

Honorary President: Glyn Bragg



Dunbartonshire Concert Band

Minutes of AGM 2021

30th October 2021, 12.15pm – 1.00pm

Kessington Hall, 58 Milngavie Road, Glasgow G61 2DP

1. Attendance and apologies

The meeting was quorate, with 43 band members in attendance, which exceeded one third of the current membership.

Apologies were received from Anna Baker, Alana Bowman, Carrie Dixon, Anne Dunbar, George Gourlay, Sam Haouchine, Claire Hendry, Jane Ireland, Bob Kennedy, Alison McCree, Emma Mitchell, Louise Muir

2. Approval of previous AGM minutes

The minutes of the 2020 AGM were proposed by John Carswell and seconded by Michele Muir.

3. Receive financial accounts

The accounts were published and sent to the band via email prior to the AGM. The accounts were proposed by Jonathan Smithers and seconded by Alan Cooper.

4. Chairperson's report – Harriet Fishley

At the present moment we have approximately 66 members with at least 55 members attending regularly despite the pandemic which is fantastic achievement. We have all been through some extremely difficult times but the band has survived and is thankfully thriving.

It has been another challenging year and I would like to thank Robert for all his work over the last 12 months. It hasn't been an easy task preparing and taking online rehearsals, but each week he gave us a music masterclass, always teaching us, encouraging us and being patient with us. Thanks also to Michelle who also took and joined us for online rehearsals.

Once again, I want to say the band only functions because there are people willing to give their spare time and commitment. Over the last 12 months, I think you will all agree, the committee has worked tirelessly to keep the band together socially with some great ideas and events, along with all the usual routine tasks that need to be done, so I would like to thank them all for the work and time they have given to DCB. (Committee, stand, as we have some new members).

I would also like to thank Robert, David, Alan and Steven, along with the Kessington Committee for the work you have done over the last 2/3 years or so, in order for us to be sitting here in Kessington Hall. An enormous amount of work has happened in the background to secure grants, which is not an easy process at the best of times, never mind in a pandemic. Thank you.

We also owe huge thanks to Cairns Church, Rev. Andrew Frater and Janice for supporting us and being our home for a good number of years and whilst we are excited to be at Kessington, we will miss everyone but hope that they will come and join us for concerts and events.

So, what did we do? Well, we followed on from the last AGM with a Christmas quiz and our very first online 'Christmas social' event, enjoyed by all those who came along. Thank you to everyone who helped to organise and took part, giving live or recorded performances and to our ever-changing bingo caller, Sula. We also had the privilege of hearing from Robert a collaboration of music and voice called 'Oh Mississippi'. This was a gorgeous piece written by various people including Robert, to honour the importance of mental health during lockdown.

We had hoped that by the beginning of the New Year we might be closer to the pandemic being under control and some good news that we would be able to get back to 'in person' rehearsals, and take up our new home of Kessington Hall.

Sadly, neither would be possible, as the pandemic seemed to be worsening, and by the first week in January, we were into another full lockdown. An article, however, in the Milngavie and Bearsden Community Magazine let people know that the band was still as large as life and playing online, and what's more, thanks to Robert, leading the way to help others gain the confidence to get their music groups online.

We began 2021 with work on Debussy's Petite Suite, a piece that the band had done before but not for a long time, so it was quite new to some of us. Our very own Colin Suckling had also written for us a 'lockdown epic' called 'Bearsden Bears' featuring some of his very own bears!

In mid-March came some very sad news that our friend and long-time fellow band member, Brian Lees had passed away peacefully in hospital. Brian had been a member of the band for a long time and for a while was our principal clarinet, the band was his passion and great love. Brian was a kind, gentle man and he is missed by us all.

In late March/April we started another great new piece, 'Aurora Borealis' by Rossano Galante. We were still in lockdown but restrictions were beginning to be lifted and a potential of meeting in small outdoor groups looked possible.

This was realised in mid-May with the percussion section and clarinet section meeting in various private gardens (following current guidelines, of course), the first live playing since the initial lockdown. Rehearsals, however, would still need to remain online!

We handed out more new music at Milngavie Station car park from the back of my car with everyone socially distanced. It was so good to see people in person, the first time for over a year!

Onwards and upwards – we revisited Star Wars, tricky the first time around, but online, well, interesting! We were, though, nearing the possibility of an outdoor rehearsal, we just had to find a venue big enough to allow 2m distance from each other, hmm..... not an easy task!

