**Minutes of 44th Annual General Meeting**

**St Andrews, 14th January 2019**

**Present:** A Nicholls (Chairman), G Hoskins (Treasurer), M Tate (Secretary), and 42other Choir Members

**1. Apologies**: M Collings; D McVeigh; C. Burnett; C Cudmore; J Gill; C. Iliff; A Scarratt; H Stobart; A Gill; C. Williams. **Absent:** I. Morcom; R. Collins; I Ridler; P Uzzell

**2. Minutes of meeting Thursday, 30th November 2017**

The Minutes, having been previously circulated, were accepted as a true record, proposed by D. Honey, seconded R George and carried unanimously. Signed by the Chairman.

**3. Matters Arising:** None

**4. Reports**

**Chairman’s Report 2018**

Good evening fellow members, we've had a successful year. The number of concerts has grown, though we are still not quite so busy as we have been in some years gone by.

There have been some notable editions to our repertoire, and I must say I am personally pleased to see a few lighter songs coming along like Mr. Blue Sky.

More recently we have had very successful Christmas concerts. Good sized audiences at St. Andrews with the ladies and the school children, a really rewarding one at St. Augustine of Hippo with our friend Alison Harvey as soloist, where we made nearly £650 for St. Petroc's. It was lovely that we, as one of Cornwall's major choirs can perform a high-quality Christmas concert using all our own material.

The brewery concert which was rather uncharted territory for us was a cracker. Well attended and enjoyed by all in a relaxed and festive atmosphere. It was great to be able to say thank you to the brewery for their generous support of this choir over a long period in our own special way, and to donate £200 to their charities.

For all of this I must thank my fellow committee members. Our meetings have been well attended and well-argued but all in a healthy spirit of 'can do' and with the choir’s best interest always to the forefront. In particular, I would like to thank Mike Tate who has done a great job as secretary and worked hard to keep our eye consistently on the ball. I hope he will be on the committee again carrying out his other role. Another stalwart we are losing is Peter Bowker who has worked tirelessly and persistently as well as successfully in raising considerable funds for our choir (£11,236 over three years). Thank you both Peter and Mike.

There are numerous other people who deserve our thanks and who all help make the choir function. Chris Williams, Cliff Burnett and Graham A'Lee always help with risers, piano etc., and together with guys like Les Hereward, Paul and Peter tow our trailer or carry our gear around. All this is much appreciated. Also, Ray George and Des Honey for acting as choir marshal in Humfrey’s absence. I would also thank Chris Bale for his prompt work with our uniforms and draw attention to the commitment shown by him and Phil Walter and their attendance at both practices and concerts.

I do have some concerns to share with you. Whilst I was delighted with the turnouts for our Christmas concerts: always a busy and demanding time for most people, I am concerned that we frequently have more people attending at practices than turn out for concerts since September. I know time is limited but please ALL do try and enjoy what for many is the 'fat' of our singing and attend as many concerts as you possibly can. I do not believe it is fair or considerate to all those who work so hard for the choir, that with a singing membership of nearly sixty only thirty-five can turn out for a concert accepted well in advance. It is also certainly not playing fair with our excellent MD and accompanist.

We have been lucky to enjoy more of Graham's time on the latter half of this year and let us hope 2019 brings him good news concerning his health problems. Here, I must thank Mike S Thompson for so ably stepping up to the mark and successfully seeing us through what could have been a very difficult period. It is a great comfort to note that he is able to work well with our excellent accompanist Matt Fox and our MD Graham Willcocks. Thank you to our music team: second to none.

I have mostly enjoyed being chairman this year and thank you all for your support.

Let us continue to help others raise funds for their various charities and enjoy ourselves doing it. Thank you.

**Musical Director’s Report 2018**

Good evening Gentlemen.

As I’m sure you can appreciate 2018 has been my Annus Horribilis.

Having to miss so many rehearsals and concerts hurt as much as the treatment I received.

Watching clips of Mike at the Minack plus photos of the quay concerts brought about very mixed emotions. Upset at not being able to be with you and great relief that Mike was willing and able to take over for me.

