

Whitstable Music Society Chairman's Report to Members June 2019

I am pleased to report that 2019, our forty fourth season, was an excellent season of concerts. The feedback we received from the audiences was very positive indicating that the mix of ensembles and musical genres appeals to our core audience. The quality of each concert was superb but possible highlights of the season would have to include The Heath Quartet, The Fujita Piano Trio, the saxophonist Huw Wiggin and the Gould Piano Trio with the clarinettist Robert Plane.

Our financial statement for the year will be available at the AGM on Sat 8th June and I'm pleased to report that our finances remain very satisfactory. In view of our healthy balances we decided to budget for a modest deficit on the year so that we could maintain the very high standards which our members and regular concert goers have come to expect from Whitstable Music Society. This has been largely possible thanks to the generous support of our sponsors without which we would not be able to maintain our ticket prices at such a reasonable level.

The committee are always keen to keep the cost of a season ticket as low as possible, consistent with maintaining our high standards. With this in mind, for our 2019/20 season, we have decided to set the cost of the season tickets at £75 (*£70 in 2018/19*) which is still less than £11 per concert. The cost of a Single Ticket for individual concerts is to be maintained at £16 which continues to represent excellent value.

Our sponsors play a major part in maintaining our finances and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for their generous support. I am delighted to report that Gill Smyth and Margaret Crawley have once again done a really superb job in maintaining excellent relations with our sponsors. Without their efforts we would have to raise the ticket prices quite substantially. We owe them our thanks for all the hard work they put into this. I congratulate them on behalf of the society for their excellent work. The extent of their efforts will be apparent when we present the accounts at the AGM.

Last year we launched our new website thanks to the hard work and expertise of Neil Anthony, a Society Member. The new website is a great improvement on the previous one and enables us to provide more information than was previously possible including photographs, videos and audio recordings of our musicians. This coming year we are going to concentrate on identifying specific ways in which to use our improved website and other media such as Facebook, Twitter and the local press, to try and increase the sale of both season tickets and single tickets on the door. Existing members and concert goers also have an important role to play in the success of the society. Experience over many years has shown that personal recommendation is the most effective way of promoting the society, so we hope that our current members and regular concert goers will play their part in the campaign to increase audience numbers.

On behalf of all our members I would like to thank all the committee members for their hard work throughout the year. Also those who kindly helped to set up the performance space and to reinstate the room after our concerts. This is an enjoyable activity and many hands make light work. There are many ways in which you can help the society so if you would like to help in any way please mention this to one of the committee members who are always on hand at our concerts. We are very grateful too for the many donors who help us in various ways. A list of donors is published in our new season's brochure. Our thanks also to the many volunteers who help with the teas and coffees during the interval and the washing up after the concerts. Finally our thanks to our page turner Lorraine Spiro and to Kim Hogarth who produced our excellent programme notes last season.

John Walker. Chairman.