

**Note that these minutes are “Draft” until approved at the AGM in July 2018**

**HARROGATE CHORAL SOCIETY (1164776) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 JUNE 2017 IN CHRIST CHURCH PARISH CENTRE, HARROGATE**

**PRESENT:** Peter Thompson (Chairman), Gill Walsh (Treasurer), Ruth Pridmore (Secretary), Marilynne Davies (Deputy Music Director) & 62 members

**APOLOGIES:** were received from Andrew Padmore (Music Director – who was ill), Jean Clay, Jenny Goodwin, Catriona Mackay, Janet Murdoch, Val Saunders, Margaret Cooke, Gill Crowther, Val Kaye, Margaret Knight, Tessa Mobbs, Ann Shovelton, Bruce Jagger, John Littlewood, Nick Brown, Mark Denyer, Philip Goodwin, Philip Heyes, Daniel Hutton, Chris Shovelton, David Smith, and Geoff Smith

**MINUTES** of the Annual General Meeting held on 13 July 2016 had been distributed in hard copy with the agenda. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Amy Wall, seconded by David Cork and approved unanimously. There was one matter arising – Bryan Dexter asked if the Committee had now resolved the previous problems with missing non returned scores and RP confirmed that the librarian team had not had a repeat of the previous problems.

**MUSIC DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

In Andrew’s absence Marilynne presented his report. He apologised for not being there in person but had no voice due to a viral infection.

Andrew was very pleased with the choir response to a challenging programme this season; it was evident that huge amounts of work had been done both at rehearsals and in between. The choir had enjoyed a wide range of musical genres including Orff and Chilcott, a traditional Messiah, choral classics and finally the lovely Poulenc Gloria and challenging Belshazzar’s Feast.

From a musical perspective all the concerts had gone very well. In particular Andrew was pleased with the way the choir approached Belshazzar and he was delighted with the outcome.

His main concern rests with our lack of tenors and he urged all members to seek out singers to come and swell the ranks of a small hardworking group.

Finally he expressed very grateful thanks to Beryl and Marilynne for all their support throughout the season.

There were no questions

**DEPUTY MUSIC DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Marilynne looked back on another interesting and challenging season for us. Concert repertoire has varied from Choral Classics to Belshazzar’s Feast with accompaniment ranging from BackBeat percussion to the large Walton orchestra – who did not drown us! Those who sang in all five concerts will have had a rewarding experience. Messiah proved to be an outstanding performance to an appreciative audience.

The Christmas concert attracted a good audience and HCS stepped up to the challenge of doing all the actions for Reindeer on the Roof. Marilynne thanked those who are faithful to this concert as it is special and is also a means of attracting a different audience who may come to some of our other concerts.

The Polyphonic have appeared at two very different weddings with different challenges including backing to a pop song written by the groom and a post modern accompaniment of the Cantique de Jean Racine. It is a credit to the singers that they remained true to the original manuscript.

The Halcyon singers have moved forward this year. Andrew invited them to sing the Ragazzi in Carmina and then agreed they could also sing in the Little Jazz Mass. They have now become part of HCS, enjoying singing with the adult choir and looking forward to returning in the autumn. They recently sang in the Beati concert and were well received. They are however still a small group so the singers, conductors and organisers are currently reviewing the way forward. Marilynne expressed thanks to Caroline Hess and Gill Walsh for all the time and energy they have given to the singers this year.

Beati have given two concerts – each raising over £1000 for charity and both involving young performers. Katy Penn moved away in March and will be missed greatly.

Marilynne noted that there are now five choral societies of more than 40 singers in the Harrogate area, in addition to Rock up and Sing. We no longer have the monopoly and thus have to work twice as hard to attract new singers and audiences. She expressed gratitude to the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer for all the work making sure the organisation is run well. She also noted that HCS owes Andrew a huge debt of gratitude for his

meticulous preparation and boundless energy in preparing us well for each performance. He has been supported by Beryl whom Marilynne is convinced has fifteen fingers and two pairs of eyes!

Marilynne closed by thanking everyone for their personal support which means a great deal to her, and wished that the choir go forward into our celebration year with confidence, self belief and joy.

There were no questions

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Peter opened by reminding everyone that a year ago he agreed to return to the role of Chairman with the support of a CEO. During the past year unfortunately things have not worked out as planned but he is willing to stand for re-election for a further year with the support of a strong team of trustees.

He is grateful to Marilynne for stepping into the breach yet again in respect of managing the Halcyon singers, Peter cannot thank her enough for continually stepping into the breach and many members will not be aware of all the behind the scenes work that this has entailed, and continues to do so. He was also grateful for the work she puts into the Christmas concert and felt that this year's was the best ever – including the choir doing the actions for Reindeer on the Roof!

