

Note that these minutes are in draft until approved by the 2024 AGM.

HARROGATE CHORAL SOCIETY (1164776) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2023 IN CHRIST CHURCH PARISH CENTRE, HARROGATE

PRESENT: Paul Jackson, Amy Moseley (Co - Chairs), David Lawrence (Music Director) via Zoom, Marilynne Davies & Tom Moore (Deputy Music Directors), Ruth Pridmore (Business Manager), Katharine Bruce (Committee Secretary) and 62 members

- 1. APOLOGIES:** were received from Simon Berger, Aileen Bussooa, Christine Collier, Kim Fraser, Sue Fraser, Jenny Goodwin, Philip Goodwin, Caroline Jackson, Bruce Jagger, Carolyn Johnston, Alli Kay, Sally Lee, Mick Leach, Emma Littlewood, Patrick McCreanor, Bruce Noble, Jen Roberts, Peter Stretton, Mary Talbot, Gill Walsh (Treasurer), Anne Wilkinson, Brian Kay (President)
- 2. MINUTES** of the Annual General Meeting held on 6 July 2022 have been distributed by e- mail with the agenda. There were no matters arising.

3. MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Report from David Lawrence – Music Director for the Season 2022-23

We started the year with our Magnificats Concert. I was really happy with this programme - the three pieces represented a breadth of challenge, and I am certain this did us some long term good. The Paul Ayres piece was deceptively challenging. It came with a Nunc Dimittis which I haven't forgotten, by the way, so we may not have seen the last of that! I really enjoyed rehearsing the Bach with you and I don't say that lightly - I have often found Bach really quite hard work, but you made that a real joy. I thought the Rutter made you sound magnificent - I think the orchestra found it quite challenging but were certainly up to the task by the evening.

Of course I wasn't at the Christmas concert and had nothing to do with it, but I have spoken with Bryan a lot recently, as you can imagine, and it was his opinion that your performance was wonderful in the evening, despite a challenging rehearsal. I can't comment, but I fully intend to come this year as I confess it is still a bit of a mystery to me.

I always love a Messiah! But despite that orchestra being utterly wonderful it felt to me a deeply unmusical rehearsal - not at all because of us, you were fabulous! but because there was so much to rehearse in so little time. I have made my feelings known, and we will have a recit call late morning next time, freeing up time to rehearse the soloists' arias and our choruses. The performance was on the whole a triumph. We posted an audience survey in the programme, and I haven't seen the results of that yet, but I am very keen to before I programme the 24/25 season. Please, if you have any ideas for this send them in!

So, you got to perform the Puccini for the third time of asking – phew! I am always happy to make way for Brian Kay, and the Gounod, a piece he champions, was not a piece I knew. I did just one rehearsal of it and clearly Tom had galvanised you hugely towards it, and Brian's email after the concert was testament to the powerful combination of Tom's inspiration and your commitment.

It will be difficult to sum up how I feel about our incredible summer term in just a few sentences. The first meeting for that concert took place in the summer of 2019, as I understand. Thanks to Covid that was a long gestation! It was a huge success. Musically I knew it would be, as the programme was well thought through, our singers remained extremely motivated throughout and the symphony orchestra were led by the indefatigable Bryan! It seemed to me that both the choir and orchestra responded best to the hardest pieces in the programme. The team with which we worked from the Charity were totally wonderful, also enjoyed the event, and were thrilled with the outcome which as I write is looking wonderful - we'll have the final figure soon and of course we'll let you know.

I want to say congratulations to our tenors and basses whose re-audition this year road tested my idea of group re-auditions. Group after group appeared to confirm to me that this was indeed the

way forward. This manifested itself when for each of them they had the small chance to sing one phrase on their own at the end. Everyone did it, no-one refused, and in nearly all the cases the individual singing was OK, but being brutally honest was often nothing more than OK. Put them all back together for a final sing through and the sound was rich, warm, and resonant. Now, had we recorded the individual lines and played them back all together the result would have been 4 or 5 multiplied by rather average which, as we all know, equals rather average(!) But putting those 4 or 5 voices back together it was anything but - even beyond my imaginative expectation! Put simply, the whole was very much greater than the sum of the parts. Why test someone's ability to one thing by asking them to do another? The altos gave me this idea, and I am grateful to each of you! No longer will you dread your re-audition. Looking forward to seeing you sopranos next year very much indeed!