We were very lucky to be offered the opportunity to use the grounds of one of our members.

On June 12th our first 'in person' rehearsal at Carbeth House took place. Our thanks to Moyra and Allan for allowing us to park and wander over their garden. Without their willingness to open their grounds to us, it would have been so much more difficult.

We could not have the full band as space was limited and we had to consider health and safety issues, not to mention all the Covid guidelines. But what an amazing location, fabulous views across Carbeth Loch, Dumgoyne and the Campsies. We all settled in our seats and Robert lifted the baton. After 12 months of Zoom rehearsals, it was like nothing had ever happened and Vaughan Williams 'Folk Song Suite' echoed across the landscape. What became clear, very quickly, was that our Zoom rehearsals had really paid off.

We managed another outdoor rehearsal for our last session of the season, again not the full band but it was an opportunity to finish this long and difficult year on a high note! Apparently, Glyn could hear us in Milngavie, or so he says! (I'm not sure whether to believe him or not).

In early August we received more sad news, Andy Hunter had passed away at the grand age of 90. Andy was a very talented man, having had a career as a professional bassoonist. He also played many other instruments and was also an incredible artist. He is missed by us all.

In mid-August I had my first look around Kessington, there was still some work to be done but things were looking great. Our hope that we would be able to start the new session at Kessington was finally becoming real.

On the Thursday before we were due to begin rehearsals, we were given the keys to Kessington. Still a few jobs to do and thanks to a small group we moved the percussion from Cairns to Kessington. Our thanks to Susan's partner Neil, who kindly offered his services and use of his van.

On Saturday 4th September we had our first full band rehearsal at Kessington Hall. It was amazing to see everyone and it sounded fantastic.

Next came the Making Music Awards. Back in July we had put together Robert's nomination for 'Best Musical Director' 2021.

We were thrilled when he was shortlisted and on 9th September the award ceremony was held via Zoom. It was a great evening, the nominations and some of the music and ideas were incredible. So, on behalf of the band, thank you again, Robert, for all your work to keep the band running during 2020/21 and congratulations on winning this much deserved award.

Now that we do have our own home it is even more important that everyone plays their part in helping with jobs that need to be done. Some of these need doing on a weekly basis and may creep into the rota over time. I am sure there will also be requests for volunteers to help with specific projects as time goes on, so please join in.

What's next:

Well, it is clear the band will continue to go from strength to strength. I think it is fair to say we are already playing at a high level given all we have been through. I hope we may be able to put on some kind of Christmas event, Robert and I are working on this. We will look for venues big enough to give concerts, and allow audiences. I know you are all itching to get going.

There will be plans for a special opening of the hall when things allow, and so much more, but we have to be patient for a little longer.

We have also had a new bespoke library built for us, so our thanks to Dave (Fiona McLean's husband) for his time and expertise. It will be so good not to have to crawl around in a dark tunnel, lifting heavy boxes to find music. We will need help though in the coming weeks to move the library from Cairns to Kessington so please do volunteer to help with this.

Overall though we have proved that we can weather the storm and we look forward to making great music in the coming year. Thank you everyone.

5. Musical Director's report – Robert Baxter

Robert began by thanking Harriet for her very detailed summary, and mentioned that this had highlighted just how much the band had achieved over the past year.

The last 12 months have involved a great deal of hard work but have been very worthwhile. The band is now back to normal rehearsals, has welcomed new members, and is more visible in the local community. Robert explained that he was very proud of the achievements of the band, emphasising that the acquisition of Kessington Hall had come at just the right time.

Robert thanked the committee for putting together the online rehearsals via Zoom during the Covid pandemic. Robert also thanked Harriet for her huge efforts during the pandemic, emphasising that the role of chair had not been easy during this period.

Robert went on to thank the other DCB Kessington trustees, David Broad and Alan Cooper, emphasising the time spent by the trustees to make improvements to Kessington Hall for the benefit of the band.

During the pandemic, we may not have got everything absolutely correct, but we tried to do so, particularly by ensuring that every band member had the opportunity to engage and take part in online rehearsals via Zoom.

Moving forward, the band is playing very well. A Christmas concert will hopefully be possible if a venue of a suitable size can be found. An outdoor concert in the new year would also give the band something to aim for. Robert emphasised that he is trying to ensure continuity of music during rehearsals, whilst also introducing some variety.