The other thing that members may not realise is the amount of work done by the trustees to bring our governance up to scratch now that we are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. He thanked Ruth for taking over from Tom as the lead trustee in this and also to all the trustees for the time taken to approve everything at meetings.

The 2017-18 season promises to be an exciting year of great music and it is hoped we can reach out and bring new audiences to our concerts. We have reduced ticket prices for two of our Royal Hall concerts and will continue to offer £5 tickets for under 16s and students. The final concert of the season will be in St Wilfrid's which offers a smaller venue where ticket prices can be even lower.

Looking ahead - in autumn 2018 we hope to be involved in the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary concert celebrating the re-opening of the Royal Hall singing Parry (and other music) along with the Parry Choir. It is hoped that Prince Charles will be able to attend. 2018 is also our 70<sup>th</sup> year as a choir and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Brian Kay as our President. We are therefore planning to perform Elijah in March of that year and an evening of Mozart in October 2018 with Brian Kay conducting

Peter thanked all the trustee and noted that Simon Hawkesworth was now stepping down but had agreed to continue to offer legal advice if needed. Judy Hamilton has also resigned from both the choir and as a trustee. He thanked her for all her work in a pastoral capacity and Simon for overseeing the work of the F&A for a considerable time. Peter thanked Pete Wilmott for his work on publicity (with a virtually nonexistent team) and thanked Amy for the many hours she put in organising both the Social evening with Sarah Fox and the Mayors Ball. In connection with this he said the choir was immensely grateful to Nick Brown for the huge sum raised and he had just been to a photo shoot in the Mayors parlour where he had received a cheque for over £24,000. This money will enable us to do some things outside the norm and the committee will be considering what we might do.

Peter thanked all members for their input into the consultation which had taken place and especially to Paul Jackson who had agreed to become the trustee responsible for membership matters (including taking over the Pastoral and Social role).

Finally Peter thanked Andrew for his work with us during the season and confirmed that our last concert was the first time that Andrew had conducted Belshazzar's Feast and that he had been as nervous about it as we had. In all Peter's 41 years with the choir he had not known a Music Director who took more time over planning for rehearsals than Andrew and the choir should be really grateful for his work.

There were no questions

### **TREASURER'S REPORT (including approval of various accounts)**

Gill started by thanking all those who help collect and bank cash so she doesn't have to do it all. She then announced that due to the donations made for teas and coffees at rehearsals and very few expense claims for consumables we have made a small profit and therefore the committee have agreed that membership fees for the 2017-18 season will stay as they are.

We registered as a CIO in November 2015 and as a result have to make reports to the Charity Commissioner for both the old and new charities for both 2015-16 and 2016-17. The main reason for this is that the old bank accounts could not close until part way into the 2016-17 season due to various financial matters that needed to be completed.

### **Approval of final Accounts for 2015-16 Charity 1164776**

Referring to the papers which had been distributed Gill explained that the first sheet relates to the CIO in its first year, basically the CIO was dormant in 2015-16 but we need AGM approval. Ruth Pridmore proposed this be accepted and Simon Hawkesworth seconded, everyone present agreed and the necessary paperwork will be signed by Bruce Noble as he was Chairman at the time.

### **Approval of final Accounts for 2015-16 Charity 508884**

The next two pages, final accounts for the old charity for 2015-16, should have been dealt with at an EGM some time ago but due to pressure of other work they had only just been agreed by the external examiner. There are only minor changes from the papers presented to last year's AGM. Pete Wilmott proposed they be accepted, Amy Wall seconded and all agreed.

### **Approval of final Accounts for 2016-17 Charity 508884**

The paper distributed relates to the period between end of June last year and closure of old bank accounts. The acceptance of these was proposed by Bruce Noble, seconded by Pete Wilmott and approved by all.

### **Draft Accounts for 2016-17 Charity 1164776**

Gill explained that this was in the new format with all sections of HCS included. This year Gill has been managing our accounts with the use of an accounting package called Quickbooks. This has entailed the rearranging of some items and more work will follow on this with help from the quickbooks experts. Gill noted that up to 5 people can have access to the accounts online and reports from the system can be exported into excel or as a pdf to be emailed. The page being presented is from the main quickbooks report and replaces pages 2 & 3 of previous AGM documents. All events are included and there is a column for transactions not related to a specific event. For the time being items such as membership and sponsorship are split equally between the core concerts. The original budget for the core performances was to have given a small surplus but due to poor tickets sales we have unfortunately ended up with a deficit. We have also had to pay pre-hire deposits for various future concert venues and these are not included as they relate to future seasons. The balance shown does include a £5000 bequest which will be used for the Opera Gala Night; it also shows the final sponsorship payment from Terry Bramall. Our other sponsor deal is also due to end but due to the huge donation from the Mayor's ball we now have enough cash to invest at least £20,000 into a savings account – if anyone knows of a suitable account paying good interest please let Gill know! Gill noted that the Halcyon deficit of £3000 is mainly due to there being such a small number of singers, we need to discuss the way forward to make having young singers viable but there is still nearly £8000 in the Halcyon pot. If we use the "bonus" funds wisely we should be able to continue to develop with financial hardship for at least another couple of years. Re future finances we always have to pay a deposit when booking venues for future concerts so need to ensure we have enough funds to cover these.