I am very excited by next year's programme. I am deliberately bringing a piece from the Proms programme into our first concert next year - there is nothing wrong with singing music that we know and taking it onto the next level. Next year we have a huge variety of music to enjoy, and with my hand on my heart I can tell you I am thoroughly looking forward to my third year as your musical director.

David Lawrence

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Comment 1 AMo/RP The official photos from the Proms concert have been posted on Facebook and they are tremendous.

Q1 Sarah Sherliker – given the success of the recent Proms concert are there any thoughts about repeating it? DL – yes, there are thoughts to do it again, though the time scale is uncertain. Enthusiasm is there from DL, the charity and orchestra. DL asked for a show of hands for those who would support this. Most hands were raised. PJ confirmed that there is a suggestion that we repeat the Proms concert again in 2026.

4. DEPUTY MUSIC DIRECTORS' REPORTS

4a Report from Tom Moore, Deputy Music Director for the Season 2022-23 shared verbally by Co-Chair (AMo)

To start this report, I would like to congratulate the membership of HCS for a strong season where standards of singing have been maintained and improved. This is only possible through the commitment of members in attending as many rehearsals as they can. I know this sounds obvious but without the singers, the MD and Assistant MD, as splendid as they are, can't do anything – we can only work with the people who turn out for rehearsals! It is also noted and appreciated by us when members find time to practice between rehearsals – this means that rehearsal time each week can be used to shape the music and approach it in greater depths, rather than using the time to bash through the notes.

There isn't any point in me dissecting this season's concert performances as this is best left to someone in higher authority, but I might just say how much I personally enjoyed working with everyone in preparation for the spring concert, conducted by Brian Kay. I get just as much reward out of directing rehearsals as I do playing the piano to accompany them. Rehearsal discipline was excellent throughout this particular term, and it was good to spend time together learning a major choral work in the Gounod St Cecilia Mass that hadn't been sung previously by many in the choir. Although I was sorry not to be involved in the concert at the end of that term, I took great pleasure in comments that Brian made about the chorus being so thoroughly well prepared, and we should all be delighted if not a little relieved that the Puccini finally made it to performance! Whilst touching on the subject of approaching repertoire, which is new to many members of the choir, I would also say that I have noticed that the choir as a whole seems rather more open minded when it comes to this, compared to perhaps the concert when we prepared Brown's Seascape in summer last year. There's doubtless a number of reasons for this, but it is important to remember that, as a group, not all the music is going to suit all of the people, all of the time. It is right that a group such as HCS should perform music of all periods and genres, and we have a responsibility to do so.

Congratulations go to the men of the choir for embracing the new, more “user friendly” reassessment process. I thought everyone joined in admirably with this, and it was useful to hear feedback about the various matters relating to choir from each group that took part. Hopefully the new way forward regarding reassessment will take away some of the apprehension people feel about this element of membership. It was also good to have several voice tests for new members on that same day, noting that there were a number of applicants, some of a younger age, who came to us for an audition after having taken part in the Proms rehearsals and concert.

Finally, many thanks to those who have shown an interest in the work that I am now doing in Northampton, and how that work is impacting family life and musical activities in the north of England, particularly in regard to HCS. The last academic year has been hard, as I have been away from home in Wakefield for a lot of time. I have also spent a lot of time travelling between the Midlands and Yorkshire whilst I have begun to find freelance opportunities around Northampton. We are moving to Northampton as a family in August. At that time, I take up the role of Music Director of Northampton Philharmonic Choir, as well as continuing my work at St Matthew's Church in the town, and we will be leaving behind much of what we know and are comfortable with in Wakefield. However, I will be making the journey to Harrogate each week to continue working with you. I have committed to this for the autumn term, which will give me time to decide whether or not this is a practical way forward in the medium to long term. I enjoy working with this choir and am keen to maintain my contract with you. Perhaps in the future it will be possible to link HCS up with Northampton Philharmonic for a massed choir event.

Tom Moore

4b Report from Marilynne Davies, Deputy Music Director for the Season 2022-23.

This has been an interesting year in so many ways.

1. We have come together regularly since Covid with doors open and wrapped up in rugs etc.
2. We have sung under the direction of our newly appointed MD and of our President.
3. We have given a Prom in the Convention Centre for the NHS

Quite a memorable year!

