

## HARROGATE CHORAL SOCIETY (1164776) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2024 IN CHRIST CHURCH PARISH CENTRE, HARROGATE

**PRESENT:** Paul Jackson, Amy Moseley (Co - Chairs), Marilynne Davies (Vice President), David Lawrence (Music Director), Anthony Gray (Deputy Music Director), (Tom Moore (Deputy Music Director) via Zoom, Ruth Pridmore (Business Manager), Gill Walsh (Treasurer), Katharine Bruce (Committee Secretary) and 62 members

1. **APOLOGIES:** were received from Trevor Berry, Carol Bracher, Liz Danskin, Jenny Goodwin, Philip Goodwin, Rosy Goodyer, Caroline Jackson, Sally Jackson, Mick Leach, Alastair Martin, Judith McKenna, Louise McClure, Alison Mundie, Bruce Noble, Olamide Olabisi, Samantha Roffe, Kate Rogata, Frances Romanec, Geoff Smith, Charles Stones, Anna Thornhill-Jones, Richard Wheeldon, Brian Kay (President)
2. **MINUTES** of the Annual General Meeting held on 5 July 2023 and Extraordinary General Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2024 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 2023-24

Well, three years in, and I am still very excited about my role as your Musical Director. It is becoming the kind of choral society I used to only dream about. I am enjoying a creative freedom the likes of which many MDs don't have, and I feel trusted when it comes to repertoire. It is so lovely to receive messages from choir members after concerts saying how much they enjoyed the rehearsals and performance of a new piece of music. But what is currently floating my boat is that the audience seems to be really coming with us on this journey too, and you don't need me to say how incredibly important this is.

I have always believed that making connections with living composers is very important. I'll go further and say that as living performers I believe it is our responsibility to perform the music of living composers, and the response I have seen from HCS whilst not surprising me, has delighted me hugely. Like many of you, I have begun to miss the classical canon, and next year will see us redressing this balance somewhat. But it has to be like this: we are now in a position where singing contemporary music is just part of what we do, rather than something special.

Before I briefly address each of the concerts of the past Season, I want to say that for a choir and an MD to work alongside musicians with the pedigree of a Tom Moore or an Anthony Gray is a rare and wonderful thing. We have a Tom AND an Anthony which is obviously great for me, and of course it is great for you, as it means you have guaranteed, qualitative musical leadership at every turn. I am thrilled that they are as keen as each other to stay involved, and it is very much in my mind to have Tom and Anthony conduct in performance as well as rehearsal.

We nearly got caught out this year. I programmed the concert Season before any budgets or dates had been organised. One concert had to be pulled due to cost, and this was replaced by Circlesong - which I am sure you will agree went down well! There is always an answer to the financial challenges inherent in what we do, and I remain extremely grateful to our management for their creativity in this regard.

However, because the year was programmed before the concert dates were booked we were left with an uncomfortably asymmetric rehearsal schedule offering one concert 14 weeks of rehearsal and the other 8. It was uncomfortable because the repertoire was set. If this situation arises again then I can plan something more complex for the 14 week period, and something more straightforward

for the 8, so you should know that we now have a system in place where I programme the concerts once I know the schedule.

At the time of writing everything is on hold for next year, although I have two years' worth of concerts ready to propose as we do need to start booking things more in advance. A number of you have had holidays booked before the concert dates come out which prevent you from singing, and this really is avoidable. The committee know this and agree. We are all on the same page.

This Season also saw us present two concerts in the afternoon, both to wonderfully sized audiences. It clearly is a good thing to do, particularly in the darker months, but I don't see why it wouldn't work in the summer either.

I'd like to reflect briefly on each of our successes this Season, and so that I don't have to say it over and over again, can I say now that I was happy with all of them, and wish to heartily congratulate you all for the supreme musical effort you committed to our performances.

