

Note that these minutes are “Draft” until approved at the AGM in July 2019

**HARROGATE CHORAL SOCIETY (1164776) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2018 IN CHRIST CHURCH PARISH CENTRE, HARROGATE**

PRESENT: Peter Thompson (Chairman), Gill Walsh (Treasurer), Ruth Pridmore (Secretary), Andrew Padmore (Music Director) & 84 members

APOLOGIES: were received from Marilynne Davies (Deputy Music Director), Rachel Goodwin, Katherine Carr, Alison Mundie, Ann Shovelton, Marjorie Simm, Julia Watts, Elizabeth Wearing, Philip Heyes, Bruce Jagger, John Littlewood, Mark Denyer, Peter Frederiksen, Tony Latter, Bruce Noble, and Chris Shovelton

Before the meeting commenced the Chairman was delighted to present a cheque for £250 to Simon Hawksworth on behalf of Crossroads Charity, this represented the donation of £1 per ticket sold to the concert on 9th June.

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held on 28 June 2017 had been distributed in hard copy with the agenda. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Ruth Pridmore, seconded by Amy Wall and approved unanimously. There were no matters arising.

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Andrew's report was circulated by email in advance of the meeting to give members chance to have a copy. It reads:

“This has been a musically successful year for the Society. The varied programme through the Operatic repertoire, annual Messiah, Elijah and the American music was embraced with a sense of purpose, enthusiasm and executed with confidence. I think the Choral Society gave very creditable performances, rising to the challenge of each concert.

When the music is planned, there are so many considerations to take into account, a few being:

1. Suggestions of works from choir members (which are seriously considered)
2. A balance of types of repertoire in terms of musical period
3. Costs and finance available
4. Venue costs availability and appropriateness for the chosen works
5. Audience appeal and commerciality
6. Challenge for the choir

The balance between all these considerations is not easy to achieve, and we will not always get it perfect. However, you can be assured that as a committee we work to provide something for all of our members to enjoy and something to challenge each one of us. It is all a matter of balance, and we try to take into consideration the tastes and abilities of our various members, as well as our audiences.

I am however very concerned that we are not attracting more new recruits – as always, particularly in the Tenor and Bass sections. If we do not have a steady supply of new members the society will die. We are in a critical situation!

I wish to pay tribute to Marilynne for her constant support and wise council: Marilynne does more than anyone will ever know in the background for the good of this choir. There have been members concerned about coping with challenging repertoire, or the stress of auditions, and Marilynne gives freely of her time and expertise to assist and encourage them. She has a passion for choir outreach and always enthusiastically organizes and conducts the Family Christmas Concert. She is also an enormous help to me in taking rehearsals – I know that when she takes the rehearsal, the work in hand will be covered thoroughly. So a very big thanks to Marilynne.

Also, as a society we are enormously lucky to have had the amazing keyboard skills of Beryl – it doesn't matter what is thrown at her, she has always interpreted the score to give maximum help to you as singers, and to me trying to get a particular section of a work learned. Her aim has always been to do the very best for the society and its musical performance, and has done it with such good humour. It is sad that she has decided to retire, but I know she will long be remembered by us all with great affection. I am also enormously grateful to Christine Alp for stepping in to accompany the rehearsals for Elijah at short notice and with such skill, and I am very pleased that she is to be our assistant accompanist for the future. It is with much personal pleasure that the Committee has appointed Tom Moore to be the choir's accompanist. We are extremely fortunate to have secured the services of such a highly talented and highly regarded musician. Very few choral societies can boast that their accompanist is a Cathedral Organist – and one of the finest! I have always maintained that for any choral society, the most important figure is the accompanist – they determine the speed of learning and the accuracy of the choir in subtle ways that we are often not aware of. I hope that Tom & Christine's association with the Society will be long, happy and fulfilling.

Thank you to all those in the society who are loyal members supporting our aims to produce high quality musical performance, and to those who give in so many other ways to support our aims (whether on committees, fund raising, publicity, concert management, or just persuading people to buy tickets to our concerts). A society like this only works as a team effort – it is the pulling together of all the strands, and if we are all pulling in the same direction, great things happen!