To return to a commitment after a long break is always a challenge but most of us are back and glad to be so and I hope that we may be back to full strength at the beginning of the new season. The signs are good. This year we have sung quite a wide repertoire including the Gounod Messe Solennelle under Brian Kay and Seascape a 21st century piece by Christopher Brown which was very successfully conducted by David.

This is my last report to you as your Deputy Music Director and that fact has encouraged me to think and reflect even more than usual about the future of the society.

When I joined HCS it was really the only choral society in the town. Indeed apart from Church Choirs it was probably the only non Church based choir. Since then the position has changed. Harrogate now has a number of choirs who give concerts in the town. I suppose they could be called chamber choirs, but they all meet regularly and give concerts. One even has the audacity to meet on a Wednesday evening.!!

In addition, we have HSO a lively, huge orchestra who certainly for the last 30 odd years have given concerts almost all of them to a filled Royal Hall. They have not shied away from challenging repertoire e.g. Shostakovich and have still filled the Royal Hall. What is their formula?

The question is how do we attract audiences to our concerts? We are The Harrogate Choral Society and no other choir has that title. We must be proud of that and unite together to ensure that we live up to our name. We are, I believe, a little shy of publicising our programme and even more shy of actually selling tickets! No one else is going to publicise our concerts but us.

I am the worst ticket seller of all time and am known to buy a book(book) of raffle tickets rather than just one so that I so not have to do the obvious selling! SO, ideas please!

HCSO have a group of Friends - in fact they have over 100 friends. The indefatigable organiser of their Friends keeps in touch with us and persuades us to come to the concerts and give us the first opportunity for the best seats.

So, what do we have in our favour? We have the name. We have a large group of dedicated singers. We have a fine conductor and a fine accompanist. Our recent re-audition process showed David, Tom and me that there were a splendid sounds coming from the Tenors and Basses and we all felt quite uplifted by what we heard.

Following our Proms Night we have already had people wanting to join HCS and whom we have auditioned and hope to see in September. SO, everything is moving in our favour, but we have to believe that, be proud of our Society and encourage people to come to our concerts. Then perhaps we will be able to afford to sing in the Royal Hall more frequently and sometimes even to venture forth to Ripon Cathedral!

Every Society needs key people to fill vital roles. We are very fortunate in HCS to have Paul and Amy as co-Chairs, Ruth as Business Manager and Gill as Treasurer. All of whom give of their time and expertise very generously. Thank you so much.

The two key people in any Choral Society are the Conductor and the Accompanist. For David this has been his second Season with us and I hope he feels very positive about us as a Society. It has been a joy to work with him and we look forward to next season with him. Thank you, David,

Then we are also very fortunate to have Tom as our accompanist, and deputy Music Director. His pianistic skills are awesome and his rehearsal skills witty very informative. Thank you, Tom.

Christine Alp has also accompanied us as a choir and also accompanied various auditions. We much appreciate her help. Thank you, Christine.

Personally, I would like to thank you all for your support and your great good humour over so many years.

Marilynne Davies

5. CO-CHAIRS REPORT

Report from Paul Jackson and Amy Moseley Co-Chairs for the Season 2022-23

We don't intend to detain you for very long. You hear a great deal from us throughout our annual choral cycle and we don't want to simply repeat what you have already heard. Or read.

This has been on any analysis, a good Season. Yes, of course there will have been moments that haven't pleased everyone, but the great majority will have been pleased at some moments or another. That is a successful Season.

Those of you who sang in all the Season's concerts including the Christmas concert will have performed to a total audience of something in the order of 3500 people. Remarkably. Whilst raising a worthwhile sum of money for charity. And at the same time raising our choir's profile in a very positive way.

There have been five events, each very different.

From the joyous Magnificats of Bach and Rutter, via Gaynor Keeble's own magnificent performance in our Messiah, to the choir's best yet Reindeer on the Roof, then the spine-tingling poignancy of Gounod and the operatic Puccini, to finally the explosion of colour and noise and excitement that was the Harrogate Proms with the ever-enchanting Sarah Fox.

That is quite a choral journey.

Along the way there has also been much off-stage progress and success..

