

Bingham and District Choral Society

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD 16TH MAY 2018 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), Peter Iley (Programme Chair), Judy Unell (Publicity), Janet Chapman (Membership), Tim Connery (Box Office), Brad Poulson (Website), Janet Iley (Ordinary member) and Guy Turner (Musical Director).

Apologies were received from about 32 people, including Committee members Margot Anderson (Librarian), Beryl Cottrill and Tina Warrington (Ordinary members).

Members were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair.

2. Minutes of AGM 17th May 2017

Page 2, Treasurer's report: £400 should read **£4000**.

There were no other amendments. Proposed by Jeff Crampton, seconded by Sally Ashton, accepted unanimously.

3. Matters arising from Minutes of AGM 2017

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

4. Treasurer's Report - Huw

The choir has assets of £32,902, a profit of £1,786 from last year. The Gift Aid income will give us a further £1,000. £22,588 of this is in our Virgin Money accounts.

The Duruflé *Requiem* last May, made a very small loss; *The Creation* in November, with a large orchestra and soloists, was quite expensive, but this loss was shared with Mansfield Choral Society.

We have received a generous donation of £2,000 from **Sheila Barwick** from the sale of CD's and hi-fi equipment. Thank you very much, Sheila. Other substantial income came from the Marcus Farnsworth Singing Day – thank you **Derek (Tabron)** and other members who organised this. Thank you to **David (Atkins)** for organising the 100 Club. The tea and coffee organised by **Jeff (Crampton)** also raised funds, as did the sale of cake, books and CD's; and **John Bannister** completed his half-marathon, which you supported with a significant amount of sponsorship.

Although not part of last year's accounts, the Quiz Night (a social rather than fund-raising event) made a profit of £113.

John Beaumont donated his usual £500, which is greatly appreciated, and also a further £500 for the first prize of our new venture – the Bursary and Prize concert for young musicians. This fulfils the objective of the society to educate and interest the public in music. The quality of the applicants was very good, and it was decided to award second and third prizes as well. Because of a large audience, only a small loss was made.

We have made some purchases which support the running of the organisation and help reduce the heavy workload on the committee. These include new music folders, a store of Carols for Choirs and some wine glasses.

The smooth running of the choir is enhanced by our website, which is also an important tool for attracting new members; we are therefore continuing to invest in its development.

Next year's finances will of course include the Verdi Requiem concert, which will be expensive, but again costs will be shared with Mansfield. The armistice centenary needed proper recognition by the choir, so appropriate works have been chosen for our War, Remembrance and Peace concert in November – costs for this will again be quite high. This summer's concert will cost us little as the Byron Society are meeting nearly all the costs. Overall, I suspect we will make a small loss next year.

We have opened a new bank account with Lloyds Bank, which will still require two signatures on cheques. This can be operated online, though there is a checking system with other signatories before a bank transfer can be made. This sits within the framework of our Constitution. When Gift Aid has been received and the Verdi concert fallout has settled, I will close the NatWest account and transfer the money.

This is my last year as Treasurer – thanks for the final time to **Pam Brooks** and **Hugh Holbrook** for examining the accounts.

From the floor: There were no questions.

5. Chair's Report - John

Huw has dealt very well with our musical activities. I would like to thank all those who have made these events possible. **Erica Leyshon, Ellie Martin** and the team at Mansfield Choral Society organised the performance of Haydn's *Creation* in Southwell Minster, including joint rehearsals in Mansfield. They also hosted the March rehearsal for the Verdi *Requiem*. Thanks to **Peter Iley** and others for organising the second rehearsal at the Minster School in Southwell. The performance in the Minster last Saturday was wonderful – the NSO did us proud, as did the soloists and the building. This was another successful collaboration with Mansfield.

Thanks to **Tim Connery** for the many hours spent organising and selling tickets and front of house; to **Judy Unell** for publicity and contacts; to **Brad Poulson** for work on our classy website, and his assistance to Tim, Judy and others; and to **Derek Tabron** and Judy for organising the Singing Day with Marcus Farnsworth.

Thanks to **Richard Joyner**, who worked for many months – from an idea over two years ago - to bring about the first Bursary and Prize competition for local young musicians in January; and to our patrons, **John and Barbara Beaumont**, for the prize awarded to the winner. We expect to run the competition again in 2020.

Thanks to **Guy** for preparing us to a high standard for our performances, and to **Ed Turner** as accompanist and coach; and to **Jeff Crampton** and **David Atkins** for providing staging and lighting when required.

Thanks to **Guy** and all the committee members who helped organise the Quiz Night in April. It was good to have this kind of social event – I am aware that despite the good work of our voice-part mentors, new members can often feel a little isolated, so I would encourage people to include them.

Huw has been a diligent Treasurer for many years, and is now retiring from that role – thank you for all you have done, Huw. Also, thanks to **Sheila Barwick** for her very generous donation of the proceeds from the sale of her husband's hi-fi and CD's.