Mike, please accept my grateful thanks for jumping in at the deep end with little notice and even less chance to prepare. You are a brave and talented individual who deserves great respect and admiration for what you put yourself through to help us at that difficult time.

After over twenty years of directing the choir with little backup, (apart from the helpful, though he admits himself, rather reluctant Roger Mitchell,) It is a huge relief that Mike is now officially the choir’s deputy MD.

I hope you are as pleased as I am with the direction the choir’s repertoire is heading. The addition of ‘Mr Blue Sky’ and ‘Tell My Father’ has to be the icing on the cake for 2018. Two contrasting pieces that will have huge public appeal. One lady guest who sat in on one of our Monday rehearsals approached me in the Fountain later and told me that ‘Tell My Father’ actually reduced her to tears. I am aware that this piece is far from every choir member’s taste, however I do believe that it has huge emotional content that cannot fail to reach the heart of the listening public.

As I have said before but will repeat, our mission is to reward the paying audience with entertainment of the highest standard. It’s a given that to achieve the highest possible standard of performance we have to concentrate and work hard during rehearsals. Gentlemen, this is something we are failing to do on increasing occasions. I am finding your individual discipline lacking more and more. Let me tell you that I will not tolerate this issue in 2019. If you would like to work under a happy MD may I suggest you listen harder and talk less? If you must talk to your neighbour, please do it at half time or after the practice has finished. I know that a lot of the chatter is about the music we are singing but please, if you have a question then ask me. The odds are good that I will have a better answer then Whatshisname sat next to you. I will happily answer any question you have as long as it’s a sensible one (George!) Trust me on this, I take no pleasure standing out front and shouting for quiet. It is important, even vital, to have a laugh during a hard-working Rehearsal, but not at the expense of discipline.

Now that the Christmas repertoire is now large enough to give a whole concert without having to insert standard concert pieces, our next aim should be to add a few more pieces so we won’t have to sing SATB pieces any longer. Adding one more item per year, (time allowing,) is the goal. However, after all the hard graft we all put into our Christmas repertoire during 2018 The Shakin’ Stevens piece ‘Merry Christmas Everyone’ may not make it into our Christmas concerts this year. It’s not an easy arrangement and I think that a break from Christmas music this new year will do us no harm.

We also have to get ‘Mr Blue Sky’ up to performance standard and we have a new piece ready to go if we should get bored!

The concerts I was able to direct in 2018 were of a reasonable standard on the whole. The Tavistock concert was very enjoyable. Rosemary Turner was very complimentary about our repertoire but did not mention our standard of performance, Curate’s egg comes to mind here.

Our best performance was probably the Christmas concert with Mevagissey Ladies in St Andrews. I thought we did a great job followed by a distinctly poor one in Penrice. We followed that with what has to be the most fun of the year at St Austell Brewery. Fun all round unless you were paying huge amounts for a pint of beer. £4.50 for lager in a brewery visitor centre? Really? They should be ashamed.

To finish, I would like to give thanks. I have already thanked Mike, however, thanks again. You are a star. Talking of stars, Matt. Without him we could not do what we do. Many thanks for your input, talent and hard work.

I hope you all had a lovely Christmas plus I wish you all a very happy, prosperous and fulfilling 2019.

Thank you.

**Treasurer’s Report 2018**

The accounts show that 2018 was successful financially and that the choir funds remain healthy. Income over expenditure was £6,860 in profit, and our Bank Funds stand at £30,998, an increase of £5,979 on last year’s £25,019.

Concert income rose to £11,687 which was a huge increase of £5,984 on last year’s figure of £5,703. Our concert at the Minack Theatre and our £1,000 fee for Songs of Praise were exceptional incomes, so to the introduction of our own Variety Show in Mevagissey which generated £732. CD sales income of £2,934 fell by £1,200 on last year’s figure, but this was offset by an increase of £769 in choir subscriptions and £400 in donations. Fund raising activities generated a healthy £2,997 profit after expenses and Donations raised £2,678, all very good news.

