

Bingham and District Choral Society

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD 11TH MAY 2016 AT CARNARVON SCHOOL, BINGHAM

1. Attendance and Apologies

About 50 people were present, including Committee members John Bannister (Chair), Sally Ashton (Vice-Chair), Huw Cadwallader (Treasurer), Valerie Morgan (Secretary), Barbara Cobb (Programme Chair), Margot Anderson (Librarian), Judy Unell (Publicity), Richard Joyner (Fundraising Chair), Sylvia Aldworth (Box Office), Janet Chapman (Membership), Tim Connery, Brad Poulson (Ordinary Members) and Guy Turner (Musical Director).

Apologies were received from Clive Evans, Jill Heywood, Juliet Ward, Claire Woodward, Claire Winsor, Deborah Winson, Elaine McGarva, Douglas Travers, Diane Collins, Jackie Fish, Pauline Woodhouse, Maisie Ray and Derek Tabron.

2. Minutes of AGM 13th May 2015

There were no amendments. Proposed Jeff Crampton, seconded Richard Joyner, accepted unanimously as a true record.

3. Matters arising from Minutes of AGM 13th May 2015

There were no Matters arising.

4. Treasurer's Report

The choir has maintained its membership of 90, and Guy and Ed have made excellent starts. Careful budgeting at the year's concerts, our continued success at fundraising, and using fewer musicians have resulted in an end-of-year profit. Our concert with Mansfield a year ago made a little profit, and the concert with the Goldstones only a small loss. The Christmas concert was its usual success. Saturday's concert will make a noticeable deficit, with a full orchestra and soloists in the Minster. It will help that we sold out, and the loss will be shared with Southwell Choral Society. Hopefully we will continue to maintain a balance between large choral works and less expensive but still worthwhile works in future.

Fundraising: most weeks there are members selling cakes or jam etc. Thanks to everyone involved, and to **John Bannister** for his annual half-marathon, **David Atkins** for the 100 Club, and **Jeff Crampton** for tea and coffee. Thanks too to **Derek Tabron** for organising the successful Choral Workshop, led this year by **Guy**. The enjoyable Evening of Comic Songs exemplified **Guy's** commitment to the choir, and made a substantial profit. Thank you, Guy.

Richard Joyner has greatly helped us raise funds with his planning skills. However he is leaving the Committee this year, and we will seriously miss his wisdom and gentle humour.

Financially we have £15,275 in our Savings Accounts, and enough in our bank accounts for the day to day running of the Society. I have suggested a change in the Constitution so that only one signature rather than two is required on cheque payments in future. The Virgin Money Savings Accounts will still require two signatures. This is so we can have an online bank account, which is expected by many companies. It will also enable the Treasurer to access the bank accounts to check if payments have been made. Unfortunately an online account can only be run by one person.

Thank you to **Pam Brooks** and **Hugh Holbrook** for examining my annual report.

5. Chair's Report

This is, my first report as Chair and our first with **Guy Turner** as MD and **Ed Turner** as accompanist. We are all gradually getting used to one another.

Too late for **Richard's** AGM report as Chair, we had Neville's farewell lunch in Radcliffe. Neville's gift was tickets and hotel for Glyndebourne, where he and Joan enjoyed Britten's 'Rape of Lucretia'. Their letter said how pleased they were. We also have **Richard** to thank for the many hours he spent organising the often difficult process of appointing a new Musical Director and Accompanist. Richard deserves much credit for his handling of major change within the society.

For Neville's retirement, BDCS commissioned Guy to set poems by WB Yeats to music. **Juliet** is to be thanked for the subject, and 'Three Poems' had its world première at our concert on 21st November 2015 in St Mary's, Radcliffe. Neville was pleased with the work and our performance. Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone accompanied, and Emma Rae Ward was the soloist. The Christmas concert was successful and fun as ever with Toot Hill Brass, and the Carnarvon School Choir, also under new direction. In February, Guy led a workshop including some of his own work. Thanks to **Guy** and to **Derek Tabron** for organising this, and to him and Ed. for providing An Evening of Comic Songs in March in Colston Bassett Village Hall, which netted over £1000.