6. Treasurer's report – Fiona Ross

Fiona explained that a loss was made last year, as the band's only significant income came from subscriptions, donations and Gift Aid. However, the band was in a good financial position prior to the Covid pandemic.

Fiona thanked Anneli Demberg for ensuring that the KLM flight deposit refund was claimed after the cancellation of the Valencia tour. Fiona also thanked several band members who had elected not to take their refund and instead donated this to the band.

7. Subscriptions

Fiona explained that the committee had decided not to increase subscriptions for the coming year. It is therefore likely that a loss will be made this year, with subscriptions plus Gift Aid likely to not be sufficient to cover other expenses. However, the band is in a good financial position, and the financial position should improve once ticketed concerts are possible.

Fiona explained that the band account had a balance of around £10,500 at the beginning of 2021. This is likely to be lower at the end of the year, however the balance was only around £5,000-£6,000 when Fiona took over as treasurer in 2015.

Fiona stated that she is happy for band members to pay their subscription in instalments, however she would appreciate if band members could let her know if they are planning to do so.

Fiona reminded band members of the current subscription amounts - £110 full subscription, £65 for retired members and £50 for non-tax payers.

Fiona emphasised that although subscriptions are not being increased, if any band member is able to pay more than the subscription amount, this would be much appreciated.

Fiona mentioned two other potential sources of income:

1. The 100 Club – has been in abeyance, with no tickets sold in 2021 due to the Covid pandemic. To be worthwhile financially, a minimum of 50 tickets must be purchased. A show of hands confirmed that this would be viable.
2. Tea money – since many band members may not be carrying cash, Fiona proposed that band members pay any tea money owed for the year via bank transfer. This would allow Gift Aid to be claimed on tea money amounts.

Caroline Masson asked if the band had considered easyfundraising and Amazon Smile as potential sources of income. Harriet confirmed that easyfundraising was already used by some band members, and a total of £89 had been raised to date. Harriet explained that an Amazon Smile account will be set up. Harriet encouraged all band members to consider using easyfundraising and Amazon Smile, especially with Christmas approaching and online shopping likely to be more frequent.

8. Elect committee members

Harriet explained that two committee members, Anneli Demberg and Emma Wylie, were standing down. Harriet thanked Anneli and Emma for their efforts during their time on the committee.

Two new committee members were elected:

Heather Brown – proposed by Harriet Fishley, seconded by Alan Cooper

Alison McCree – proposed by Susan Macfarlane, seconded by Ruth Sinclair

Harriet welcome Heather and Alison to the committee.

9. Elect an honorary independent financial examiner

On behalf of the band, Harriet thanked Robert Thomson who has been the band's external auditor for many years, and also thanked Robert for his continued support of the band. Robert is happy to continue as independent auditor of the financial accounts. This was proposed by Fiona Ross and seconded by Monika Mihm Carmichael.

10. Consider resolutions of which due notice has been given

No resolutions were raised prior to the AGM.

11. Elect/re-elect band trustees

Harriet stated that John Waller had stepped down from his position as trustee a couple of years ago and this year David Welsh has also decided to step down. Harriet thanked David for his work as a trustee.

The remaining trustees (Jill Bolling, Alan Cooper and Colin Suckling) are all happy to continue.

Two new trustees were elected:

Jonathan Smithers – proposed by Lorraine Sherry, seconded by Cameron McCulloch

Moyra Hawthorn – proposed by Fiona McLean, seconded by David Broad

12. Elect honorary lifetime member

Harriet explained that the committee would like to elect David Welsh as an honorary lifetime member to thank him for his support over many years. This was proposed by Anneli Demberg and seconded by Scott Vassie.

13. AOCB

Colin Suckling proposed a formal record of the band's thanks to Robert Baxter, David Broad and Alan Cooper for their hard work to allow the band to continue to make music together in Kessington Hall.

Anneli Demberg mentioned that a band tour at some point in the future would be a possibility, particularly as 2023 will be the band's 50th anniversary. Anneli explained that she would be happy to be involved in organising a tour.

John Carswell thanked all those involved in setting up and organising the online rehearsals via Zoom. These were a wonderful connection to the band, and gave band members an incentive to practise.

Sula O'Duffy thanked Glyn Bragg and Colin Suckling for composing pieces of music for the band over the past year.

There were no further questions. 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>