

## CHATTERIS MUSIC SOCIETY NEWS LETTER

October 2021

We hope you are all able to appreciate and enjoy the continued gradual lifting of Covid restrictions. Compared with where we were eight months ago we can see how much progress to normality has been made although still some way to go.

The Committee has met twice during September and we are happy to report that progress has been made on several fronts although we all feel the need to move faster in order to get our concert programme up and running again.

Our Annual General Meeting will take place at the King Edward Centre, Railway Lane, Chatteris on 12th February 2022 commencing at 15.30 hours. This is a later start time than usual due to the venue being heavily booked around this period. We are arranging entertainment from 16.30 hours to last about 45 minutes. Refreshments will be provided following the business meeting but in a slightly different format in order to ensure we stay within the 'spirit' of current Covid guidelines. This means that we shall use disposable cups and pre-wrapped biscuits/cakes etc. Although not what you have been used too we hope that you will understand.

While there are no specific requirements now to socially distance or wear masks in public places we would encourage everyone attending to act thoughtfully and responsibly in this regard and have respect for the wishes of others. Just old fashioned common sense!

Our Grand Piano continues to be the focus of difficulty and has taken up much Committee discussion time. Our specialists, 1066 Pianos, have recommended that humidity in the Piano must be controlled in order to prevent it becoming unusable due to the effects of mould growth. A humidity controller will require a mains electricity feed and must be left running 24/7. However the Vicar advises that, following consultation with the Church insurers (Ecclesiastical Insurance), this represents a fire risk particularly when the building is unoccupied and will invalidate the Insurance cover. We are unable to understand the logic of this bearing in mind:

- Other domestic electrical appliances (pulling a much heavier load than a humidity controller) already run 24/7 in the Church premises. In particular the security system which was required

by Ecclesiastical Insurers themselves as a condition of continuing Insurance cover following a claim several years ago.

- Professional electrical advice confirms that modern 30mA trip fuses (isolators) would fully conform to current electrical regulations/requirements and be perfectly safe. We can't therefore understand the logic of what the Insurers are reportedly saying.

- Other Churches in the area, also insured with Ecclesiastical, don't have the same problems/restrictions in leaving electrical appliances running 24/7.

Over the last year (notwithstanding Covid restrictions) we have repeatedly asked to meet with the PCC concerning the Piano and peripheral matters. On one occasion we wrote individually to PCC members but there was no collective response. More recently we have received emails from the Vicar saying that PCC agenda is 'already rather full' and that in any case a meeting with another charity might cause 'a conflict of interest'. Again we don't understand why and we have therefore reluctantly concluded that we will not be allowed to meet with the PCC officially. In view of all the foregoing we feel there is no alternative but to accept that we must find alternative venues for our concerts and the Piano.

Enquiries at several venues in Chatteris have drawn a blank either because they are too small, cannot take our Piano as well or haven't got sufficient facilities etc. Further afield (within 10 mile radius) there is more hope and we have already identified one venue which potentially has at least all the facilities offered by Chatteris Parish Church but mostly on a larger scale and interestingly for slightly lower hire fees. We are investigating further!

It is very clear that in order to prevent further deterioration to our Piano it must be moved from Chatteris Parish Church and preferably before the worst of the winter cold sets in. Unless we can find a suitable alternative venue then we may have to consider storage at least for the time being. We are mindful that the conditions under which the Society acquired the Piano included the provision that it should be available to anyone in the community who is able to and wishing to play it. However if we leave it at the Church the inevitable deterioration will continue and that in turn will increase the renovation costs up to the point where it becomes an uneconomic repair. At that point we will have lost a valuable instrument and community asset forever.

Our next Committee meeting is scheduled for 25th October 2021 by which time we hope to have positive detailed news about restarting our concerts in 2022.

The CMS Committee

