

These are in draft until approved at the 2021 AGM

**HARROGATE CHORAL SOCIETY (1164776) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2020 BY EMAIL DUE TO CORONVIRUS CRISIS**

PRESENT: Paul Jackson (Co - Chairs), Gill Walsh (Treasurer), Ruth Pridmore (Secretary), & 47 members (who had confirmed their attendance by email)

APOLOGIES: were received from Andrew Padmore (Music Director), Marilynne Davies (Deputy Music Director), Amy Moseley (Co Chair) and 25 other members who had delegated their vote (if needed) by proxy to members of the HCS Executive.

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held on 19 June 2019 had been distributed by email with the agenda. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Jill Heyes, seconded by Yvonne Denison and approved unanimously. There were no matters arising.

All the following reports had been distributed by email to all Members

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Andrew's report reads:

"The first part of this season was another musically triumphant one. The Elgar Concert in the Royal Hall with our wonderful soloists Samantha Hay and Gaynor Keeble and the choir singing The Spirit of England and The Music Makers with much colour and style. The Messiah in Leyburn was a splendid event with a capacity audience on a very wet and wintry day, with the choir singing neatly and stylistically whilst in a random formation. I am sure Marilynne will speak about the very successful Harrogate Christmas Concert. The Men's Vocal Workshop in January was also a very successful event both musically and socially - and resulted in a few new recruits. Sadly, after preparing the Rossini and Puccini works to a very high standard, because of the COVID 19 pandemic the performance had to be cancelled, as has the rest of the season.

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 reassessments or even initial auditions, and Marilynne gives freely of her time and expertise to assist and encourage them. She has a passion for choir outreach and enthusiastically organizes and conducts the Family Christmas Concert. She always has the best interests of this choir at heart. Marilynne 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 THANK YOU to Marilynne!

Also, as a society we are enormously lucky to have the amazing keyboard skills of Tom – his confident support throughout every minute of the rehearsals had built a greater sense of confidence within the choir, and has played a very significant part in the success of our performances. We are extremely fortunate to have such a highly talented and highly regarded musician as part of our team! Very few choral societies can boast that their accompanist is a Cathedral Organist – and one of the finest! So a very big THANK YOU to Tom!

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 would also like to thank our assistant accompanist – Christine Alp who has played when Tom has been unavailable, and who also has great keyboard skills and can sight-read ANYTHING.

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 to the Committee chaired by Paul and Amy for all the time and effort they put in to make the affairs of the Society run smoothly. The Chairmanship of a choir such as this is no small task, and both Paul and Amy have given unstintingly to develop the structure and plan for the long-term future of an organization in a world that is changing at an alarming rate.

Thank you to all those in the society who are regular, 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).

Thank you all for your friendship and thoughtfulness – comments, cards, letters, emails etc during the year mean a great deal, and I greatly value your support.

Andrew"

There were no questions.

DEPUTY MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Marilynne's report reads:

"Chairmen, Andrew, Fellow Singers.

This is the first report I have ever made in a lockdown situation. It is somehow surreal and yet very real.

The season consisted of the three concerts in the Autumn. All three very different and challenging in many and different ways. The lovely Elgar programme which was so much enjoyed gave the Society the opportunity to listen to the Elgar Sea Pictures sung by the consummate performer of this work Gaynor Keeble.

This was followed by a Messiah in a very different venue - the Auctioneers in Leyburn! The lovely Garden Room at Tennants gave us the opportunity to travel in a bus and enjoy a meal together, to sing alongside colleagues from other voice parts and to sing to a capacity audience. It was a joyous occasion made even more special by hearing James Micklethwaite – Tenor - sing with such poise and understanding. A young man with a very promising future. Andrew, you must be very proud.

The Harrogate Christmas Concert brought 2019 to a close for us. As always I am greatly indebted to those who remain faithful to this concert. I am not sure that we ever appreciate the impact of this event on the 300 schoolchildren who participate each year. In 2019 it was the turn of the village schools many of whom do not have a music specialist and who were so excited to be performing with a huge orchestra and quite a large choir. Each year the HCS headgear gets more elaborate and /or minimalist and this year was no exception.