Early this year David very generously gave up a number of contracted rehearsals which he could have attended, and indeed a contracted concert in order, in order to afford Tom the opportunity to

prepare us all the way to concert level with a free rein, as Tom did so very well indeed, for a magical performance in March with our President Brian Kay. We'll come back to Tom in a moment.

David has changed the format of our reassessment process, which for too long had, we fear, cast terror into the hearts of perfectly good choral singers for no reason other than we could tell the world that we were an 'auditioned' choir. We hope that the new system has removed that fear.

We received confirmation from the Bramall Foundation that their very generous funding will continue for a further three years and we have already thanked publicly Kate and Philippa for their advice and leadership in our successful application.

The Proms Concert involved a huge amount of organisation. Sally and her team did a great job on the day, and we have already acknowledged that and thanked them, but we wanted to thank also our Librarian, Liz and her team of helpers and volunteers who assisted the Committee so much with the administration that went into finally, after five years, bringing the project to fruition. Liz is still chasing errant guest singers the length and breadth of North Yorkshire for their return of David's very helpfully constructed and annotated copies.

Bryan Western and David worked together, supported of course by Tom, to produce an extraordinary evening of entertainment. It was Harrogate performing to Harrogate. And Harrogate loved it.

The HSO greatly enjoyed being conducted by David. It was all round a very worthwhile project.

And whilst on the subject of the Proms we have recruited from amongst the guest singers, six or seven new HCS Members. Including three new men! We had thought that once other singers had seen what HCS did, and had appreciated the standards we aimed for, that this would happen, and it is gratifying to see that we have been proved right.

A thank you goes to Bruce Noble, who has retired from HCS. Paul had known for some time that this was going to happen. Bruce felt that the moment had arrived to spend time listening to concerts rather than performing. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his time as Chair of HCS. It wasn't an easy time financially and Bruce worked very hard with others in delivering solutions and in striving to establish a young persons choir. The Halcyon Choir did flourish briefly but did not survive. It did produce a batch of very good young singers who then sang with us for some time before inevitably heading off to University. Bruce btw recently took part in discussions with David and Marilynne as to the feasibility of attempting again to build a choir for young people. The current feeling is that we lack the numbers of volunteers within HCS to do this and furthermore there is concern as to whether there really is space for another choir in Harrogate.

As you will have heard Marilynne's role within the choir is changing. She is stepping down from the role of Deputy Director but is certainly not leaving us. She will remain as both a Member and a valued Trustee of HCS for as long as she wishes. We cannot imagine an HCS without Marilynne. She was appointed as our Vice-President this time last year. Long may she remain so!

So, looking ahead.

The future, it is said, is a moving target. And there will surely be more ups and downs.

You have already heard from Tom about his feelings towards our choir and his determined effort to find a way forward. We are equally determined to help him to do so. He is a great asset to this choir and a friend.

We haven't yet advertised for a successor.....

That said, word travels fast and there have already been *four* expressions of interest in his job!

One of those expressing keen interest was Alex Berry, of Bradford Cathedral, who came to us in January and February of this year to help out Tom, and was very highly spoken of by HCS Members. He has however been snaffled up as Music Director and organist by Great St. Mary, the university church in Cambridge.

We will be talking to all the others over the Summer and will be looking as we must to having someone suitable in place to help out *in any event* in January and February during the period when David is away with Young Voices. As Tom says in his report to us this evening, he will in the Autumn be able to take a view as to the feasibility generally of his continuing to commute to Harrogate on a Wednesday. Tom please stay!

The Strategic Review will be completed over the Summer by Paul, assisted by Katharine Bruce, who has been a great addition to our Committee group and to whom we are very grateful.

Financially, we need to get through this year without making a loss and without eating into reserves. We *can* do it. We're grateful to everyone for supporting the subscriptions increase. Coincidentally John Dunford of Ripon and Wetherby Choral Societies has recently suggested that we meet up to again exchange ideas about how best to combat the financial pressures we face. We're all in the same situation.

A very clear message from the choir in response to the ongoing discussion about audience numbers for our 'own' concerts is that ticket prices must (a) come down and (b) offer options. We hear that message and we are going to do our very best to help you all to sell more tickets.

David has planned lovely concert programmes to look forward to next Season, a wide range of music, much of which will be new to many of us. It will be an exciting year.

The choral journey continues!

Thank you all for your support.