Finally Gill noted that during the year she had found there to be an increasing number of foreign coins coming from rehearsal collections, book sales and cake stalls. She encouraged members to try to avoid this in future!

Marilynne queried the sum of £600 for MD for the Christmas concert and Gill explained that this was the combined fee for Marilynne and Bryan Western, as HCS dealt with all transactions for the concert those which went through our bank account need to be listed here.

Bruce Noble queried the amount of £1165 for travel for this concert and Gill explained this was for buses for the schools, this is money well spent on a community event which we can refer to when approaching sponsors in the future, Gill also noted that there are pages of notes which will go with the accounts when they are submitted to the Charity Commissioner. She added that these account are in draft and will need HCS approval at an EGM at some point in the autumn.

There were no further questions.

### **CLOSURE OF CHARITY 508884**

As all financial matters had now been concluded Ruth Pridmore proposed that the Trustees be given permission to close the old charity, this was seconded by Simon Hawkesworth and approved by all.

### **APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS**

Scrutineers were not needed for the election of the Executive Officers or Committee members.

### **ELECTION OF TRUSTEES FOR 2017/2018**

There being no further nominations Charles Nightingale proposed that the nominations for the Trustees be accepted. This was seconded by Bryan Dexter and accepted unanimously.

## **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS**

Gill Walsh said that as explained last year the current independent examiner was retiring. We had put various feelers out but had not found anyone who would carry out this work for the society on the same terms. She had spoken with an accountancy firm in Ripon who already dealt with other charities and, having noted that other large choral societies pay for their financial examination, she proposed we pay The Barker Partnership in Ripon to carry out our independent examination in the future. This was seconded by Peter Thompson and approved by all.

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES AND ONE AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION**

Ruth explained that the changes were necessary to clarify one or two things which had been the subject of discussion during the past season. In response to a query relating to item 1 she confirmed that Beati and the Polyphonic are not mentioned separately as they are adult singers part of the main choir, youth choirs include the Halcyon singers and potentially a Halcyon children's choir and have slightly different rules for some matters.

Ruth confirmed that the all the policies, including the mentioned Code of Conduct will be published – once she has some time – during the summer as an add on to the members page.

Ruth then proposed that the changes be accepted, this was seconded by Monika Sabor and approved by all.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Peter Stretton asked what the reduced ticket prices for the new season would be and it was explained that for Messiah prices will be £17, £24 as per this season but that for the other two Royal Hall concerts they were reduced to £15 and £20. For all Royal Hall concerts we will continue to offer £5 tickets for under 16s, students and unwaged.

Ken Anson expressed concern that some members just won't sing in the Christmas concert and suggested that this was perhaps because there was no real music for the choir to "get its teeth into". Marilynne reminded everyone that the concert is one mainly for the children and in addition there is little rehearsal time but she will take this into consideration when planning the programme.

Pam Child asked what progress the committee had made with the artistic ambition consultation process as she was disappointed that there was little mention of it in the Chairman's report. Peter responded by noting that the committee was currently considering Paul's report on membership recruitment and retention and by dint of Paul doing the work so far we now had him on board as a trustee. We have also addressed one of the concerns by looking at ticket prices and another by planning to hold the final major concert of the forthcoming season in St Wilfrid's. We are now considering future plans but have not been able to action many changes sooner as concert venues and soloists up to December 2018 had been booked for some time. He further explained that part of Amy's new role as Deputy Chair would be to take charge of Artistic planning and it was hoped we could come up with a five year plan. He added that we want the membership to be involved in the "modernisation" of HCS and hoped members would volunteer as opportunities present themselves.

Anne Wilkinson asked about the Elaine Howarth bequest and it was explained that although it would not be a concert in memory of her we are using the money to support the Opera Gala concert which will be very expensive to put on. Furthermore John Cunningham the bass soloist was a good friend of Elaine's and there will be an article about her in the programme.

Finally, Peter read out an email he had received from Helen Owens, who had recently left the choir, thanking the committee and all helpers for the work they do for HCS, Bryan Dexter added his thanks to this.

At approximately 8.45 pm Peter thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.