As always I am indebted to Beati whose only public appearance this season was at the Christmas Concert and who sang with great poise. The other two concerts planned one for Horticap and one in Darley have had to be postponed and we hope they will take place in 2021. I am very grateful to Jean Clay who is our very reliable and conscientious rehearsal accompanist. Thank you Jean.

The organisation of a Choral Society of this size is quite complex and we are very fortunate to be very well served by our two Chairmen Paul and Amy, by our Secretary Ruth and by our treasurer Gill. Thank you so much to you all. There are so many other people who make such a valuable contribution to the life and organisation of the society. Thank you to you all – we could not do so without you and we are very grateful to you.

HCS would not be able to give performances of a high standard if it were not for our indefatigable Music Director – Andrew Padmore. Where does he get his energy? Always meticulous in his preparation, always cheerful and always demanding of us all. Thank you, Andrew, for all that you give to the Society and for the joy of performance that you inculcate in us.

This season has been Tom's second season with us and we are all amazed at his command of the piano, his score reading and the apparent ease with which he manages to accompany us. Thank you so much, Tom .

Last year I talked about us, as members, being the ambassadors of the society. This, I believe, still to be the case. Much of this season has been different from any other and I hope that it will not be repeated. However if there is any good to come out of it it will be that we are closer as a family of singers determined to rehearse together, make music together , care for each other and enthuse others to come and join us.

Thank you to you all. Marilynne Davies"

There were no questions.

CO – CHAIRS REPORT

Paul and Amy's report reads:

"As we look back at this Season in years to come it will we feel sure prove to be particularly memorable. Sadly for the wrong reasons...

It has by no means however been without its highlights.

Three events stand out in my mind.

We found a great new venue in Tennants of Leyburn; our Messiah performance there was a triumph. A particularly stimulating aspect of the concert was the difference in atmosphere that a full house, in a smaller venue, can make. It was so much more intense, the audience was close at hand and was left we know with the sense that we really had shared our interpretation of the glorious music, rather than simply performed it.

It was an evening on which we experimented, under Andrew's confidence-boosting guidance, with a scattered formation. It suited very well the intimacy of the venue. We know this from the particularly appreciative feedback received. We must thank Andrew for inspiring us to perform in this way and also applaud ourselves for having held our collective nerve...

It was a great opportunity for us to reach out to concertgoers in a new, for us, area of North Yorkshire and reach out we most certainly did.

Earlier in December a small, representative choir attended Harewood House, under Marilynne's leadership, and sang Christmas carols. I know from chatting with members of the public during the performance that it was very well received. Another gratifyingly successful reach out event. We perform at Harewood to a larger audience than at any of our other concerts. I wish that we could include more choir members but it is not possible to do so. We took with us this time a different group of singers and so far as is practicable this variation will continue.

We held a very enjoyable and successful Mens Open Rehearsal at Harrogate Cricket Club and I must express my personal thanks to Andrew for what was an expertly delivered and inspiring workshop, supported ably as ever by our excellent accompanist, Tom. My thanks go also to the many Tenors and Basses who attended the event and to the small group of Sopranos and Altos who came along to support and assist us. We have gained valued new choir members and we had a great day out at the same time.

Thereafter our season was overtaken by this dreadful virus. By the time of the AGM it will be approaching four months since we last sang together.

I am wary of saying too much about the prospects for us being able to perform any or all our Autumn programme. You already hear more than enough from me. I was convinced until very recently that the Government's approach to easing the lockdown would be to err on the side of caution. Now I am not so sure. Even however if performances might be permitted, audience numbers might be severely restricted and it will take more than a governmental green light for performers and concert goers to regain confidence.

Whatever happens however please rest assured that we will always endeavour to find an opportunity for us to sing together within whatever legal framework is in place. Most people however tend to the realistic view that we will not be performing again until next year. Amy and I are amongst them.

We have each been very grateful for your support in this strange, strange time. What a lovely group of people you all are. It brings us both so much pleasure to be part of this choir.