#### Concert with choir and organ

This was our first attempt at an afternoon concert, and I asked the audience for feedback. I didn't have to wait longer than the interval to hear from one man who brought 5 ladies from a nearby nursing home who, he made clear, could not possibly have come out in the evening. For my money, Tom was the undoubted star, for his first class accompanying, let alone his extraordinary solos. You made me love the Lili Boulanger piece, so a genuine thank you for that! I have agreed that one concert each Season will be accompanied by piano and organ, or extremely small orchestral forces,

#### Messiah

I don't know how many Messiahs I have led. It is a lot, but I realised something the year before last, that I have never done it top to tail on just 3 hours of rehearsal. And I will never do it again like that! For me it was the least musical 3 hours I can remember. Again, fabulously, the management agreed that we could have a recit call with the continuo and soloists, and this made everything so much easier. The Messiah we gave last year to 600 people was really good. I was sad that last minute illnesses stopped people attending, and that we had to reach out to other choirs for support. Illnesses are unavoidable, but I do hope we don't have to do that again.

#### Christmas Concert

Joanne and I had a lovely time at the Christmas concert with the Symphony Orchestra! I was always curious about this element of our Season and thought that I really cannot influence it in any direction until I have been to see it. It seems to me to be about the Children, and I loved that. Children and Christmas is a winning combination. In terms of our Christmas festivities, I need to be convinced that sending just over a third of us to sing the same old repertoire year after year is a justifiable way forward and whilst I am not at all ruling out participation in the Symphony Orchestra's Christmas concert, I would like us to look and see if there are other ideas we could consider when it comes to reflecting this most musical of Seasons in our schedule.

#### Circlesong

As I mentioned earlier, this was a last minute replacement for a concert with full orchestra, and as a second choice piece I thought it went rather well! I was so happy that Backbeat were invited, Tom and Anthony were fabulous together at the pianos, and the choir from Scunthorpe basically stole the show, as expected. I was delighted with the audience in terms of quantity and quality, and yes I am very happy to never wear that shirt again. I hope you remained unaware of the issues we had with the pianos - it was so bad we have been offered a free hire next time we need one. Every time something like this happens we learn more about what we need to do and I hope that never stops.

#### Da Vinci Requiem

I am going to call this the highlight of my year with you! You really went the extra mile in terms of learning at home, given that the most challenging music we sang this Season had the least rehearsals. If rehearsal tracks continue to be useful then I will continue to produce them. The programme looked good on paper and I believe worked really well with the inclusion of the Vivaldi. I am not sure we made the most of that in the advertising for the concert, since getting an audience

was one of the handful of reasons it was included. My plan for rehearsing the Whitacre I think worked, and I had no compunctions about using piano support in the performance. The way we started it had a suitable effect on our lucky audience and you should know that Sara enjoyed the day so much she texted me on the Monday saying she was still buzzing from it. I hope you know what an important composer Cecilia McDowall is, and you should know that she genuinely thought very highly of our performance. It wasn't easy for the orchestra, and I thought they did very well, not least dealing with the last minute realisation with 4 days to go that they had been sent the wrong music. (Choir gasp!) Cecilia and I share an agent in Val Withams and that was never more important than it was when this came to light, but again we live and learn!

Right now it seems to your musical director that we have everything going for us. Our membership is healthy, the age profile is mixed, you pay a good subscription, compared with many choral societies our audiences are very good, we still have reserves post pandemic and on top of all this we have sponsorship the likes of which most choirs could only possibly dream. I am very excited about next Season and cannot wait to tell you all about it!

David Lawrence

#### **4. DEPUTY MUSIC DIRECTORS REPORT**

##### **Report from Tom Moore, Deputy Music Director for the Season 2023-24**

To start this report, I would like to congratulate the membership of HCS for another strong Season; one in which choices of repertoire have sometimes perhaps taken singers out of their comfort zone. Members have demonstrated commitment and tenacity in approaching and learning some very difficult, sometimes modern music, working exceptionally hard to prepare programmes particularly in the short rehearsal period for the summer concert. I made mention in my report for last year's AGM how impressed I was at the choir's increasingly open-minded attitude to learning music penned by present day composers, and this last Season has reinforced my opinions here. Far from complaining about doing modern repertoire, members now seem positively excited about the challenges that 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century music presents, and many relish the opportunity to get stuck in. Attendance in general has seemed to be strong throughout the Season, which importantly enabled us to consistently make progress week on week. 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 we have together to bash through the notes.

