

CHATTERIS MUSIC SOCIETY NEWS LETTER

1st July 2021

Despite the twists and turns that Covid 19 has taken we continue to move to a more normal way of life and we hope this newsletter finds you all well and looking to the future.

Sadly the final concert we had planned before the Pandemic struck has had to be cancelled. The Wyton RAF Band, who were due to perform in Chatteris Parish Church on 17th July, have cancelled the concert because they have been unable to find enough opportunity and facilities for practice during the last 18 months of lock-down. However they will be re-booked in due course when we are confident that concerts can safely resume.

The Committee had hoped to meet on Monday 21st June 2021 but the expected national lifting of Covid restrictions was delayed until 19th July. Although we could have legally met outdoors on 21st even the weather was against us and the meeting had to be cancelled. We now plan to meet on Monday 26th July 2021.

Amongst other things on the agenda will be the increase in hire charges for our concert venue, Chatteris Parish Church, of which we have recently been advised. The effect of the increases, (which come with a different fee structure and therefore it is difficult to make a direct comparison with what was charged previously) will mean that our venue hire charges will, on average, more than double. Some of the accommodation at the Church is no longer available for hire anymore. We estimate that these increases will put at least £3.00 (and probably more) on our concert ticket prices and we are therefore investigating costs of other suitable venues in the area.

It is recognised that increasing ticket prices and/or changing our regular concert venue could be contentious issues about which some of you may have strong views. Please do let us know your thoughts on this in time for our next Committee meeting. Unfortunately we cannot ignore this matter. If we wish to maintain our present level of high performance standards we are at a point where we have to decide whether to raise ticket prices to meet the increased costs of

hiring the Parish Church for our concerts or change our concert venue, possibly to somewhere outside Chatteris.

Last September we requested a meeting with the Parish Church leadership in order to discuss this and other outstanding matters but there has been no response to this specific request!

Sometime ago our piano tuner advised that the 'action' of our Kawai Grand Piano was 'slowing down'. Not good news when we engage top professional concert pianists, one of whom expressed the view that some of the strings were sounding 'stressed'. Our piano specialists, 1066 pianos, subsequently identified small amounts of mould/mildew growing in the piano. They have advised a general cleaning, refurbishment and, in the longer term, re-stringing of the piano in order to bring it back to top concert condition. The total cost of all these works is estimated at around £10,000. We are currently pursuing alternative funding in order to facilitate this.

Thereafter we will need to control the climatic conditions within the piano to ensure similar deterioration does not re-occur. Sadly the climatic conditions within the Parish Church are not helpful to the wellbeing of our piano's condition. The prolonged period of damp and cold during which there was reduced heating in the Church due to the Covid lockdown will only have served to exacerbate this situation.

We will issue a further newsletter after our next committee meeting when we hope to have more positive information about when, where and how we can continue with our concert programme.

The CMS Committee.