Our concert, in Southwell Minster on Saturday 7th May with Southwell Choral Society and Nottingham Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Guy, with Alfie Smith, Abigail Broughton, Stephen Cooper and Roger Bryan, went well. Guy will give informed feedback shortly.

Also to be thanked are **Pam Brooks** and **Hugh Holbrook**; **Jeff Crampton**, **Beryl Cottrill**, **Robin Aldworth** and **David Atkins** for their financial, programme and concert work. Thanks too to all who have helped to raise money over the year. And again thanks to **Jeff** and his helpers for setting up and clearing away.

I am indebted to the committee for their hard work over the year. **Brad Poulson** and **Judy Unell** are working on a new website. The committee felt that we need a site to appeal to new singers and to give information on who we are and what we do.

Particular thanks are due to **Richard Joyner** and **Sylvia Aldworth** who have decided not to seek re-election. I have already mentioned **Richard's** work as Chair. He provided the committee with fine leadership, and I personally found him very helpful. His further year as Fundraising Chair; resulted, not surprisingly, in a good year for the choir. Richard is taking the role through until after the Goldstone-Clemmow Concert in September. **Sylvia** has been on the Committee since 2003, and has taken leading roles in fund raising and concert organisation. We are indebted to her for her hard work on ticket sales in particular. I am delighted that **Robin Aldworth** will continue with much of the programme production work.

Next season's programme includes-

24th September in St Mary's and All Saints, Bingham:

Anthony Goldstone and Caroline Clemmow piano duo

19th November in St Mary's, Radcliffe on Trent:

Pergolesi Magnificat

Mozart Solemn Vespers

Vivaldi Beatus Vir

Mozart Eine kleine Nachtmusik

With string orchestra

Dec.17th in St Mary's and All Saints, Bingham

Christmas Concert

Carnarvon School Choir

February Workshop

Leader and date to be announced in due course

May 13th 2017 in Newark Parish Church

With Newark Choral Society.

Organ Accompaniment by Roger Bryan

Durufle Requiem

Vaughan-Williams Five Mystical Songs

Parry I was Glad

The choir restarts on **7th September**.

John's report was proposed by **Patrick Mountford** and seconded by **Barbara Cobb**. It was accepted unanimously.

A vote of thanks was also proposed to thank **Sylvia** for all her hard work.

6. Membership Subscriptions for 2016-2017

John proposed that the subscription should remain unchanged at £95. However there are changes to library charges for music – this is now £1.25 per copy. The Society will absorb some of the cost, but music will now be charged at 25p per copy.

This proposal was seconded by **Richard Joyner** and accepted unanimously.

From the floor: Will there be an opportunity to buy copies? Copies to buy can be ordered, but mostly people buy their own copies – 10% discount at Windblowers on production of membership card, or from Choralline with code Bing.

7. Resolutions

Some amendments were proposed to the Constitution:

a)i) John proposed that some amendments should be made to make the Constitution gender-neutral, eg substituting 'Chair' for 'Chairman' and 'he or she' / 'his or her' for 'he'.

This was seconded by **Pam Brooks** and accepted unanimously.

ii) Clauses 6.3 and 6.4: **Huw** proposed that **Clause 6.3** should be amended as follows: 'Two Trustees shall be required to sign any cheques or Deed on behalf of the Society relating to any savings accounts'.

Also that a new clause, **6.4**, should be added as follows: 'One Trustee only shall be required to sign cheques and provide signature for transactions drawn on any current account used in the day to day financial running of the Society'.

From the floor: It was pointed out that with the greatest respect to Huw, there needed to be safeguards against any problems in the future, and possibly a £250 limit on what could be drawn on one signature. There had to be transparency. A monthly statement should be made to the Committee. Questions were raised as to whether if the account was online, the present NatWest current account would continue (it would not), and what controls there would be over username and password with only one signatory.

Huw said that the two NatWest accounts were linked, so that money was automatically transferred into the current account when it went down to a certain level. No one could authorise spending above £300 without Committee approval. The other accounts would continue to exist and require two signatures. Soon everyone would be forced into online banking.