I am certain that salient points regarding particular concerts, and the highs and lows concerned will be discussed by others, but I will say how much I personally enjoyed working with everyone in preparation for the spring concert when we learnt Bob Chilcott's Circlesong. The singing day with Bob was an added bonus for those able to be present, and we should be grateful to the committee and their associates for providing us with opportunities to work with three present day, living and breathing composers of music we have been singing, or are going to sing next Season. Although it is the lot of an Assistant Musical Director to stand in and help prepare the choir when the MD is away and then not conduct the performance, I got much pleasure from playing the piano alongside Anthony in that concert, and took pride in the way that the choir acquitted itself in performance.

Speaking of Anthony, it is certainly good to have him on board, and I am sure he will be seen on an ever-increasing basis as the next Season progresses. HCS is better resourced than many choirs by way of having several professional musicians on its books, and credit should again be given to the committee for making strategic appointments, and their foresight in dealing with possible staffing issues before they arise. Whilst I am sure there are some members who have their preferences, I hope everyone can see that David, Anthony and I bring our own individual musical skills to Harrogate Choral Society, and that we give you our best when we come. It is an added and fortunate bonus that the three of us all get along well – definitely not a given where musicians are involved.

Congratulations go to the soprano section for coming through the recent reassessment process relatively unscathed. I thought everyone joined in admirably with this, and we hope the new way forward regarding reassessment is taking away some of the apprehension people feel about this element of membership. It was great to have Beryl working with us for the reassessments, and I know many of you were delighted to see her. It has also been excellent to have a goodly number of voice tests for new members taking place on a regular basis throughout the year, meaning that membership of the choir is strong, and now includes many younger voices. Everyone is an equally important part of the HCS squad, young, older, inexperienced or an older hand, and I hope that new members have found friends and good support from existing members of the group.

Finally, many thanks to those who stop to have a chat, ask me about my week, and how much time I've spent recently on the M1. This time last year, I committed to working with HCS until December of last Season. I myself might reasonably have expected, given I often spend 6 hours on the road each Wednesday with a 300 mile round trip, that I could have decided to stop last Christmas. Some 10,000 miles later I am still in harness, and this is solely because I enjoy working with this choir and am keen to maintain my contract with you whilst circumstances allow.

Tom Moore

## **5. BEATI REPORT**

### **Report from Anthony Gray, Leader of Beati, Deputy Music Director for the Season 2023-24**

Since taking over the reins of Beati in the September of last year, we have been fortunate to expand our membership to a full complement of 10 members. I'm hugely grateful to all those of you who auditioned with us, in what I hope wasn't too arduous a process. The choir have held some initial rehearsals themselves, as well as gathering at St Wilfrid's for a sing-through of a large collection of repertoire with myself and pianist Ed Jones. We are now planning our first concert as a new group, to be held in Darley on Friday 27th September at 7:30pm (details in Ruth's email). This will take the form a slightly more relaxed 'soiree' of a concert with special guests Daniel Hutton and Christine Littlewood. We will also be remembering former member Katy Penn as part of the evening. Additionally, we are looking forward to being part of an event at Harrogate Convention Centre early next year, when we will be singing for a conference of orthopaedic hip surgeons. We're nothing if not versatile! A huge thanks to all the members of Beati for being so keen to sing, and especially to Jo Trigg for being the organisational driving force behind our endeavours.

Anthony Gray

## **6. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **Report from Marilynne Davies, Vice President for the Season 2023-24**

1. Good to see members returning to HCS after Covid.
2. It has been an interesting Season in which we have been introduced to new repertoire.
3. We have performed at St Wilfrid's, the Royal Hall and the Convention Centre.