Hugh Holbrook and **Pam Brooks** have put in a lot of time as auditors, and **Robin Aldworth** helped us with photography and poster and flyer design.

Beryl Cottrill worked hard as stage manager, as did **Sally Ashton** (Vice-Chair), **Val Morgan** as Secretary – working most days on some task for the choir; I find her support invaluable. Val has obtained from Committee members a résumé of their responsibilities, which may help some of you to become more involved in the running of the Society. Thanks to **Janet Chapman** (Membership) and **Margot Anderson** (Librarian), to **Janet Iley** and **Christina Warrington** for their committee work. I intend to resign as Chair in 2019 – my hearing ability is becoming less conducive to the task, but thanks to the committee for their patience and support.

Thank you too to those who have produced cake, and made tea and coffee; **David** for running the 100 Club; and all members, especially **Geoff and Mavis Bailey**, who help set up the hall for rehearsals and those who put it all away again at the end.

Jeff Crampton has put many long hours into the Society over the years, but now intends to retire as a fully active member. Now a life member, he has been in the choir for over 30 years, many of those as a committee member and as Chairman. He is first to arrive and last to leave on rehearsal evenings. He has moved staging around the countryside with his own transport and manufactured various enabling devices. Jeff, you will always be welcome here – thank you so much for all you have done.

From the floor: No questions

6. Membership Subscriptions 2018-2019

Huw said he thought that they should stay the same for another year, and **Janet Chapman** proposed that they should again include Summer Singing.

John said that in view of **John Barber's** request to discuss this again (see 11 below), we would do so now together with subscriptions.

Janet C. said she felt we should try to have more flexibility than our current rigid structure of 3 concerts in November, December and May, and that some people had found the 5 month rehearsal period for the Verdi Requiem tedious.

The following points were raised from the floor:

Members should not be 'expected' to come to the Summer Singing

The meeting seemed to be conflating the subscription rate with the Summer Singing

The cost of hiring the school hall needed to be taken into account

Guy said he would like to continue with it, but respects that some members do not wish to participate.

Janet C. said there was a clear difference in numbers when there was a concert to work towards in the Summer Singing period – this time there were about 60 people

Peter said that it was suggested that next year the Summer Singing should again be for a lunchtime concert in Newark, and proposed that *for the next year the subscription should stay at £95. This was seconded by Terry Scholey. It was then*

proposed that, as at present, there should be no extra charge for Summer Singing for the foreseeable future, and that this could be reviewed annually.

Huw said there was no problem at present as far as funding this was concerned.

.A vote was taken on the above proposal: **this was carried, with none against and 1 abstention.**

7. Resolutions

1) Barbara Cobb, seconded by **Richard Joyner**: *That the Society match the £500 donation from John and Barbara Beaumont, making the Bursary worth £1,000 to the winner.*

This was discussed and the following points raised:

Richard Joyner said that the Beaumonts were happy to donate a further £500 for the competition.

2nd and 3rd prizes were only to be awarded if the quality of the applicants was good enough.

Doug Travers said that he felt that the 4th and 5th applicants were left with nothing, and would like to propose an amendment that *in future all applicants on the shortlist should be given £50 towards expenses.* This was seconded by **Gill Bailey**.

After further discussion, a vote was taken: **the resolution was carried with two against, and the amendment was carried unanimously.**

2) Jeff Crampton, seconded by **Janet Iley**: *That our Accompanist Ed Turner be made Accompanist and Associate Conductor of the choir. This title was given to Roger Bryan, our former Accompanist during his time with the choir.*

This was discussed and the following points raised:

Would this increase his fees? This had happened with Roger. This will be decided in Committee.

If agreed, it should be made clear in the appointment letter that there was no automatic progression to Musical Director if the current incumbent left.

A vote was taken, and **the resolution, with the proviso of no automatic progression, was passed unanimously.**

3) Honorary Life Membership

John Proposed that **Richard Joyner** should be made a life member, for his work over the years as Chair of the Committee, and also after stepping down. This was seconded by **Barbara Cobb**.

A vote was taken, and **agreed unanimously.**

8. Appointment of Examiners

Pam Brooks and **Hugh Holbrook** have again agreed to do this.

The meeting agreed unanimously to their reappointment.

9. Musical Director's Report - Guy

This has been a satisfying year for me. Last year's Summer Sing culminated in a lunchtime concert at St Mary's Newark, with music by Parry, Elgar, Fauré, Mozart, Bruckner and Mendelssohn. I hope we may repeat this 45 minute slot. Haydn's *Creation* with Mansfield was a concert to be proud of; the choirs sounded as good as most auditioned choirs, and it was a pleasure to perform with a really good orchestra and soloists. The Christmas concert was as always a crowded and fun community occasion, with the children from Carnarvon making another excellent contribution. I was delighted to be part of the very successful bursary competition in January. Emily Hodkinson was the stand-out winner, and she will be singing in our November concert. Many thanks to **Richard Joyner** for instigating the bursary, which will now happen every other year. The Verdi *Requiem* has to be one of the most memorable concerts of my life. The orchestra knew the work really well, the soloists were good musically and easy to work with. The choirs produced every detail needed, including considerable volume! The choirs recovered quickly from the soprano soloist's miscount in the unaccompanied bit of the last movement. The soloists also commented on how good they thought the choir was – so full marks to both choirs!