It was agreed that all the above considerations would need further discussion within the Committee. **John** proposed that the motion be accepted with this proviso; this was seconded by **Patrick Mountford**. The motion was carried unanimously.

iii) **Clause 6.6:** **Richard** proposed that a new clause should be added as follows: 'The Annual General Meeting may appoint as Patron any person who has made significant financial contributions to the Society, and this post shall stand for a period of three years. Such a person or persons may be reappointed'.

It was suggested that the word 'financial' was unnecessary, and it was agreed this would be deleted.

The motion was seconded by **Huw**, and carried unanimously.

iv) **Clauses 13, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3:** It was proposed that **Clauses 13 and 13.1** be amended as follows: **13. 'Paid Individuals or Groups. 13.1.** The Committee shall provide any paid associate of the Society with a contract setting out his or her terms of engagement and responsibilities.

Clause 13.2: Selection and appointment. The Society will advertise vacancies in appropriate journals and notice boards. The Committee will ensure that the membership is kept informed of the process. Applicants will be shortlisted on the merits of their written application and references. Selection will be made by members of a Sub-committee assisted by invited professional musicians appointed by the Committee. For posts other than Musical Director, the Musical Director/Director of Music would assist in this process. Whenever possible, this process will involve formal interview by the Sub-committee and an audition with the choir. Society members will be asked to indicate their preferences, but such preferences will not be binding on the Sub-committee or Committee. The Chair of the Sub-committee or another or others invited on the Chair's behalf will advise all candidates of the outcome of the selection process'

Clause 13.2: 'From time to time individuals or groups may be engaged to perform tasks or provide services to or on behalf of the Society. They shall be selected by members of the Committee or others acting on behalf of the Committee'.

There were no comments from the floor. The amendment was proposed by **David Atkins** and seconded by **Barbara Cobb**. The proposal was carried unanimously.

v) **Rules Clause 6:** It was pointed out that ladies could wear smart black trousers or a long black skirt for concerts.

It was agreed that 'or smart black trousers' should be inserted after 'long black skirt'.

Proposed **Sally Ashton**, seconded **Valerie Morgan**, and carried unanimously.

The Committee was reminded from the floor that a copy of the amendments should be sent to the Charity Commission if there was anything in the above amendments which would have the effect of stopping us from being a charity. It was agreed there was not.

b) **Richard** proposed that **John Beaumont**, who has given generously to the choir for many years, should be made a Patron of the choir. He is agreeable to this.

The motion was seconded by **Barbara Cobb**, and carried unanimously.

John to write to John Beaumont.

c) **Life Membership:** **Jeff Crampton** proposed that **Joy Holbrook** should be made a life member: both she and her husband Hugh had given long and valuable service to the choir.

This was seconded by **Barbara Cobb** and agreed unanimously,

Joy was congratulated and thanked the choir, saying she was honoured.

8. Appointment of Examiners

Pam Brooks and **Hugh Holbrook** were thanked for their service, and reappointed to examine the accounts for a further year.

9. Musical Director's Report

In September 2015 I was delighted but slightly nervous of following in the footsteps of my illustrious predecessor, especially as he was the founder-conductor, but the warmth and friendliness of the choir soon put me at my ease. Also new was our delightful accompanist Ed Turner. When he was appointed I did not know him well, but his musicianship and quirky humour have added to everyone's enjoyment of rehearsals.

Initially I was daunted by the amount of music we had to learn in our first concert. The committee reassured me that the choir had done the programme before, albeit in four months rather than two and a half – *and* we had my Yeats pieces to learn as well. However the concert was a great success.

It was a particular pleasure to start with one of my own compositions, and I was very pleased with the Yeats songs performance. The Chilcott, which was the main challenge, really came off on the day and was very exciting, as was the Rutter Feel the Spirit. The Porgy and Bess selection did not quite reach the same standards, but I don't believe the audience noticed. Caroline Clemmow and Tony Goldstone are not only great musicians, but also fun to work with. They are doing a concert for us on 24th September. Our soloist was local Mezzo Emma Rae Ward, who dazzled and charmed us with her singing.

Then came the Carol Concert – a great occasion in a full church, with the infectious enthusiasm of the Carnarvon School choir, ably led by Becky Cowling, and Peter Siepmann on the organ.