There is, choral ability apart, a wealth of talent and experience within the choir. It is humbling. In fact it's rather scary if we think too much about it. We need to deploy however as much of that ability as we can.

Nick Brown is standing down as a Trustee. We owe him a debt of gratitude for the excellent work he has done for the choir. He has raised the level of sponsorship that we enjoy to unprecedented levels. The Bramall Trust has been a lifeline for us, and it's lovely to see Terry and Liz Bramall in the audience when they are able to attend our concerts. Nick also held the choir close during his tenure as Mayor and we benefitted hugely by way of the charity windfall that we received. He has agreed to remain in a non-Trustee, consultative role as Sponsorship Adviser and we are grateful to him for that. Thank you Nick.

Nick's departure will reduce us to seven Trustees. Over the next few weeks we will look to expand the Trusteeship. We must as a choir make use of our collective experience and expertise and we will be approaching members with that in mind, as we did with Kate Rogata and Dee Walsh, both of whom have brought much enthusiasm and ability to our Committee. In addition, I am now the only male Trustee and we all agree that we must endeavour to redress that imbalance. We need Tenors and Basses on the Committee.

We have recognised, the above said, that there must be some leeway afforded to those people who would like to help us but are anxious, understandably, to minimise the full commitment that goes with Trusteeship. We can be very flexible. We are always seeking ways in which to reduce the time spent in meetings. Wherever possible henceforth all required internal meetings will be virtual meetings. We want Trustees to be able each to have the time to do what they are best at and enjoy doing. We remain open also to offers of help from those who would prefer not to sit on the Committee.

Time has stood still in recent months. Marilynne had intended to retire this summer. She then kindly offered to delay her retirement to the end of this year. Amy and I are delighted that she has now offered to further postpone her retirement until December 2021, and we have readily accepted. She will conduct and coordinate the 2021 Christmas Concert, following its cancellation this year. We will of course have the opportunity during the next Season to celebrate with her and to demonstrate the affection and esteem in which she is held. Thank you Marilynne.

We shall in the meantime move towards the appointment of a new Deputy Director and he or she will work together with Marilynne pending her retirement.

We had intended to appoint an additional Music Director to recreate what is envisaged as a younger choir. Our vision is of a hybrid entity. A combination of community choir and a youth choir which would aim to attract younger people from late school age to perhaps upper twenties. That plan will be explored further but has had to be delayed. We have designated funds from which we would be able to draw.

Andrew's online rehearsals during lockdown have been very well received and as always our thanks are owed to him for his professionalism and guidance.

It is fair to say that those rehearsals could not have been delivered without considerable input in terms of time and expertise by one of our members. Yet again we have been the fortunate beneficiaries of his now legendary technological wizardry. We think he deserves to be, and have decided to make him, a Life Member. Thank you Robert Brown.

Finally a thank you to everyone who has played their part in supporting the choir this Season. You know who you are and, importantly, we know who you are.

Let's make the most that we can of the rest of this year. One way or another, we *will* sing together!

Paul and Amy”

There were no questions

TREASURER'S REPORT

Gill's report reads

“Firstly I am going to say a big thank you to Kate Scott who has helped enormously with the membership fee invoicing, collection, banking and recording. Having someone else who can use the accounting software is a bonus!

Thanks also to Mary for banking the cash from choral music hire and for keeping a track of the numerous associated invoices (sometimes months in advance of the hire, sometimes on return and everything in between).

Thank you also to those of you who have added to choir funds via Gift Aid, Easyfundraising, refreshments, cake and book sales etc - that's probably the whole choir, but it does make a difference.

As usual this report is a summary of our concerts and other activities this season and does not contain the comparison with last season or balances, ie it is merely a statement of our income and expenditure broken down into specific concerts or events.

I have included the Christmas concert in full this time so that you can see the breakdown of costs. We aim to cover costs for this event but agree to share any deficit.