I am looking forward to working with Ellie Martin and Mansfield again in 2020, when we sing the Brahms *Requiem*. Thanks to **Ed Turner**, for his excellent work as our accompanist. He will soon be spending a period as Acting Director of Music at Derby Cathedral.

The Byron Festival concert on 7th July links to the 200th anniversary of Byron living in Italy. One of the other choirs joining us is the Cathedral Youth Choir from Sarzana, Southwell's twin town, in the region where Byron lived in 1818. The other choirs are the Newstead Singers and the Choir of St Mary's Newark. We are singing songs by Thiman, Pearsall and Paterson, and at the end my *Byron in Italy*, with massed choirs and brass band. On November 17th, just after the armistice centenary, the choir will present War, Remembrance and Peace, with a small orchestra and four soloists. The first half will be Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, written in the Napoleonic Wars. The second half will consist of Brahms' funeral march from his *Requiem* and three pieces by Ivor Gurney, who was injured at the Somme. Emily Hodkinson will sing the first two, and the choir will sing the third, *The Trumpet*. The text of each is by a war poet. Peace will be represented by my *Lux Aeterna*, originally composed for a performance in Messines Church in Flanders. In May we will be joined by Caroline Clemmow for a programme of

English music, including a recently discovered setting of *Psalm 23* by Eric Thiman. There will also be extracts from Elgar's *Songs from the Bavarian Highlands*, plus my *Under the Wide Sky*, a setting of poems by R.L. Stevenson. The final piece will be John Rutter's *The Sprig of Thyme*, a sequence of folksongs, with Harriet Astbury. In 2019-2020 we will have a concert including Handel, Vivaldi and Purcell, with a small orchestra, and then the Brahms *Requiem* in the Minster with Mansfield. My thanks to the excellent committee for their hard work. I have not felt so well supported in any other choir I have been involved with, and appreciate the committee's efficiency and good nature.

From the floor:

I was in the audience, and felt very proud.

Two of my friends came, and said it was spine-tingling.

I was also in the audience, and thought it was an amazing sound.

I thought the Sanctus was fabulous – I was reduced to tears singing it.

Lighting for soloists was not good [– this is done by private contractors – they need to be told].

Re Brahms Requiem: there are two versions, one for piano: this is better, as you can hear the choir. [This concert is Mansfield's, and they have sponsors who are paying for a full orchestra].

10. Election of Officers and Committee Members

All members have agreed to stand again, except for Treasurer **Huw Cadwallader**, who is standing down.

Brad Poulson has agreed to stand as Treasurer

Juliet Ward has agreed to stand as an Ordinary member.

All members standing were re-appointed, and Juliet was elected.

The new committee is as follows:

Chair John Bannister; **Vice-Chair** Sally Ashton; **Secretary** Valerie Morgan; **Treasurer** Brad Poulson; **Programme Chair** Peter Iley; **Librarian** Margot Anderson; **Membership** Janet Chapman; **Publicity** Judy Unell; **Box Office** Tim Connery; **Ordinary members** Beryl Cottrill, Tina Warrington, Janet Iley and Juliet Ward.

11. Items notified for discussion

1) Summer Singing

See 6 above

2) Saving waste

Jill Haywood said she felt that our single use of polystyrene cups for coffee was against recycling principles, and suggested that some other choirs were bringing their own coffee cups. This was discussed and agreed that this could start in September.

12. GDPR – new Data Protection Act

Brad gave a short presentation on this. It will affect the way we store data and keep members informed. We will put a privacy statement on the website, and it can be assumed that by becoming choir members people agree to basic information being kept about them. However people will have to give formal consent for other information (eg Newsletter) to be sent to them. This will apply also to our mailing list of "friends". The application form can be amended in the short term, but in future, perhaps "renewal" of membership rather than re-application may be possible, and also renewal (and payment) via the website.

13. AOB

1) The conductor's dais

This is a heavy item, which Jeff has always brought back and forth. The school had been asked if they could store it, but is not willing to do so. Is anyone willing to take it home and bring it each week?

2) Andrew James: expressed concern about staging being moved by choir members who are no longer young. We need something lighter. The firm which did the Minster's staging has gone out of business.

The meeting ended at 9.04 pm.

A presentation was made to **Jeff Crampton** on his departure from the choir. **David Atkins** gave an appreciation of all that Jeff has done for the choir, in the 30 years he has been a member, both in the area of practical help and also as Chair and committee member. Jeff received the unanimous good wishes of the meeting.