On the Expenses side, there was an increase in Travel and committee expenses and donations, no doubt due to increased concert activity.

I suspect that the concert activity in 2019 will not be as lucrative as last year’s as we do not have any large concerts arranged such as the Minack, but as long as we can maintain our current levels of fund raising, programme advertising revenues and donations to the choir, our funds should remain healthy.

The funds are in good health and therefore I do not feel that we need to increase Choir Subscriptions for 2019 and recommend that they remain at £90.

**5. Appointment of Musical Director**

G Willcocks was proposed by W. Roberts, seconded by G Phillips and carried unanimously.

**6. Election of Executive Officers**

The following nominations had been received:

**Post Nominee Proposed Seconded**

Chairman A Nicholls S Truscott D Smith

Vice Chairman S Gibson G Blamey D Leeson

Treasurer G Hoskins P Vellenoweth R Murphy

Secretary G Middleton M Tate D Leeson

There were no other nominations for any of these posts. All four were carried unanimously.

**7. Election of Other Officers:**

The following nominations had been received:

**Post Nominee Proposed Seconded**

Fund Raising / Sponsorship R Richardson P Bowker G Hoskins

Concert Secretary C Burnett A Nicholls G Blamey

Social Secretary S Lawday G Blamey ??

Publicity Officer M Tate G Hoskins S Gibson

There were no other nominations. All four proposals were carried unanimously.

**8. Confirmation of Other Posts**

The following nominations had been received:

**Post Nominee Proposed Seconded**

Almoner A Gill G Millington ??

Librarian S Gibson T Coplin S Lawday

Federation Rep C Bale M Tate D Leeson

CIMVC Festival Rep T Coplin R Mitchell S Lawday

There were no other nominations. Confirmation proposed by S Lawday, seconded by G Evans, carried unanimously*.*

**9. Payments to Musical Director and Accompanist**.

The musical director left the meeting at this point- the accompanist was not in attendance.

The chairman reported that both the musical director and accompanist are paid at the same flat rate for performances - £45 - but that the musical director received £10 in addition to cover his current exceptional travel costs.

Graham Rundle spoke from the floor to say that he understood that the performance rate had not increased for some years. The chairman confirmed that the rates had remained the same for three years.

David Leeson proposed that the performance rate increase with immediate effect to £50 for both and, that the musical director continue receiving travel costs. This proposal was seconded by Graham Rundle. Carried with one abstention and no votes against.

The musical director re-joined the meeting and the chairman informed him of the decision to increase remuneration. The chairman thanked both the musical director and accompanist for their outstanding work this year.

**10. Review of subscriptions**.

The Chairman reported that the Treasurer saw no compelling reason to increase subscriptions as the choir finances were healthy.

David Leeson proposed that subscriptions remain at the current level. Roger Mitchell seconded.

Carried with one abstention and no votes against.

**11. Music Committee report.**

Terry Coplin thanked members for suggestions for performance pieces. He stated that all suggestions are considered seriously but about 90% are rejected since often nice songs do not always have arrangements of sufficient quality to enable them to become successful repertoire pieces. All members who make suggestions are given full feedback following consideration. The committee are still looking for unusual pieces that fit the direction and ethos of the choir but also fulfil the committee’s ambition to maintain a lightness of feel to the choir’s repertoire.

Members were informed that photocopying of pieces may only be done with the arrangers’ (or their agents’) permission. A question was asked if old music could be recycled – this will be looked into by Terry via the Federation, but the Librarian added a note of caution that some music formerly discarded returns to the core repertoire at a later date.

Terry reported that rehearsals for the six to eight pieces for the Federation concert in Birmingham will need to be held on an additional rehearsal night. The Chairman thanked the Musical Director who has kindly offered to take these rehearsals on the additional night for no fee.

The International Festival this year will be held at St John’s on the first weekend in May - 40 choirs will attend - 18 of which will engage in the competitive element of the festival. MMC will be joined by a South African choir ‘Cenestra’, Tamar Valley MVC, Bridgend MVC and ‘Maelstrom’.