The Fauré Requiem never loses its freshness for me, despite singing or conducting it over twenty times. The choir was very patient with my precise attention to details – especially with breathing and speeds, and I think that paid off. The Poulenc is a rather difficult work; however I need not have worried because both choirs produced an excellent spirited performance. Adding the Fauré Pavane meant the programme was better balanced, and it is hardly ever heard with the choral parts. I know this was not much fun to rehearse, but I hope people enjoyed it in the end. The Poulenc Organ Concerto was an exciting inclusion –

giving our friend Roger Bryan a real showcase. We were very lucky to be accompanied by the Nottingham Symphony Orchestra. I have written to the orchestra and to Southwell Choral to thank them. Our vocal soloists were excellent. Abigail Broughton won the Nottingham Young Musician in 2009, and with her clear high range she was perfect for the role. The Fauré Baritone solo needs incredible breath control and Stephen Cooper certainly demonstrated this. Finally, although I feared he would never leave the first note, Alfie Smith delivered a beautiful Pie Jesu.

All told this was one of the top five concerts I have conducted – not least because the Minster was so full. I am still reliving the excitement of hearing the choirs deliver what I wanted.

Now of course I am looking forward to September – the Autumn Concert features the Mozart Vespers, which is a great sing for the choir – second only to the Requiem in Mozart's choral output. We will also be doing the sunny and joyous Pergolesi Magnificat, and the lesser known Vivaldi Beatus Vir. We will have a quartet of soloists and a small string orchestra. This will be followed by the Carol Concert –using the same formula as this year, but with different carols. In the Spring Term we combine with Newark Choral in Newark Parish Church for the Duruflé Requiem, Vaughan Williams Five Mystical Songs and pieces by Parry and Thiman. Roger Bryan will again be at the organ. The Baritone soloist is Marcus Farnsworth, who is well known through the Southwell Music Festival.

Further ahead is a joint performance of Haydn's Creation with Mansfield, and the Brahms Requiem, using Tony Goldstone's new piano duet arrangement of the accompaniment.

To end I would just like to say a big thank you to everyone, especially your very efficient Committee, for making my first year such a pleasurable one.

From the floor: 'My friend, who is very musical, thought it was wonderful'.

'Immensely enjoyable, but would be even better if people could enter into the spirit of it; we need to be encouraged to know what we are singing about, perhaps by being given translations of the words'.

John: Committee to consider this.

Barbara: 'I was in the audience, and thought the choir was well-balanced; the unaccompanied bits were lovely'.
'The tenors were a bit quiet'.

'I enjoyed myself; thanks to Guy. But when will I stop hearing it when I wash up!'

John read out a letter of congratulation from Neville.

10. Election of Officers and Committee members

The following were elected unopposed:

Chair John Bannister; **Vice-Chair** Sally Ashton; **Secretary** Valerie Morgan; **Treasurer** Huw Cadwallader; **Programme Chair** Barbara Cobb; **Librarian** Margot Anderson; **Publicity** Judy Unell; **Membership** Janet Chapman; **Box Office** Tim Connery; **Ordinary Member** Brad Poulson; **Ordinary Member** Alison Marriott
Ordinary Member Pam Jones

Alison and **Pam** were welcomed on to the Committee.

11. Any other Business

1) Jeff Crampton: he has received a letter from the organisers of the Christmas Tree Festival. Due to the lack of a permanent rector they are not holding it this year. Jeff asking for volunteers for the following year.

It was suggested that a letter should be sent to Rector David Harper thanking for the use of the Church over the years.

Valerie to write this (Done).

2) John: i) Wondered about perhaps having vocal training in the Spring Term' to help us making words more audible.

ii) Also about possibly having voice tests of basses, as some have quite a high range – this could help the tenor shortage. To be discussed in Committee.

3) Richard: Reminded people to collect their tickets to sell for the Goldstone-Cleddow concert on 24th September, to raise funds for the choir. Minimum sale is 150 tickets, by 14th/15th September.

4) Valerie James: Reminder that they are opening their garden to the public on 4th and 5th June to raise funds for BDCS, the Bach Choir and Music for Everyone.

12. Video for Choir Website

Brad showed an unedited version of the video interviews and rehearsal footage done professionally for the new website.

The meeting ended at 9.07 pm.