Our use of St Wilfrid's has increased and we have performed three of our concerts there this Season. The other two being in the Convention Centre and the Royal Hall. St Wilfrids has a good acoustic and it can accommodate the HCS numbers. However, for the sopranos at the far end of the row their view of the pulpit is unparalleled.

The programming of our concerts has included some familiar works - Messiah and the Christmas Concert. In the other concerts we have been privileged to perform repertoire that was new to most of us. One concert also involved not only us but Scunthorpe Junior Choir. This was a particularly popular programme and the children were still talking about when I met them in May.

It is always a challenge to introduce unfamiliar repertoire to an established Choral Society, but David has taken us with him as he has introduced us gently and with good humour to Circlesong which has

a following all its own and to the Leonardo programme.

(MY middle aged son – a committed Wagnerite was very sceptical before he came to Circlesong. He much enjoyed the programme and will certainly be back at our concerts.)

I have been very interested to receive many comments about our concerts. They have been universally positive and interested in future concerts and some have even said that they might join HCS in September.

The Christmas Concert drew a good audience – about 1400 and as always it was a very happy occasion. All Choral Societies face similar challenges and deal with them in different ways. At HCS we have Conductor with wide experience both here and abroad and the talent to increase the breadth of our repertoire with great good humour. We are very fortunate – thank you David.

We are also very fortunate to have not one but two Deputy Music Directors Tom and Anthony. They form a splendid duo and are very patient as we learn new repertoire. Thank you to you both.

The running of the Society is managed by a very diligent team Paul and Amy – joint chairs, Ruth our indefatigable Secretary, Gill Walsh our treasurer and our amazing Librarian Liz. Thank you to you all. We are very grateful to you.

I look forward to the next Season with eagerness.

Marilynne Davies

## 7. CO-CHAIRS REPORT

### **Report from Paul Jackson on behalf of Co-Chairs (Paul Jackson, Amy Moseley) for the Season 2023-24**

This has been an enjoyable, if at times rather stressful, and in many ways a very successful Season. All four of our concerts went well to both audience and choir acclaim.

Our November performance with piano and organ accompaniment was well received, as was, *significantly*, the concept of the afternoon concert.

Messiah was a great evening before an enthusiastic and *large* audience of pre-Pandemic numbers. Circlesong was a glorious, thrilling triumph, including the memorable Saturday workshop with Bob Chilcott.

The Leonardo concert was a challenge but ultimately a joy in which to participate and the audience reaction was quite remarkable.

We have reached out to Taylor Scott Davies, with whom we enjoyed a wonderful workshop rehearsal and whose Magnificat we are performing in November. All being well Taylor will be with us for a rehearsal and for the concert.

We have adapted to our prescient move away from the Royal Hall.

I should on that subject tell you that Ruth and I are attending a workshop later this month together with HCC and representatives of other amateur bodies where the aim will be to find a way forward in terms of facilitating a return to the Royal Hall. I should tell you also that frankly we hold out little hope of terms being extended such as would enable an early HCS return. We remain open-minded however.

St. Wilfrid's, our new home, has some drawbacks, the most significant of which being two inconveniently situated pillars which cause sightline issues. It has however some excellent advantages over the Royal Hall. A better acoustic and fewer seats to fill. It still isn't cheap, but it is less costly than the Royal Hall. Our relationship with HCC/Royal Hall is very one-sided. In their favour. Our relationship with St Wilfrid's is excellent.

I am talking to our staging company with a view to possibly narrowing, but deepening the staging at St Wilfrid's and thus overcoming the sightline issues, without taking up too much orchestra space. Incidentally I have also made enquiries of Ashville College as to the cost of hiring the large, modern hall there if on occasions we needed a larger venue. It would be quite a bit more expensive. The discussions continue.

I sense and am delighted that we have this Season united as a choir behind David, it having taken a little time for everyone to adapt to a new regime. As a choir we have on the whole always been receptive to new ideas. The atmosphere within the choir has been happier, there have been recently very, very few complaints and there has been much positivity expressed.

The almost unanimous enthusiasm for Circlesong helped enormously.

