seconded by Alan Cooper.

Harriet thanked Robert Thomson for his work on this year's accounts.

9. Consider resolutions of which due notice has been given

No resolutions were raised prior to the AGM.

10. Elect/re-elect band trustees

Harriet stated that John Waller has stepped down from his position as trustee. The remaining trustees (Jill Bolling, Alan Cooper, Colin Suckling and David Welsh) are all happy to continue.

Re-election of the remaining trustees was proposed by Fiona Ross and seconded by John Carswell.

11. AOCB

Monika Mihm Carmichael asked, since the band currently has a large financial buffer, if it would be a good idea to start to plan a future concert in a large venue with a socially distanced audience, to be held in the next few years. Harriet thanked Monika for her suggestion and agreed to raise this at the next committee meeting.

David Broad mentioned that a concert in two to three years' time would coincide with the 50th anniversary of the band. Anneli Demberg suggested that a UK tour could be planned during the 50th anniversary year.

Louise Muir asked if it would be possible to film a Christmas concert and broadcast this online, since a Christmas concert in person with a live audience will not be possible this year. Robert agreed that this would be a good idea, and could be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Harriet explained that the committee is very open to suggestions from band members. Robert mentioned that he leads a number of groups online, but is always keen to hear suggestions of ideas that can be explored. Robert stated that he doesn't want the current format of online rehearsals to go stale, so is always keen to look at other options.

Jan Winder mentioned that band members will miss the Christmas concert that would have taken place in December this year. Could something be done instead? Jan explained that she would be happy to assist with backing tracks to allow band members to play along. Harriet mentioned that a Christmas event is currently being planned.

Michele Muir thanked all involved for the work that has been put in to keep the band together. Michele explained that she felt this had brought some sort of normality to the lockdown period.

Harriet thanked all present for attending, and closed the meeting.

Notes:

- a) Minutes of previous AGM meetings are available on the website at:

<https://dunbartonshireconcertband.co.uk/minutes/>

- b) The DCB Constitution, as adopted in June 2015, and with the required OSCR charitable objectives amendment can be viewed at:

<https://dunbartonshireconcertband.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/DCB-constitution-2016-2017-OSCR-objectives.pdf>