

Bromsgrove Concerts

Annual General Meeting 2024

Chairman's Report

It is with considerable sadness that I write this Chairman's report for what will be the final AGM for Bromsgrove Concerts in its current form. But at the same time I look back on the 2023/24 season with great pride and fondness, having staged seven superb concerts with possibly the widest variety of music that we have staged in recent years.

Before I come to the next steps for Bromsgrove Concerts, I thought I should reflect briefly on the season that has just passed.

We started with a programme given by the Birmingham Philharmonic Chamber Ensemble featuring works by Bernstein, Stravinsky, Milhaud and Ibert, all inspired by jazz. It is the first time I can recall whoops and cheers from a Bromsgrove Concerts audience and we had not far short of 200 people there including many students from Bromsgrove School.

Then followed a variety of concerts featuring notable musicians including the Solem Quartet, a song recital given by Elisabeth Irvine accompanied by Ariane, Jurriaanse Lazarom, and a piano recital by Di Xiao which were of the highest quality including a mix of old favourites and new works.

We then welcomed back our old friends, the Gould Trio and our 60th Anniversary year was brought to a close by the Eblana String Trio with flautist, Emma Halnan. So all in all a very successful season musically, but sadly our audience numbers continued their decline after the heady heights of the opening concert, thus endorsing our reasons for deciding to bring Bromsgrove Concerts, if not to a close, at least a long pause!

But we couldn't let our 'club' end without staging some sort of party, so we decided to go out with a bang in a concert of Gershwin and Marquez performed by the Enigma Brass Ensemble conducted by Dr Richard Jenkinson who has taken part in countless concerts for Bromsgrove Concerts over the years. Yours truly played the solo piano part in Rhapsody in Blue and Dancon No 2, and judging by the rapturous applause and standing ovation, we certainly celebrated our 60th year in style.

So what now for Bromsgrove Concerts? Well at our Special General Meeting held on 22nd January this year, we presented the reasons for our wishing to either wind the 'Club' up, or at least explore options, faced with declining audience numbers, as well as a shrinking group of Trustees to run it. At the meeting we received permission from you our members to "commence discussions with relevant charitable organisations with the purpose of continuing to support the 'club's' Charitable Objects. These discussions will attempt to test the viability of and interest in keeping Bromsgrove Concerts active in some form, for the benefit of the people of Bromsgrove and surroundings, or, if no suitable way forward is found, transferring the 'club's' assets to such organisation(s) that have similar stated Charitable Objects". We committed to reporting-back at the end of

the 2023/24 season on the preferred course of action, which we will do at this AGM.

Since then we have consulted widely and sought opinion from a wide range of organisations based in or near to Bromsgrove and have now arrived at a proposal which we will be putting to you later in this meeting.

Our choices however turned out to be quite limited. As a charitable organisation, in the event of seeking to wind our Club up and distribute our funds, we are duty bound by the Charity Commission to either merge with or donate our resources to similar registered charities with similar charitable objects to ours. And surprisingly there are not many organisations nearby that fit our profile, or with even a willingness or interest in receiving our funds.

With our options limited, we have decided to act on advice given to us by John de la Cour of the Elmley Foundation, who has been a loyal financial supporter in recent years and without whom we would not have been able to stage many of the concerts that we have enjoyed. John's advice is to not wind the Club up, but rather 'pause' it for a year or two to allow us to explore ways in which to continue at some point in the future, when the interest in and opportunities for classical concerts may well have changed - especially now that we are under a government, and that our very own Artrix has been revived.

So, whilst this is my final Chairman's report, for now, I believe that the proposal that we will be presenting to you in a few minutes will give a ray of hope for Bromsgrove Concerts followers that we may be able to stage concerts once again in future, but probably in a different form to now, and under new management.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to my fellow Trustees, Joyce Chamberlain, Alan Cook and Chris Cooke for all of their hard work in running Bromsgrove Concerts, and to our predecessors, including our previous Chair, Janet Upward and Richard Sugden who are with us this evening. We can look back over 60 years of music making with great pride, beautifully remembered in our very own book, written by Joyce Chamberlain which I would urge you to read if you haven't already got a copy.

So for now it is definitely 'Au Revoir' rather than goodbye!!

Bromsgrove Concerts

Resolution presented to the AGM on Monday 22nd July 2022

Following extensive consultations and seeking advice from trusted supporters and donors, Bromsgrove Concerts have decided to:

1. Cease presenting concerts for the time being
2. Invest the funds that the Club has accumulated in charitable investments to secure the funds and achieve growth if possible
3. Retain four trustees to oversee the investments and to oversee a future revival
4. Seek new trustees through negotiations and meetings with interested supporters, donors, and relevant arts organisations

All this with a view to retaining the opportunity for the Club to be revived at some future time with sufficient resources to enable a future board of Trustees to stage concerts and events in line with its charitable objects.