The positivity within the choir flows from the creation of the shared Musical Directorship of David, Tom and Anthony. A remarkable triumvirate of talent for a local choral society to possess. We are very fortunate indeed.

Tom is doing his utmost to stay with us, despite his geographical distance and this Season has seen Anthony join us as leader of Beati and then as second Deputy Director. Tom and Anthony's contracts are being renewed this summer. David has just completed the first year of a three year contract. We have created a hub of true musical excellence here in Harrogate. And we are very proud of that.

We thank David, Tom and Anthony for all that they bring to our choir.

I have been asked whether we are likely to sing more modern music, for which by the way there is much support, under David's directorship. The answer is a tentative yes but I would ask all of us to consider the following

- Firstly, that this is not a new direction. Certainly in the twenty years or so that I've been a member, we have *always* sung the works of living composers. Karl Jenkins, Andrew Carter, David Fanshawe, Bob Chilcott, Will Todd. Indeed I recall under Andrew's leadership receiving dark messages about the extent to which we were working our way through the John Rutter song book...

- Secondly, this Season, we have yes of course sung works by Chilcott, McDowell, Weir and Whitacre. As well however as music by Berlioz, Boulanger, Bruckner, Durufle, Faure, Handel, Parry and Stanford.

Next Season we have Handel and Mozart lined up already.

We *will* continue to support living composers whilst ensuring that we provide more than sufficient scope for enjoyment by choir and audience of the great choral back catalogue. Amy and I were however determined to break out of a slight sense some years ago of choral claustrophobia and we are certainly getting that out of our system.

So, is everything in the garden coming up roses?

Well, not quite. But I hope we are getting there. Dare I refer to the green shoots of financial recovery? Although our accountant was relieved to note that we appeared so far this Season to have reduced the amount by which we have had to disturb our reserve funds we were advised very clearly of the continuing need to live within our financial means.

This Season's figures (of which more later) are not quite finalised. My *belief* is that we made a modest profit on our Autumn Magnificats concert, a rather more substantial profit on the Messiah concert, that we lost a modest amount on Circlesong but then lost a more substantial figure on the recent Summer concert. My *belief* is that after two heavy loss-making Seasons is that we have reduced the losses.

The context here is that over the past few years, due to a combination of lockdown when relatively little was spent and also to Nick Brown's remarkable historic fund-raising, been able to feel reasonably comfortable, commensurate with our duties as Trustees. But we have reached the end of that period. We must be careful.

So.....what can we do to continue to safeguard our future, to ensure that we can continue to work with David, with Tom, with Anthony. Which is what we very much want to do.

The options are limited.

Our accountants have proffered simple but effective advice.

***Don't organise loss-making concerts!!!*** It's very sound advice indeed.

*Learn from experience. What works and what doesn't work.*

A few pointers. A non-exclusive list.

*Orchestras are expensive* Obvious but worth saying. If we are performing with an orchestra then we *must* select programmes that will appeal to the public. And at least one concert per Season must be with piano and organ accompaniment, or none!

*We do need to sell more tickets* Ruth has distributed some statistics as to choir and audience numbers. They support the afternoon concerts idea. They also demonstrate, as one might expect, that the more people we have singing, the larger the audience. One simplistic interpretation might be that if the choir likes what it is singing, then it will sell more tickets.

We are very grateful to Samantha Roffe and to Jo Van Berkel for their work on PR and social media in promoting our concerts. Their efforts have changed our public face significantly.

I have been asked whether perhaps the choice of modern, less-well known composers is harder to sell to our audience. Possibly, yes, although we have also in the past suffered from low audience numbers when the programme has not been modern. Come what we may ask ourselves *every time* whether or not a concert will sell. What will it cost? Can we cover that?

*We must explore additional charitable funding* for specific concert projects, as we did with the Circlesong concert. It helps enormously. This can't all be done by Kate. We are considering the option of paying someone professionally to do this on our behalf when an opportunity presents itself. David has pledged his support in whatever way it is needed. Thank you, David.

