



The Old Southendian Organ Society (OSOS)



OSOS Annual General Meeting

Thursday 11 April 2019, 7.45 pm

Old Southendian Clubhouse, Garons Park

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Having relocated to Gerald Usher's house due to the OSA Clubhouse not being opened as booked, the meeting commenced at 8.23 pm. The committee had waited for fifteen minutes from the advertised start time at the assigned venue to redirect any members who wished to attend.

Present: Gerald Usher (GU), Jon Roberts (JR), Brian Fletcher (BF), Joe Zammit (JZ), George Cobby (GC) [via Skype], Suzanne Zammit (SZ) [via Skype]

Apologies for absence were received from: Geoff and Karen May, Warren Symes (WS)

2. Approval of minutes from the 2018 AGM and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and there were no matters arising.

3. Reports from the committee

Excellent reports were received from:

a) Chairman

GU summarised the impressive range of activities undertaken by the Society since the last AGM.

b) Treasurer

JR confirmed that the Society maintained a healthy income and that all creditors had been paid. However, he warned that for the first year since its inception,

the Society had made a small operating loss and it was vital to ensure adequate funding for the work of the society and to have full funding available for any future works to be undertaken on the organ before contractors are engaged.

c) General Secretary

BF reported that the committee had met four times since the last AGM, with an attendance of at least four at every meeting. The main items under discussion were OSOS events, ongoing work to the organ, means of supporting school organists and strategies to recruit and retain members.

d) Membership Secretary

GC reported that while the level of support for the society remains high, a number of members have not chosen to renew their membership, depriving the society of regular income, and advised that retention and recruitment of members should be a priority in the year ahead.

e) Publicity and Communications Officer

JZ outlined ways in which the society has communicated over the past year with supporters, students of the School and the Charities Commission, as well as ways in which donations towards the work on the organ have been recognised.

f) School Liaison Officer

WS reported on the continuing success of the School Organ Society and ways in which the profile of the organ has been raised within the school, including a whole-school assembly about the organ, an award of half-colours to the School Organist and a dedicated section of the library for sheet music and books about the organ. In addition, WS has continued to liaise with the School and Village Workshop regarding the maintenance of the organ.

These reports are available in full as a separate document together with a statement of accounts for the year.

4. Discussion of proposals for an organ bursary/scholarship scheme at SHSB

In the absence of WS due to illness, this matter could not be discussed in full. It was noted that OSOS has offered informal, ad hoc support to school organists since its inception but that the Society now wishes to offer support in a more formal way. A similar scheme is in existence at WHSB. It was agreed to ask WS to propose some options for discussion at the next committee meeting.

5. Elections of the following committee positions for 2019 – 2020

The following were elected:

- a) Chairman – Gerald Usher (proposed by JZ, seconded JR)
- b) Treasurer – Jon Roberts (proposed by BF, seconded JZ)
- c) General Secretary – Brian Fletcher (proposed by GC, seconded GU)
- d) Membership Secretary – George Cobley (proposed by JZ, seconded BF)
- e) Publicity and Communications Officer – Joe Zammit (proposed by GU, seconded GC)
- f) School Liaison Officer – Warren Symes (proposed by GU, seconded JZ)

6. Appointment of a committee member as Deputy Chairman for 2019 – 2020

GU introduced this item by stating that over the past year, health problems had prevented him from taking as active a role as he would have liked. JZ was proposed as Deputy Chairman by GU, seconded by BF, and duly elected.

7. AOB

BF will write to the OSA to complain about the problems experienced with using the OSA Clubhouse as a venue for the meeting.

8. Provisional arrangements for next Annual General Meeting

JZ proposed organising the next AGM at the School in combination with an organ-based activity/concert to encourage better attendance and also suggested actively encouraging greater remote participation. SZ suggested including the School Organist in the programme. JZ also made the point that a considerable amount of information was already available to members online which meant that members would not perceive a strong need to attend the AGM for information alone.

The meeting concluded at 8.42 pm.