Paul Jackson, Amy Moseley

Acceptance of items 2-5: Chris Shovelton proposed that all items 2-5 be accepted. This was seconded by Daniel Hutton and approved by all.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT including presentation of finances 2022-23

6.1 Report from Gill Walsh (GW), Treasurer for the Season 2022-23 - Gill has given her apologies due to illness. In her absence this is the written report that Gill shared, and copies were made available at the AGM. It is followed in 6.2 by points noted by Ruth Pridmore (Business Manager) who stood in for Gill in her absence.

Harrogate Choral Society: Finances 2022-23

HCS Finances 2022/23		Autumn	Christmas	Spring
	TOTAL	3 Magnificats	Messiah	Gounod, Puccini
		St Wilfrs	Royal Hall	Royal Hall
		(actual)	(actual)	
INCOME				
Subscriptions, incl Friends	16500.00	5500.00	5500.00	5500.00
Ticket sales	30570.64	4500.00	7970.64	8100.00
Programme sales	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Programme advertising	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Choral music	982.56	682.56	0.00	300.00
Sundry income concert related	300.00	300.00	0.00	0.00
Gift Aid	3500.00	1100.00	1100.00	1100.00
Other (eg additional performances/events)	0.00			
Sundry income general	1000.00	300.00	300.00	400.00
Sponsorship	11000.00	3500.00	3500.00	4000.00
TOTAL INCOME (3 HCS concerts)	53653.20	£ 15,882.56	£ 18,370.64	£ 19,400.00

EXPENDITURE				
Music director	6370.00	9520.00	2042.00	808.00
Deputy Music Director T	6057.00	1662.00	725.00	3670.00
Deputy Music Director M	212.00	212.00	0.00	
Accompanist (rehearsals - C. Alp)	1177.00	377.00	0.00	800.00
Artists	5550.00	1550.00	2400.00	1600.00
Orchestra / musicians	22164.00	9910.00	8125.00	10129.00
Conductors HCC/Blay	2200.00			2200.00
Instrument hire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Choral music	926.48	626.48	0.00	300.00
Concert venue	6900.00	1300.00	2800.00	2800.00
Box office	180.00	60.00	60.00	60.00
PRS	604.80	216.00	0.00	388.80
Music for orchestra	300.00	100.00	0.00	200.00
Printing prog	300.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Marketing	200.00	200.00		
Publicity	600.00	200.00	200.00	200.00
Hire of rehearsal rooms	1980.00	960.00	300.00	720.00
Other (eg additional performances, events)	128.00	128.00		
Box office fees for ticket sales	614.00	0.00	325.00	289.00
Sundries concert specific	400.00	200.00	100.00	100.00
Sundries - non concert	170.00			
General admin, including MM/insurance	2700.00	900.00	900.00	900.00
Charity donation	500.00	100.00	200.00	200.00
Audition costs	1050.00	350.00	350.00	350.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE excluding Prom	£ 61,113.28	£ 16,671.48	£ 18,627.00	£ 25,814.80
PROFIT / LOSS ON CONCERT	-£ 7,460.08	-£ 788.92	-£ 256.36	-£ 6,414.80

Treasurer's written report

As usual at the AGM stage, just after our final concert of the season, we do not have the final figures for the June concert to report. When we have these and the accounts for 2022/23 have been checked by our accountants then a short EGM will be held to formally approve them.

Funds as of 4th July are:

Current account	£15,000	sponsorship for 2023/24
	£11900	general funds (one or two invoices expected between now and Sept)
Community acc.	£3419	this was the Youth Choir account
Cambridge & Counties	£6483	31 day savings account
United Trust	£21464	2 year fixed rate 3.5% to Feb 2025 (interest will add £1535)

This season the joint Prom concert involved 3 organisations not just us, all 3 contributing in terms of the organisation, contracting and procurement. We collected and banked the singer donations but also dealt with the rehearsal venue hire fees.

HCS agreed to donate £10 per singer from memberships to the Hospital fund (i.e. the same as the singer donation requested from non-members singers). HSO did likewise for their players.

HCS had already transferred its singer donation for members two seasons ago i.e. before we had to postpone all performances, but the additional singer donations will be included in the final balancing of 'who paid what when' between HCS, HSO and the Hospital Charity.