I want to add further thanks. Liz and the Librarian team, Judith and Sarah concert stage managers, those medical practitioners who have been 'volunteered' as First Aiders. Ernesto our photographer, Christine Alp our additional accompanist.

Next Season promises to be as exciting as the Season just coming to an end. It will also doubtless produce for us its stressful moments but I know that Amy will join me in saying that the fun far outweighs the stress....!

And finally, on the subject of stress and to avoid any disappointment that I haven't mentioned Covid !!..... We are not singing in the Christmas concert next Season, for reasons related to the costs issue. My most stressful moment, of many this Season, was when Ruth emailed me to tell me that there had been an outbreak of Covid in the choir at the Christmas concert. Just days before our Messiah concert!!!!!! I will *not* miss the worry associated with singing together with 300 primary school children, with attendant runny noses and goodness knows what, immediately before our biggest money earner, our most expensive concert of the year, the short notice cancellation of which would almost certainly wipe us out for the Season if not beyond. Covid remains a potential issue for us.

Thank you all for being with us, for staying with us, and for your invaluable support.

Paul Jackson

## **8. TREASURER'S REPORT, including final accounts and Independent Examiners report for the 2022-23 Season and presentation of draft accounts for 2023-24**

Report by Paul Jackson (Co-Chair)

We are in a slightly unusual position.

Our Treasurer, Gill, as you will know from our previous emails to the choir has been hoping for some time to retire, after many years of service.

We have tried but failed so far to find a member of the choir who would be willing to take on this role. Gill, in the light of this, had been prepared to continue until the end of this calendar year.

It would not however have been appropriate or at all easy to switch Treasurers part way through the Season.

Ruth as you know is relinquishing her busy role as Business Manager, with Amy and I taking over.

Ruth has made the very generous offer to take over the role of Treasurer. Temporarily, for a period of one year. We are very grateful to her. Ruth has significant experience of the type of work involved. We look forward to affording her every assistance.  
The search for a long-term replacement for Gill will continue.

And the role will be broken down as best possible to enable the accounting work to be separated out from the time-consuming process of collection and so on. Albeit that we have also sought, so far without success, volunteers for the administrative role.

We are immensely grateful for all the work that Gill has put in over the years and we hope that she will be able to enjoy fully a well-earned rest from Trustee responsibilities. Thank you very much Gill.

As for this evening's business, the 22/23 accounts have already been circulated to the choir. They have been signed off by our accountants and indeed lodged with the Charity Commission. It is required that they are formally approved by a quorate meeting and we need someone please to approve them and someone else to second the approval.

**Steven Murdoch proposed that the Final Accounts for the 2022-23 Season be approved. This was seconded by Bryan Dexter and approved by all.**

Thank you

This Season's figures i.e. 2023/2024 have not been finalised. They will be so very shortly. The delay is unfortunate but it will be remedied.

I understand however that we hold across five bank accounts an amount just short of £55,000. My understanding of that figure is that it hides a running loss on this Season's rehearsals and concerts which has then been in effect covered up for lack of a better word by the receipt of £15,000.00 from the Bramall Foundation. To whom we remain as ever very grateful indeed for their generous support.

As soon as the final financial outcome for this Season is known, we will be able to continue our artistic programming and we will confirm the balance of the programme for 2024/25.

We will fix the 2024/2025 membership subscription fee. We have already considered that fee and it is likely to be raised from current £200 up to £217. That takes into account inflation over the twelve month period from this time last year, together with an additional amount to cover what are now the customary two sectional rehearsals per term.

It would be prudent however for us to await the final figures before confirming that proposed 2024/2025 subscription fee.

Paul Jackson

**Daniel Hutton proposed that Items 2- 8 be accepted. This was seconded by Christine Collier and approved by all.**

## **9. 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.

## **10. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES FOR 2024-25**

Details had been circulated with the agenda, however there are a number of subsequent changes to note. Although Ruth Pridmore is resigning as Business Manager (formerly Secretary) Ruth is willing to take on the role of Treasurer and Executive Trustee on a temporary basis. Gill Walsh is stepping down as Treasurer and Trustee. (see Treasures Report)

The Trustee outwith the Executive with the longest service is Deirdre Hume who is resigning but is willing to be re-elected. The remaining five continue without the need to be re-elected.