Terry will be calling for volunteer helpers nearer the time.

**12. Constitution Amendments**

Four separate amendments to the Constitution had been proposed by the Committee and had been circulated to members in advance. These were taken separately, as follows:

# Paragraph 6.2 on OTHER MEMBERSHIP currently reads:

**The Committee may appoint Honorary Members. The award of Honorary Membership will be to recognise longstanding and/or distinguished service to the choir and to offer continued membership of the choir with no liabilities for attendance or subscriptions. *An Honorary Member will not be eligible to vote at General, Extraordinary or Committee meetings.***

It was proposed by the Committee that the section in italics should be deleted and replaced by the following:

**An Honorary Member shall continue to be eligible to vote at General, Extraordinary or Committee meetings for as long as he remains a singing member.**

This is to reflect the Committee’s view that Singing Members who have been granted honorary membership should be permitted to continue to vote. The motion was carried unanimously.

# Paragraph 38 on ELECTION OF OFFICERS currently reads:

**A list inviting nominations for Officers of the Choir shall be posted on the Choir notice board by the first practice in November each year. Such nominations shall be proposed and seconded by full Singing Members. If such nomination(s) have been received for a particular vacancy or vacancies, the Chairman may also invite further nominations from the meeting.**

It was proposed by the Committee that the first and third sentences should be deleted and replaced, as below:

**A list seeking nominations for Officers of the Choir shall be posted on the Choir notice board each year at least four weeks before the date of the AGM. Such nominations shall be proposed and seconded by full Singing Members. The Chairman may also invite further nominations from the meeting.**

This is to reflect the Choir’s recent agreement to allow the committee to move the date of the AGM from December if appropriate. The motion was carried unanimously.

# Paragraph 46 on PRACTICES currently reads:

**Regular weekly practices shall be held, and *a register of attendances maintained by Section Leaders of their respective sections*. Members absent from four consecutive practices or for more than ten practices in one year without due cause shall be brought to the notice of the Committee and may be required by the Committee to resign their membership.**

It is proposed that the section in italics should be deleted and replaced by the following:

***a note kept by Section Leaders of the attendance record of their respective members.***

This was proposed in light of the Committee’s concern at a growing lack of attendance. It led to a lengthy discussion and a new proposal, as follows:

1. The first part of Paragraph 50 on UNIFORMS currently reads:

**The Choir uniform, to be worn by all members at concerts, shall be agreed by the members at a General meeting. *Each member shall be required to subscribe 25% towards the cost of the uniform, the balance being paid by the Choir funds.* Each member shall purchase, in addition, at his own expense, the approved style and colour shirt, tie, shoes, socks and belt, as required.**

# It was proposed by the Committee that the section in italics should be deleted and replaced by the following:

# A new member, on passing his voice test, should be promptly advised by his section leader that he needs to pay £50 towards the cost of his choir uniform. At the same time the section leader should inform the Treasurer. On receipt of this payment, and not before, the Treasurer will proceed to order the uniform.

This reflected the Committee’s concern that uniforms should not be ordered until the relevant member’s commitment had been demonstrated. The motion was carried unanimously.

**13. First Aid**

Following an incident of sudden ill health at a rehearsal night the need for first aiders to be in attendance has been highlighted.

Action points:

1.Paul Pearce will research the costs and practicalities of the choir having its own defibrillator and report back to the Committee on his findings.

2. Members should pass details of any first aid training (current) to Gareth Millington by the end of the month.

14**. Any other business.**

Peter Bowker asked about the current situation with music bursaries. The chairman asked that this be discussed at the next Committee meeting. (Added to agenda for 22/01/19)

The issue of finding a patron for the choir was also raised – this will also be discussed at the next Committee meeting. (Added to agenda for 22/01/19)

**14. Date of Next Meeting:** It was agreed that the 45th AGM would again be held at St Andrews on a Monday in January to be decided by the Committee.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 21.05 hrs.

Signed

Chairman Date