Thank you for your friendship and thoughtfulness – comments, cards, letters, emails etc during the year mean a great deal, and I greatly value these. My wish is for a happy and fulfilling year ahead, and for the future of the society.”

There were no questions but the Chairman re-iterated the five crucial points raised by Andrew that needed to be considered when planning a concert programme. He stressed how the committee do try to balance the choir’s wishes with practicalities when deciding on a programme of concerts and noted that from time to time members criticise us for clashes. However members should note that we cannot always get the dates we want for the Royal Hall and we attempt to plan concerts three years in advance. Other smaller organisations often arrange events once ours are formalised.

DEPUTY MUSIC DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Marilynnne had sent her apologies for not attending the meeting as the change of date clashed with a previous arrangement. She had provided a written report which had been circulated by email in advance of the meeting. It reads:

“First my apologies for not being with you but the change of date has clashed with arrangements that were already in place.

In this our Anniversary Season we have performed programmes which indicated a breadth of repertoire which had a wide ranging appeal to both singers and audience. Probably Elijah could be considered as our Anniversary Concert and in that performance we were all united in the love of this splendid work and that conveyed itself to the audience. Our concert of American Music in St Wilfrid’s Church was very different and presented us with different challenges BUT apart from the Christmas concert it was the first concert in which we actually moved! SO we can do it and to good effect.

The Christmas Concert was a happy occasion filled with excited children and a responsive audience. Reindeer on the Roof has become part of the experience and you were all more confident with the actions than I was! As always I am immensely grateful to all those members who are faithful to this concert which is part of our community outreach and such an important introduction to choirs and choral singing for the children.

Beati and the Halcyon with the help of some willing Tenors and Basses formed a group to sing carols at Harewood. This was an interesting occasion in which we sang first in the Long Gallery and then in the Courtyard. Non stop carols for an extended period was quite a challenge but those who were visiting Harewood were very appreciative and some even joined in the familiar carols. This is the sort of occasion in which we should be involved as part of our outreach programme. We hope we will be invited again.

Beati have given two concerts for charity this season. One on a very cold and frosty night in St Roberts in Pannal where our guests were our great friend Christine Littlewood and the young pianist Yuan Xu who later went on to become the Young Musician of the Harrogate Competitive Festival. This concert was in aid of Martin House the Hospice in Wetherby for children and young people. The second was in the summer at St Roberts in Harrogate where we were joined by Ed Freeman trumpet and Wil Freeman piano, Jack Littlewood percussion and by the choir of Starbeck County Primary School. Quite an HCS “family” occasion! This concert was in aid of Adversity United Football team - a young charity dedicated to providing sporting opportunities for children who would not normally be able to participate in team sports.

I am very grateful to Jean Clay who has been our rehearsal accompanist and to Christine Gott and Beryl Pankhurst who have accompanied our concerts. All three of these talented accompanists have given freely of their time. Thank you so much.

This season Beati said farewell to Anna Thornhill who was one of the original “Amazing Eight” and to Sarah Sherliker. We miss them both and are very grateful to them for their commitment to Beati. Tessa Mobbs and Miranda Bond joined us after the January concert and we hope that they are settling into our rather idiosyncratic modus operandi.

In my report last year I referred to us – the members - as the ambassadors of the Society. That has not changed nor has the choral scene in Harrogate changed. We are still only one of a number of local choirs all competing for the same audiences and singers. We need more sopranos and tenors in particular and I wonder

how good each of us are in promoting what we do and talking to people about HCS or is it just something we do on a Wednesday evening – another evening class!

There is considerable personal investment in the Society by the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and I am very grateful to them for all that they do to ensure the smooth running of the Society and to others who volunteer willingly to run the library, the cake stall etc. etc. However we cannot leave it all to them and promoting the Society to the wider world is what we should ALL be doing.

As always we owe a great debt of gratitude to Andrew our Music Director whose energy is boundless and whose meticulous preparation energises us and encourages us to strive for higher standards in performance. Thank you so much Andrew.