Sponsorship: We are really pleased to report that the Bramall Foundation agreed to sponsor us for

a further 3 seasons and with an increased annual amount of £15000. This has been sent to us already (and banked) so appears in the end of year bank balance but will be an accrual when the accounts are finalised i.e. we have NOT received an extra donation for this season!

However, additional funding from what we call 'member efforts' – i.e. cake and book sales, refreshments, raffle etc continue to boost income. We only had 2 terms of this in 2022/23.

We had what seemed like quite a significant membership 'going and coming' over the last 2 seasons, therefore please can I ask members returning in September (reminders will be sent!) to complete a Gift Aid form for us if you can. It really does make a difference.

This season, as Paul has mentioned earlier this week, we asked for an additional donation of £10 from members instead of raising the membership 'fee' across the board - a third of members felt able and willing to donate. Thank you.

Nevertheless, we again needed to withdraw funds from our 'easy access' savings account (£15,000 in July 2022) to ensure adequate cashflow to start the 2022/23 season (the most difficult 'crunch' time tends to be Dec/Jan when have not yet received income from Messiah) but have other regular payment to make for rehearsals, music etc.

6.2 Points noted by Ruth Pridmore (Business Manager) –

Ruth noted that the figures for ticket sales appeared to be perhaps the estimated figures. Gill has been very unwell for some days and she may not, as would usually always be the case, have spotted the slippage across of these earlier figures on the updated spread sheet.

In respect of Ticket Sales income Gill had quoted £4500 for the Magnificats but the audience was actually only 144 so the real income was in the region of £2800; for Messiah the audience was 459 (including a number of comps as we had a guests reception), ticket sales income for Messiah should therefore be in the region of £11,000; finally for the Gounod and Puccini in the Royal Hall the audience had been 199 including 12 comps so ticket income was more like £5000 than £8000. Overall this gave a ticket income about £2000 less than the total in Gill's document.

The income from programme sales hasn't been included, and for the year totalled nearly £600.

Thus the overall picture is not that far out. Gill's figures highlight how much each concert costs to put on and that sadly overall for the three concerts in the season that were "our own" we made a loss despite the Bramall Funding. The only way to reverse this sort of loss in future Seasons is simply to sell more tickets!!

Looking at the Report to Choir side of the sheet if you add up the amounts in our various bank accounts you can see a total of just over £58k which sounds like an awful lot. However, the Charity Commission requires us to hold significant costs in reserve.

As requested by Gill. Ruth highlighted the fact that due to a number of member changes Gill would in the Autumn be reminding everyone to sign up for Gift Aid as the income does make a difference.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Q1 Daniel Hutton - Are there restrictions on the use of funds held by Halcyon choir?

PJ yes- there are. PJ/MD There is an age limit for the use of the money which is 18 and under. PJ has since cross-checked. Although the Halcyon Choir was advertised as being open to membership up to age 18, he cannot immediately find an age limit in the original funding request, other than the requirement as to youth.

There is a specific proposal under consideration by David Lawrence, Bruce Noble and Marilynne to fund young people with musical talent.

MD shared that some of the singers who have come through the Halcyon system are making music and doing well including a Cambridge choral scholar and solo work. HCS funded access to a choral course from Halcyon funding, a very valuable experience. All 3 singers are now reaping the rewards of that investment. One has been a soloist on her college music CD.

MD reported that Harrogate is well served by secondary school choirs some of which are very fine

and are keen to hold on to their singers. It was thought that the Halcyon would serve as a feeder choir to the HCS, but many Halcyon members went away to university.

Q2 Trevor Berry– community account £3419, is that an interest-bearing account?
RP was not able to confirm this on behalf of the Treasurer.

Q3 Sheila Boyle - what is next Season's subscription?
PJ confirmed £200, referring to the emailed announcement that had been made. Sheila suggested as a local art class charged £78 per term that members could possibly bear more but could we pay in 2 tranches? PJ reassured the choir that, in comparison with other choral societies, HCS were neither the highest or lowest, and confirmed that it is already possible for choir members to pay in instalments over the season. Payment over a 12-month period is also a possible further option.

Q4 Stephen Murdoch –how many people are gift aiding their subscription.
PJ reported that GW will be following this up in the autumn term and that the vast majority who can, currently do.

Q5 Sarah Sherliker -what can be done if people feel that the subscription could be more.
PJ suggested that a specific fund could be set up and that any additional voluntary payments could go into such a fund which could then provide support where needed.