The layout in this revised version has corrected an omission (thanks to Andrew for spotting this) and has also separated income and expenditure for rehearsals from that for concerts (suggestion from Marilynne mirrored my thinking on this). I have set membership income against rehearsal expenditure and together with general choir admin costs such as our insurance and some printing we would aim for a balance, but this season the rehearsals costs in that column only cover the period when we actually did rehearse together.

The aim of this layout is to highlight the actual performance figures set against additional internal and external funding.

Cancellation costs and other expenditure due to the disruption this season are in the HCS column. All our non-membership income is also in this column.

We have set a small increase in the 'full year' membership fees for next season to reflect inflation rates and hope that most expenses will not increase by more.

You will not of course be expected to pay for a full year if we cannot return to rehearse in September and if that is the case then we will you know in due course a pro rata amount. So please don't rush to be the first to pay online in July (in fact please don't pay anything until you hear otherwise from us) – we will let you know more when we actually have a start date. We are of course aware that finances are difficult at the moment for a lot of people and

we can therefore, as usual, be flexible regarding membership fees where it would otherwise be a barrier to returning. Thanks to Lynn for suggesting that this perhaps needs highlighting more explicitly.

Additional notes to explain some of the figures and to give the overall position of our finances:

1. Our bank 'balance' at the start of new season 2020/21 is estimated as approximately £22,000.
2. Reserves continue to be held partly in an easy access account (£20, 809.49 – interest rate currently 1.15% and reducing to 1% from July) and partly in a 1 year term tracker rate account (£20685.78) ending in Feb 2021. Note: as a charity we don't have access to some of the more 'tempting' higher interest personal savings accounts and we do need to retain some of our reserves in a relatively quick access account.
3. We have not been able to replace the £10,000 moved from savings into current account during 2018/19 due to the deficit in income that season and lack of additional income this season. Funds were moved to ensure cashflow between concerts.
4. Halcyon account balance is £4708.89 and will be retained as a separate restricted account supporting young singers in future seasons.
5. We were also kindly given a donation of £1500 from the Charles and Elsie Sykes Trust in memory of Anne Brownlie. This has not yet been allocated to a specific purpose and neither has the Latter donation of £1000 last season (we had a busy autumn term with the Messiah in Tennants and then somehow other matters got in the way as 2020 started). ie £2500 is restricted for specific purpose, to be decided.
6. The Christmas concert unfortunately made a loss to both organisations (we split the balance). This was approximately £450 each. Reasons for this are of course being considered as part of planning for the future. Please bear in mind that this loss arises even after Marilynne's very generous gift to us of so many hours of her time.
7. Prom concert: income is from the 'extra singer' donations. Expenditure is for music hire/print (on hold until we need it) deposit for the Convention Centre and an initial transfer of singer donations from both HCS singers and the extra singers to Harrogate Hospital Community Charity. We aim to add gift aid where possible to these donations. HSO are also putting £10 per player into the HHCC account which is held specifically for this Prom concert. We agreed to transfer these funds earlier this season as HHCC were making purchases or incurring printing costs in readiness for the concert and hence funds had to be in the dedicated account they hold for each major event. This account will be held until the new Prom date in June 2021.
8. Due to the cancellation this term we have expenses (Majestic Hotel deposit, concert venue deposits paid for March and June) which will be set against future concert costs in those venues. We usually pay at least one full season's venue deposits in advance. Hence the charges showing for cancelled March and June concerts.
9. Please, please continue to support our internal fundraising activities, including Easyfundraising and Gift Aid, as the total contribution from all these is significant.
10. The Halcyon expense was for 3 singers to attend a summer residential course in an Oxford college during the summer holiday 2019. You heard about it last September.