This season we have said a fond farewell to “our Beryl” who, after 44 years of amazing us with her mastery of the keyboard, her intuitive accompanying, her support of every voice and her modesty, has decided to retire. We owe her an enormous debt of gratitude and we wish her well and hope that as Accompanist Emeritus we will not lose touch with her.

As we move into the next season together I hope that we will not only enjoy making music together but also broadcast that fact to the wide world so that we can ensure the future of that marvellous British Institution the Amateur Choral Society.

Thank you all for your support of me personally – I do appreciate it. I look forward to our next Season together.”

There were no questions but the Chairman picked on two of her points raised – one that, following the success of ‘Reindeer on The Roof’ at the last two Harrogate Christmas Concerts in which the choir had become ‘moveable’ had resulted in further success in that respect whereby we had managed to ‘walk’ around St Wilfrid’s recently without much impediment to our vocal output! He also stressed her closing words underlining the constant need for ALL of us to promote the Society and its many attractions for music making.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Peter opened by noting that two years ago he stepped back as Chairman at a time when we had just become a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). This required a huge amount of work in terms of administration which was started off by Tom who was CEO at the time. The work involved is now managed on an ongoing basis by the Committee, all our policies are on the website and are updated once a year and therefore we (hopefully) comply with all the legislation with which we are required to comply.

In the last twelve months much progress has been made in looking at plans for the future – looking outside the box a bit and taking account of the outturn from the member consultation process.

Peter thanked Andrew for his studious preparation for each rehearsal which leads to a successful and structured learning process for the choir. The Opera Gala night was a great success despite the short rehearsal time and many audience members thought it one of the best concerts we had given. Peter had never experienced such a fastly taken Messiah! But many had liked it at that speed.

Our 70th Anniversary year started in 2018 and in Peter’s opinion the performance of Elijah and the feeling afterwards was a real highlight. The party afterwards was excellent despite the fatigue from singing in a long concert.

Peter has enjoyed the last two years and the team to be elected tonight to replace him bodes well for the future. In addition we have a new accompanist whom Peter welcomed, so all in all the future looks great and he is happy to retire but before doing so he has the pleasure of presenting a few honours.

First of all Peter presented 25 year long service certificates to Bryan Dexter, Louise Dexter, Wendy Hall, Charles Nightingale and Ruth Pridmore. Rachel Parker has also reached 25 years but unfortunately was not present to receive hers.

Peter then announced that he was delighted to be able to appoint some new Life Members, an honour which the Committee had not bestowed for some time. Firstly Anne Brownlie, who has been a choir member for 48 years and during that time has spent at least 8 years as a committee member; secondly Christine Collier who has 40 years choir membership of which she has spent 20 years on various committees and sub committees including being deputy librarian for many years, and she is still helping with various things, ie deputy keyholder. The third recipient present at the meeting was Nick Brown who had a relatively low 21 years of membership but had been responsible for raising significant sums for money for the choir including over £25,000 from the Mayors Ball plus many thousands of pounds from other sponsorship deals and sponsored slims etc. There

was one other Life Member who unfortunately was not present - Bruce Jagger who has been a member for 43 years and spent 14 of them as librarian.

There were no questions

TREASURER'S REPORT (including presentation of the draft accounts for 2017-18)

Gill had distributed summaries of the account with notes on the back. The summary is a statement of where we are financially at the present time. The full accounts will be available at some point in the season at an EGM for their approval. She apologised that the concerts detailed did not appear in the order in which they were performed – this was due to the software.

Various items such as member fees are usually divided by the number of rehearsals linked to each concert but as this year there were a lot of “mixed” rehearsals the money has just been divided evenly across the four HCS only concerts. Gill explained that the non concert specific column included things like the cost of the new website as well as income from in house fundraising. She noted that because we have to book the Royal Hall three years in advance we have recently had to pay deposits up to the concerts in 2020 totalling just over £3500.

One notable expense last season was that the June concert involved many separate pieces of music and it had been agreed by the committee that choir members would not have to pay more than a £5 hire fee even though the costs were considerably higher.

The Christmas concert normally generates a small profit for both us and the Symphony Orchestra but this year that profit will be needed to fund some new orchestral sets so that there are more options for music to be included in the programme.