The Old Southendian Organ Society (OSOS)



REPORTS TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

11 April 2019

Chairman's Report

My previous report stated that 2017–18 had been the SHSB organ's greatest year: I doubt if anyone here tonight would disagree that the achievements of the succeeding twelve months have reached equal heights and probably surpassed them. Amongst these the professional rebuilding, modernisation and enlargement of the instrument is now complete; the Society has presented a further four very successful and well-supported concerts; while activity levels pertaining to the organ, its players and others closely involved with it continue to increase.

As pointed out last year, our excellent website is kept meticulously up-to-date and full accounts of everything which is happening, and has happened, under the banner of OSOS are there on the internet for all to see. Moreover, this coverage now extends to YouTube as well and so the outside world can at last hear the organ in addition to viewing it and reading about it. We are indebted to Joe Zammit for his superb work in raising universal awareness of the instrument, the school and our society through his untiring endeavours.

The concerts followed our now well-established practice of presenting a wide variety of instrumental and vocal items, many of them performed by school pupils and staff: indeed, most of April's 'New Southendian' concert was delivered by SHSB ensembles and soloists; while subsequent events in November and March took school liaison a step further by also featuring musicians from SHSG in their programmes. Warren Symes is to be congratulated for bringing OSOS and the two schools so closely together in such a short space of time, which is benefiting all three establishments and spreading copious goodwill all round in the process.

Our President, Adrian Lucas, put the renovated organ through its paces quite brilliantly in his June recital – not only in the music played but, memorably, with his colourful descriptions, explanations and demonstrations (enhanced this year, for the first time, by screen projections of his hands and feet at work) to a delighted and fascinated audience. This latter feature is soon to be further developed and extended in scope, thanks to the initiative of a recently-enrolled member who is now trialling high-quality takes of the organ,

its players and its mechanism with the aim of further boosting our public image and, in addition, providing some valuable educational material.

Summing up, the year 2018–19 has not only seen our cherished instrument back in action – now completely reconstructed with up-to date technology and trebling of its tonal resources – but also sustained a rapidly expanding programme of events and initiatives which are drawing in ever-growing numbers of participants and supporters.

Sincere thanks to the committee for their magnificent work in spreading the organ's fame and repute far and wide. In the words of a traditional saying, the sky's the limit!

Gerald Usher

Treasurer's Report April 2019

Income

Over the year from April 2018 to March 2019, donations were substantially lower due to the end of the fundraising campaign and completion of the current capital work on the organ. However, in the past 12 months we did exceed the £50K target which has been in place since donations began in 2014. This is a major milestone and gives us as a society the opportunity to look at what has been achieved so far and where future fundraising can be best used.

Membership contributions are low, but this figure does not consider fees paid as part of a larger donation or fees paid via CAF.

A successful programme of four events in the last 12 months has given the society a healthy income.

Expenses

The remaining balance of payments to contractors has been settled and all accounts are up to date.

Additional expenses relating to events including marketing and venue hire are detailed separately.

Summary

2018–2019 is the first year in the Society's history where we have made an operating loss. Whilst this is a relatively small amount, it is important that we retain appropriate funds in the account to be able to support any future emergency maintenance. As discussed at previous meetings, it is my advice that all future works are fully funded prior to engaging contractors.

The accounts are healthy and the ongoing fundraising from donations and events has continued to successfully fund the work of the society.

Jon Roberts

**OLD SOUTHERDIAN ORGAN SOCIETY
BALANCE SHEET**

Income	18-19	17-18	16-17	15-16	14-15	TOTAL
Membership	110.00	210.00	260.00	250.00	-	830.00
Donations	1561.82	39289.26	4425.00	4150.00	1833.34	51259.42
Events	2060.60	425.00	426.84	290.00	-	3202.44
Sales	-	-	-	-	-	0.00
HMRC	137.85	-	-	-	-	137.85
Total Income	<u>3870.27</u>	<u>39924.26</u>	<u>5111.84</u>	<u>4690.00</u>	<u>1833.34</u>	<u>55429.71</u>
Expenses						
Maintenance	4611.00	38190.47	1580.52	219.99	202.40	44804.38
Trips	-	-	100.00	-	-	100.00
Marketing	332.38	305.49	93.99	-	-	731.86
Equipment Hire	284.72	-	-	-	-	284.72
Venue Hire	172.50	130.00	135.00	135.00	-	572.50
Gifts & Dontations	102.58	-	-	-	-	102.58
Total Expenses	<u>5503.18</u>	<u>38625.96</u>	<u>1909.51</u>	<u>354.99</u>	<u>202.40</u>	<u>46596.04</u>
NET INCOME	<u><u>-1632.91</u></u>	<u><u>1298.30</u></u>	<u><u>3202.33</u></u>	<u><u>4335.01</u></u>	<u><u>1630.94</u></u>	<u><u>8833.67</u></u>
Float	160.00					
Cash in account	8673.67					