Next page contains the figures

HCS 2019/20	Beati	Halcyon	HCS	Rehearsals	Elgar	Messiah Tennants	Rossini Puccini	Harrogate Prom 2020	Harewood	Men's Open Rehearsal	Majestic Dinner	Total HCS	Harrogate Christmas Concert
Income													
Admissions					5,130.00	5,514.00						10,644.00	10,213.00
Advertising			240.00									240.00	
Choral Music			165.00		389.00		535.00					1,089.00	31.60
Donations	400.00		1,515.00				10.00					1,925.00	470.00
Prom singer								1,960.00				1,960.00	
Friends			375.00									375.00	
Membership		45.00		18,353.75								18,398.75	
Betty's			400.00									400.00	
Coach Fare						820.00						820.00	
Programme Sales					183.00	215.00						398.00	576.12
Sponsorship			11,000.00									11,000.00	
<i>Sundry income</i>												0.00	218.60
200 club			666.00									666.00	
Cake Produce and Books			672.31									672.31	
Easyfundraising			174.09									174.09	
Folders Scarves Ties			115.00									115.00	
Bank(savings) Interest			345.78									345.78	
Gift Aid			3,320.00									3,320.00	
Concert Specific			20.00									20.00	
Refreshment Income			473.76									473.76	
Total Income	£ 400.00	£ 45.00	£19,481.94	£ 18,353.75	£ 5,702.00	£ 6,549.00	£ 545.00	£ 1,960.00	£ 0.00	£ 0.00	£ 0.00	53,036.69	£ 11,509.32
Expenditure													
Accompanist	170.00		2,106.00	2,825.00					75.00	150.00		5,326.00	130.00
Accountancy			720.00									720.00	
Artists				1,300.00	1,200.00	450.00						2,950.00	
Box Office				60.00								60.00	1,263.74
Charity Donations								2,800.00				2,800.00	470.00
Concert Venue					2,340.00	3,460.00	702.00	1,836.00				8,338.00	6,729.60
Conductor			1,420.00	6,235.00	1,050.00	1,050.00				300.00		10,055.00	400.00
Deputy Conductor				155.00								155.00	400.00
Entertaining											750.00	750.00	
Auditions			120.00									120.00	
Friends Expenses Admin			92.95									92.95	
Making Music/Insurance			737.50									737.50	
Music Choral	22.32				523.12		610.98	39.00		10.98		1,206.40	189.51
Music for Orchestra					272.98	40.00	418.89					731.87	119.00
Concert Specific Sundry Expense					88.59	61.29						149.88	
Office/General Administrative Expenses			66.49					34.99				101.48	
Orchestra/Musicians				7,587.00	4,048.00							11,635.00	690.00
Other Miscellaneous Service Cost			73.99									73.99	335.00
Catering							16.80					16.80	257.30
Printing, Postage and Stationery			319.31					84.00				403.31	
Programme Print					241.00	241.00						482.00	545.00
Promotion and Fundraising										500.00		500.00	
PRS			79.98		246.24							326.22	428.94
Publicity			338.34		285.10	888.00	468.94			78.12		2,058.50	148.60
Ties and Scarves			67.50									67.50	
Rehearsal Room				2,385.00								2,385.00	
Travel and Accommodation	30.00	2,595.00				1,200.00						3,825.00	300.00
Total Expenditure	£ 222.32	£ 2,595.00	£ 6,142.06	£ 11,600.00	£13,994.03	£ 12,188.29	£ 2,667.61	£ 4,793.99	£ 75.00	£ 1,039.10	£ 750.00	56,067.40	£ 12,406.69
Balance	£ 177.68	-£2,550.00	£13,339.88	£ 6,753.75	-£ 8,292.03	-£ 5,639.29	-£2,122.61	-£ 2,833.99	-£ 75.00	-£ 1,039.10	-£ 750.00	-£ 3,030.71	-£ 448.68

There were no questions

Fiona Young proposed that **all four reports** be accepted, this was seconded by Charles Nightingale and approved unanimously

APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS

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

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES FOR 2019/2020

Details had been circulated with the agenda. There being no further nominations Stephen Murdoch proposed that the nominations for the Trustees be accepted. This was seconded by Liz Danskin and accepted unanimously.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

We have been paying the Barker Partnership in Ripon to support Gill Walsh and to be our independent examiner. Ruth Pridmore proposed that we continue to use them for the 2020-21 season, this was seconded by Paul Jackson and approved by all.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

At 7.50 pm Ruth Pridmore thanked everyone by email and closed the meeting

APPENDIX

On Wednesday 24 June 2020 we held an informal Zoom question and answer session for Members as there would not be the opportunity to raise questions easily at the AGM itself. These are the notes from that meeting.