Gill highlighted that we have a very healthy balance in the bank and various savings accounts, mainly thanks to the money from the Mayors Ball. Our main sponsorship deal has just run out but the trustees are making a further application to the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation and we are hopeful for continued support to prevent us having to draw on our reserves to maintain our programme selections for future seasons. The Bramall Foundation has given £11,000 per season over the last five years which has enabled us to keep our budget on a break even basis. For the 2017-18 season we have netted £23,500 but that takes into account the £25,000 from the Mayors Ball and so overall we made a small loss

Gill then asked if there were any questions

Peter Stretton queried the hire of the venue for the Christmas concert at just over £7,000, Gill confirmed that this is the discounted hire fee plus the technical charges (and including vat) but also noted that all costs (and income) for this concert are shared with HSO. The figures in this document are totals and overall we paid £924 to the HSO.

At this point the Chairman noted that he wanted to put on record his thanks to the whole Committee for their support but notably to Gill for producing this concert by concert information which is additional work as the accounts presented at the EGM as produced by our accountants are much more general.

APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS

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

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES FOR 2018/2019

There being no further nominations Christine Collier proposed that the nominations for the Trustees be accepted. This was seconded by Daniel Hutton and accepted unanimously. The Chairman stressed that the Trustees will welcome any help with anything at any time so could members please think about what they might be able to do.

Peter then noted that as he was now “sacked” he would leave the Chair and invite Paul and Amy to take his place. The choir expressed their thanks to Peter with a round of applause and Amy then presented some gifts – a good bottle of red wine for Peter and a lovely plant for his wife.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

We have been paying the Barker Partnership in Ripon for the past year to support Gill Walsh and also to be our independent examiner. Ruth Pridmore proposed that we continue to use them for the 2018-19 season, this was seconded by Nick Brown and approved by all.

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

Paul explained that up until now it had not been possible to make a member a Vice President and that the wording of the clause related to Honorary Membership needed clarification. The Committee also wanted to add the possibility of Emeritus appointments - (noting that the definition of Emeritus is "retain title as an honour").

Paul Jackson then announced that he and Amy, and the Committee as a whole, expressed their deepest thanks to Peter for his most recent stint as Chairman. Paul explained that Peter joined HCS in Sept 1976 and found himself roped into joining the committee shortly afterwards. He was a Committee Member for 13 years and was then promoted to Chairman, a post he held for 15 years. He then "retired" and was made Life Member but carried on with Business Manager jobs - ie soloist contracts until he returned to formal Committee membership in June 2007 for a further 4 years, followed by 5 years once again as Business Manager and finally his last two years as Chairman. All in all he has been a member for 42 years, been on the Committee in one role or another for 34 years including a magnificent 18 years as Chairman, not to mention the 6 years working as Business Manager. The choir owe Peter an enormous debt of gratitude, and we owe thanks to his wife Margaret for letting us borrow him for so long.

After discussing the future with them Peter has kindly agreed to remain in the background as a consultant to Paul and Amy who are both aware that they have relatively little experience of managing a choral society. Peter has always been able to present a balanced view to any situation and during the last year as their Co-chair appointment approached he has been very supportive. Paul proposed that Peter be appointed as a Vice President and Amy seconded this.

Paul also reminded us that at her leaving presentations we had informed Beryl that it was the intention of the choir to offer her the post of Accompanist Emeritus. Peter Thompson had already proposed this formally and at the meeting Jill Heyes was happy to second it.

Paul then therefore announced that the choir need to vote on three decisions,

- (i) To amend the Constitution as detailed, this was proposed by Ruth Pridmore and seconded by Nick Brown
There was one abstention to this but everyone else was in favour
- (ii) To appoint Peter Thompson as a Vice President as nominated by Paul Jackson and seconded by Amy Wall
All present were in favour
- (iii) To appoint Beryl Pankhurst as Accompanist Emeritus as nominated by Peter Thompson and seconded by Jill Heyes.
All present were in favour

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Daniel Hutton welcomed Amy and Paul as Co-Chairs.

At 9.35 pm Paul thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting

**EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
CONVENED AT 9 20 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY ??????**