General Secretary's Report

Since last year's AGM, there have been four meetings of the OSOS committee evenly distributed across the year, each with at least four members of the committee in attendance. I would like to thank Gerald Usher, Joe Zammit and Warren Symes for their kind hospitality on these occasions.

The main items for discussion have included: the ongoing work on the enhancement and maintenance of the School Organ; planning and reviewing OSOS events; ways in which organists at the School are supported; and ways in which OSOS can improve its recruitment and retention of members. At each meeting, every member of the committee gives a report on their activities on the Society's behalf during the preceding months. The minutes of committee meetings give a clear indication of the actions to be taken by the committee to further the work of the Society and these are reviewed at the following meeting. Consequently, the business of the Society has been transacted in an efficient and effective manner, and the decisions taken by the committee are appropriately documented.

As General Secretary, I have also written letters on behalf of the Committee, for instance offering the Society's thanks to Adrian Lucas for the excellent recital he gave at the School as well as offering our condolences to the family of supporter of the Society who sadly passed away earlier this year. In addition, I have worked to develop the Society's links with local churches by exploring some potential options for future concert venues, as well as providing front-of-house support at the events held over the past year.

It has been a pleasure to support the work of OSOS as General Secretary in the past twelve months and I look forward to the year ahead.

Brian Fletcher

Membership Secretary's Report

Support for the work of the Old Southendian Organ Society is high, and the number of individuals interested in our work (those who join up to the mailing list) is at a record level – almost 200 are now signed up. Our total number of financial supporters stands at 125, up again from the previous year. The society has to ensure that, in the long term, our income is sufficient to fund essential activities such as ongoing maintenance and student support.

Regular membership subscriptions have the potential to provide a stable baseline income to fund these activities. Unfortunately, over the last two years, a number of members have failed to renew their membership, and few new members have been attracted. Going forward, our target should be to at least maintain existing numbers each year, and preferably to aim for a moderate increase each year. Moreover, it is important to ensure that school leavers continue to be targeted to ensure that they are able to play an important role in the life of the organ for years to come.

We look forward to a successful 2019–20 and hope to maintain and grow membership at the same levels as we have done at the past.

George Cobley

Publicity and Communications Officer's Report

This last year has been an exciting one to communicate - here is some of what we achieved...

Communicating the celebration

With the organ at Southend High School for Boys rebuilt, we were able to share the wonderful result with our supporters. We were delighted to welcome many to our events in the year, starting with the New Southendian Showcase in April, followed by Adrian Lucas's recital in June, the November 'Concert for Remembrance' and our latest concert out at Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh, in March.

To pick out the highlight: Adrian's celebration included a wonderfully diverse programme, demonstrations and explanations of how the organ works and the organ rebuild, all delivered with his usual style and projected in full technicolour on a large screen so even those at the back of the capacity audience could see! The history of the organ, the rebuild process, the school's initiatives and the many thank yous were all communicated for attendees in our souvenir programme. It was fantastic to have attendees at this event from all over the country, and indeed all over the world, with the USA, Canada, and continental Europe all well represented. A YouTube video interview with Adrian was kindly facilitated by the Old Southendian Association and enjoyed by many who couldn't make the evening – more to follow off the back of this initiative in the coming year as we work to assemble our own team to record more of the organ.

The concerts in April, November and March were also much enjoyed with a most impressive selection of student performances, alongside the return of a number of past pupils and friends of the Society. November's concert featured a new local choir, Voces Novae, formed to help develop the skills of many talented young voices, who were very well received. We were pleased to visit Holy Trinity for the first time as a society, with the fundraiser for music at the church and OSOS. We enjoyed their great support and warm welcome in particular – grateful thanks to all at the church who facilitated the event.