Paul Jackson introduced the session by telling everyone he had “met” earlier that day with the management of the Royal Hall, and basically they still do not know when the Nightingale Hospital will cease to exist. They are currently amenable to us rearranging our concerts at no cost. However they recommend waiting a while to see how matters work out once lockdown is released further. Paul doesn't want to leave it too long and run risks.

Amy Moseley and PJ are due to “meet” with Manchester Camerata shortly to discuss various issues including our two forthcoming concerts. ManCam appear to be empathetic to the issues faced.

Current government advice means we can neither rehearse nor perform, indoors or outdoors.

Paul's feeling is that Rossini and Puccini is still likely to have to move into 2021 but that we might be able to perform Messiah in some form.

If we can't use the Royal Hall PJ is keen to continue to work with the Man Cam to perform some sort of concert somewhere as we don't want to fall out with them over cancelled contracts.

PJ also noted that when we return we need to focus on some fundraising and getting sponsorship to raise at least £5000 per year on top of the Terry Bramall money. Kate Rogata knows of a bid advisor to whom PJ and AM are going to talk.

Lynn Morrison asked if the new 1m distancing would help, it was agreed sadly that as large gatherings are not allowed this would not help for now.

Andrew Padmore had read recently of some research which refuted the earlier reported view that singing was a conveyor of the virus. He was concerned though that the choir would find socially distanced singing very odd.

PJ asked what the minimum rehearsal time we would need for Messiah and AP replied 4 weeks but noted that as we have not sung together for some time this might need to be longer.

LM had emailed some queries in respect of Subs which Gill Walsh thought it would be a good idea to reply to to all. LM asked if the balance of 2019-20 subs would roll forward, she emphasised that she was not asking this for herself but on behalf of anyone in the choir for whom funds could be a bit stretched. GW replied that with so many unknowns working out finance for the new season was really tricky. In respect of the current season we have been paying AP for his virtual rehearsals and also paying Tom the equivalent of 80% of his fees so it was unlikely that there would be a roll forward. However once we know what we can do with the new season there will be a pro-rata amount only to pay. GW also said that we always consider particular singer circumstances where the full membership amount would be a barrier to joining or continuing to sing with us – special cases are not new and are dealt with confidentially when such a request is made.

LM also asked how the choir finances were looking overall, should we be concerned? GW replied that our current reserve funds are adequate for the next two or three years as we have monies from the Bramalls until 2022 and so far both the Royal Hall and Man Cam have been reasonable about cancellations. She added that there will be an updated version of the AGM Treasurer notes to go out with the Sunday email on 28th June.

Nick Brown wondered if we would target the Arts Council for funds, Marilynne Davies noted she had some experience of dealing with them and was willing to help.

Bryan Dexter noted that North Yorkshire Council have various funds available so it might be worthwhile looking there.

Christine Collier was concerned that we might not actually get an audience for Messiah, if it could go ahead, so would it be cost effective. PJ replied that we really don't know. Many of our audience are older and may wish to stay away but on the other hand people might be longing for something to go out to!!

AP thought the most important thing was for the choir to sing together as soon as it could, even if this was outdoors with a keyboard. There must be places this could be achieved and the publicity could raise our profile in the community and possibly build a future audience.

Various places were suggested such as the Amphitheatre outside the Victoria shopping centre and the bandstand in the Valley Gardens, though the latter would be big enough for all of us so some might have to be on the grass.

Ruth Pridmore noted that if we are allowed to return to rehearsals but have to use a bigger more spaced out venue we could use the church at Christ Church and possible stream the rehearsal using zoom to those who felt they had to stay at home.

It was also suggested we could arrange outdoor carol singing.

PJ noted that Man Cam are looking into streaming performances.

The meeting lasted about an hour and ended at 8.30 pm