Comment 6 Ann Shovelton - when Chris and Ann have arranged trips there were members who would have loved to come but either couldn't afford to or did not wish to take out of the family budget. Ann doesn't think the subscription should go too high as some people may not be able to afford it. PJ reported that some choirs e.g. Wetherby Choral Society invite people to pay more if they can.

Comment 7 Chris Shovelton - one organisation has a concessionary rate where someone cannot afford the fees. RP shared that HCS already has that in place but perhaps we need to better publicise this. PJ added that there is the possibility of deferred payments.

Q8 Liz Wearing - would it be an idea for under 18s to be free and money come out of the community account.

PJ clarified that the current under 18 fee is £20. MD said in her experience of the Halcyon choir many of that age group are already highly committed to choirs in their own schools. MD asked if a couple of Harrogate schools would participate in the Proms, but they declined. Ripon Grammar School did participate -their Music Director is in the Harrogate Symphony Orchestra. PJ shared that our current under 18 member came as she is doing the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Q9 Lynne Morrison - with regard to the annual fee Lynne feels passionately that paying monthly over 12 months makes payment manageable.
PJ said this has already been suggested and there already is the option to pay over 10 months of the season which needs to be publicised. There is the possibility of an option of payment over 12 months. AMo noted there is a need to make the options public. PJ noted that there needs to be a balance to ensure that there is sufficient HCS cash flow. AMo raised that HCS would need to have sufficient reserves if there were to be a 12 month payment option. These suggestions will be shared with GW. PJ noted that over the last 2/3 years as part of drive for new members there had a delay on when the first subscription became payable (after the first concert). That has been halted, choir numbers are very good in certain voice parts, and from next season new members will pay subscriptions at the beginning of their membership which will aid cashflow.

Comment 10 Sheila Boyle – there may be young people in the local College of Further Education who may be interested in singing and we should perhaps be advertising there.

Q11 Trevor Berry - with regard to income and subscriptions have the committee taken on board as well as raising income the need to drive down costs.

PJ stressed that this is very much under constant consideration and that there is a balance to be made to ensure there are sufficient funds to be able to plan well in advance. AMo added the need to ensure that concerts are affordable, especially post Covid. All ideas are most welcome.

Acceptance of item 6 - PJ (Co-Chair) suggested that the Treasurer's report be considered as draft until Gill has an opportunity to update the figures, including ticket sales money. The report will be brought back to HCS members for further consideration and approval at an EGM to be held next season. This was agreed by all.

7. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS

There have been no nominations received for anyone to join the trustees and therefore we do not need scrutineers. We do not have the full quota of trustees so during the season further people may be co-opted as our constitution allows this.

8. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES FOR 2023-24

Details had been circulated with the agenda, there being no further nominations Charles Nightingale proposed, seconded by Judith Mackenna that Paul Jackson, Amy Moseley and Kate Rogata be re-elected. This was accepted unanimously.

9. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

There is no need for independent examiners for the AGM accounts at this stage as the accounts are not yet the final version, but Ruth Pridmore (Business Manager) on behalf of Gill Walsh (Treasurer), proposed that we continue to use Barkers for the finalisation of the accounts in the Autumn term. This was seconded by Sally Jackson and agreed by all.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Comment 1 Ann Shovelton wished to thank PJ for the clarity and detail within his e-mails to the choir. In addition to the work of the committee Paul has sought members' opinions, managed complicated contracts, insurance matters, and taken advice from relevant organisations while balancing the opinions and needs of all members. Ann noted that we are indebted to our chairman.

Comment 2 Ruth Pridmore offered members the opportunity to see the Proms Facebook photos on her laptop following the end of the AGM.

Comment 3 Ruth Pridmore noted she often did not get chance to thank people at the AGM but this year in particular she would like to thank Sally Jackson and Janet Murdoch for taking on what she might have had to do for the Proms concert and also thanked Katharine Bruce and Sue Duckworth for their help with the registers and numerous other admin tasks at the Proms rehearsals.

3. Long Service to the Choir - RP

Daniel Hutton was congratulated in achieving 25 years membership at the end of this season 22/23 He was presented with his certificate by Paul Jackson.

At 8.43 pm Paul Jackson thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.