Communicating our thanks

In addition to our thank yous in the June recital, we were pleased to create two permanent statements of thanks, with a framed list of pipe sponsors in the organ chamber, plus donor and memorial boards on the side panels of the organ console for the most substantial contributions. We are very grateful indeed for the ongoing and generous support provided by many – the work of the society could not continue without your help.

Communicating with the next generation

The school has worked to communicate and raise awareness of the organ, its history and rebuild, with the school's organ students educating and inspiring their peers in assemblies. Thanks to Warren Symes for leading this initiative. We look forward to sharing similar pupil-led productions with the world as we increase our video social media presence.

Communicating with our friends and supporters

We continue to enjoy hearing from various friends, often with interesting stories to relate about their past experiences of the organ at Southend High School for Boys. We were pleased to receive offers from recitalists too – look out for Jeremy Blandford's recital this July (Saturday 6th July, 7:30pm at Southend High School for Boys), and further recitals in 2020. Our outward communications continue to be strong via our website, Facebook page (with some posts reaching almost 2,000 people!), and mailshots (with over 150 recipients now on our list). We were also pleased to see our events feature in the *Music in Essex* publication and local newspaper the *Evening Echo*, further increasing our reach.

Communicating our success

As a registered charity, we were pleased to file our first full return and report with the Charities Commission - our thanks to Wilkins Kennedy for their kind assistance with this.

Looking ahead...

We look forward to another successful year, with more progress to come on increasing our outward communications, and further events for your enjoyment in collaboration with other local groups. More information to follow on all of this in due course – stay tuned via our website and Facebook.

Joe Zammit

School Liaison Officer's Report

Since the reinstatement of the School Memorial Organ to active service, its significance and prominence has returned to the forefront of School life. There are a number of ongoing and new initiatives to report.

The School Organ Society

The School Organ Society continues to meet every Monday at lunchtime. There are currently four Sixth Form students who attend: two Upper Sixth students and two Lower Sixth. On a number of occasions, the School Organist has led workshops in my absence. Efforts have been made over the last year to engage more middle and lower school students. As a result, two Year 7 boys and one Year 10 have started attending on an ad hoc basis.

The Electronic Organ

The Electronic Organ has been moved from the Main Hall to the room at the back of the hall, known as the Southend Vineyard. Its place in this isolated room has enabled students to practise on a regular basis, without disturbing the administrative staff in the Main Office, or other members of staff using the Main Hall.

The Hitchcock Library

I have acquired a section in the library for sheet music and books about pipe organs. With £100 of funding acquired from the Old Southendian Association (OSA) I purchased sheet music for the students. Also, last year a considerable volume of sheet music was bequeathed to the School, which has since been catalogued in the library.

Whole School Assembly

With the assistance of the two organists in Year 13 and the AV Team, I delivered an assembly to the whole school on the School Organ. The focus was not only on the historical aspects of the School Memorial Organ, but also the role of the organist. Students heard various ranks of pipes and saw the organist using the various playing aids and pedals. Undoubtedly, this assembly reinforced the role and importance of the organ in everyday school life. Moreover, the assembly encouraged other boys to consider learning the organ.

Award for the School Organist

In addition to the Usher Cup for the School Organist, which is awarded in the Autumn Term at the Senior Prizegiving, I have introduced the award of Half-Colours for the School Organist, which was presented at the end of the Spring Term assembly to the School Organist. As this assembly signals the last assembly for Year 13, it seems poignant to publicly recognise the School Organist at this occasion, as it is usually a Year 13 student who is School Organist. Going forward, this award will signal the end of the term of the School Organist, as the potential replacement(s) take on the responsibility of the School Organist until the end of the academic year.

Organ Maintenance and Tuning

Where there have been significant faults (prior to the Service of Remembrance in 2018), I continue to facilitate the communication between the School and the Village Workshop. I have encouraged the students to report faults in the maintenance book beside the organ and will continue to do so.

Warren Symes