Please see the proposed list of Trustees for the 2024-25 Season is as below. As we can have up to 12 Trustees there are opportunities to join the committee. Nominations are welcome, preferably



perhaps preceded by an informal approach to discuss existing role division between current Trustees.

**The Executive:**

|                  |                            |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Chairman         | Amy Moseley / Paul Jackson |
| Treasurer        | Ruth Pridmore              |
| Business Manager | Amy Moseley / Paul Jackson |

**Trustees:**

Marilynne Davies  
Deirdre Hume  
Alastair Martin  
Kate Rogata

**There being no further nominations Chris Shovelton proposed, seconded by Liz Wearing, that Deirdre Hume and Ruth Pridmore be re-elected. This was accepted unanimously.**

**11. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS**

There is no need for independent examiners for the AGM 2023-24 accounts at this stage as the accounts are not yet the final version.

**Ruth Pridmore proposed that we continue to use Barkers for the finalisation of the accounts in the Autumn term 2024. This was seconded by Marilynne Davies and agreed by all.**

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**12.1 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

**Comment 1** Ann Shovelton wished to acknowledge the many thanks for David, Tom and Anthony throughout the meeting. Also, the work in organising the wonderful opportunities for the workshops with the composers. She also wished on behalf of the choir to thank Paul and Amy for all their work and all of the work of the committee.

**Q1** Val Revely (via e-mail) asked what does the choir think about singing so many modern pieces whose composers are unknown to our audience (the Chilcott aside). Is this why we are losing money? Can members not sell tickets because of this? I know we are doing Mozart in November but the rest of the programme is modern. It would be good to sing Composers works that the audience recognises. Thanks

PJ Responded that the reports during the evening have provided a broad and relevant response to Val's questions. This was agreed by those present at the meeting.

**Q2** Sheila Boyle wondered why the HCS is not linked to the Harrogate International Festival. PJ responded that the committee have talked about it more recently. With David as our Music Director there there might be a better chance of the Harrogate International Festival being interested. AM added that our member Sam Roffe has very good contacts and has identified this as an opportunity. We need to find a way in to build a possible relationship.

**Comment 2** Stephen Murdoch raised a concern about politeness and discipline of the choir in relation to the level of chatter at rehearsals particularly at the start of the rehearsals and after coffee. DL responded that he is grateful for this being mentioned and that individual choir members need to take responsibility for reducing this. This enables DL to focus on the music.

**Comment 3** Daniel Hutton shared that he was privileged to have been a member of the society for a long time. It has been a great concert Season, but for him the standout is working with the couple of composers. Daniel has done many workshops across the country with the opportunity to pick up a variety of skills and techniques and thinks the benefit of workshops to the society is huge and a huge boost to our choir. We should do more and capitalise on this including people wanting to join the choir as members, and people drawn by the composers. He would like to ask the choir their thoughts.

DL responded that yes, we should do more. DL wants Tom and Anthony to be further involved and there is already planning for Matthew Coleridge to run a workshop on the Requiem that is in our November 2024 programme. He thanked Daniel for sharing his comments and highlighting the benefits.

**Comment 4** Amy Moseley wished to highlight the wonderful support of Val Witham (DL's agent) to our choral society. She is phenomenal, is very organised with many contacts. Val sorted the involvement of Bob Chilcott, has introduced us to funding sources and suggested many ideas. Amy would like this to be minuted.

**Comment 5** Paul Jackson, on behalf of the committee, thanked all the members for their involvement and support during the Season.

## **12.2 LONG SERVICE TO THE CHOIR**

Philip Goodwin (apologies), Jill Heyes, Philip Heyes, Tessa Mobbs (apologies) and Val Revelly (apologies), were congratulated in achieving 25 years membership at the end of this Season 23/24. Jill and Phil were presented with their certificates by Amy Moseley.

At 8.15 pm Paul Jackson thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.