

NEW MUSIC MAKERS
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY, 25TH JULY 2019
AT HEDGE END METHODIST HALL

The meeting opened at 7.30pm, with Lin Kellaway in the chair.

1. APOLOGIES

Maureen Pay, Gen Marsh, Louise Staniforth, Philip Hounslow, Roy Hogben, Brenda Lambert, Rosie Adams, Margaret Hockey, Sarah Turl, Sharon Thomas, Beccy Coppen, Jill Parkinson, Michael Fisher, Keith Henry, Ron Scorey, Tom Rodaway, Diane Rodaway, Natalie Heppel, Rebecca Williams

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

These were taken as read and were accepted as accurate.

3. MATTERS ARISING

- a) The men's new bow ties need to be returned so that they can be altered as they were rather droopy.
- b) The aim of choir rehearsals should generally be to support future performances, whether full choir or smaller concert group. A delicate balance is required to ensure the time after the summer concert, from around the second week of June is not just "dead" time or that coming back earlier than we may have done previously does not just shift the "dead" time from one place to another. This also should be balanced with the fact that there may be some risk in retaining members if there is an excessive break. Potentially that risk increased by the members agreeing to the proposal to avoid concert party bookings in July and August.

The following principles were agreed:

- We should adopt a flexible approach to end of year and start of year dates (June and September respectively) based on reasonable knowledge of the circumstances applying in that year.
 - We will extend past the concert if there is a an event booked for us to sing sometime during the rest of June
 - We will return in August (but, say, no earlier than the third week of August) if there is an event booked for us to sing in September.
 - In any event the Christmas rehearsal programme will not start before September.
- c) Discussion took place about the seating at KCC this has now been rectified thanks to Eric who was able to borrow staging from Woolston Methodist Church.
 - d) Music Selection: If anyone would like the choir to sing a particular piece of music they must suggest an arrangement in four parts and not expect the Music Committee to find one.

4. CHAIRMANS REPORT

I have tried to make my report short and sweet. I am sure we would all rather be somewhere else on this very hot evening.

So what's been happening since the last AGM?

Although we had broken up we did do a few small concerts. In July 2018 we went to Oaklands Nursing Home in Allington Lane. What I can remember, it was really hot and we had trouble getting paid because the person that had booked us had left. We also sang at Southampton Sight on the 29th August with Matt playing for us, we sang for the Battle of Britain Day on the 15th September to commemorate the Spitfire Factory. Although these are very satisfying to do, it does mean that there is no real summer break because there is always things to organise and rehearsals to attend. It was decided at the AGM that we would avoid these small events in the Summer Break Months.

We returned to choir and were in full Christmas Mood with lots of new music to learn. But it was ok "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" was in. Hooray - Shame it hasn't made the cut this year – Boooo, but don't worry you will still get to sing it when we sing with the Boom Box yeah.

We had our first sing out of Christmas Songs on the 17th November at the Countess Mountbatten Fayre, a tad early maybe but they were selling Christmas decorations and things. We then went to sing for another good cause at Whitely on the 24th November for "Dreams Come True". Due to very bad weather the Switching on of Hedge End Lights was cancelled on the 29th November. We sang at Netley Abbey for their Lantern Parade. I am not sure if we would do this again unless it was better organised. The Stage that we had to sing on, was, I am sure, not very health and safety friendly. We sang at Haskins for Mountbatten, again, this was not very well organised, but we eventually did end up singing in the restaurant which was nice. We are going back this year and singing for our own charity. A few of us sang in Woolston at the Veterans Drop-In Clinic, and despite the rain I am glad we went, it was for a good cause and we were very much appreciated. We sang for the RAFA Christmas Luncheon and have been asked back this Christmas.

We managed to raise £1000 pounds for our chosen charity over the Christmas period from the choir donating money instead of sending Christmas Cards, with collections at our two Christmas Concerts, and we sang at Brambridge, Asda Southampton, Asda Chandlers Ford and The Cottage Pub. Chris Kellaway produced a new CD with some more upbeat songs on it, rather than just carols which I think everyone enjoyed, and of course it includes "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year".

Some of us joined in with the Christmas Tree Fayre on behalf of the New Music Makers at Eastleigh Museum and had Good Fun making decorations to a musical Theme.

Our own Christmas Concerts again were very successful, although we will not be able to sell so many tickets in the afternoon, as Eric has looked up how many people we are allowed to have in the Hall, and we are only allowed a maximum of 200 people. It seems we have been breaking the rules for quite a few years.

We finished the Christmas Season at the Royal Victoria Country Park, which was lovely to be back in the new refurbished Chapel, and who can forget Alec's beautiful rendition of O Holy Night.

We came back in January with some more lovely new songs to learn, some quite challenging but amazingly we had them ready for the Netley Abbey Concert and then for our own Concert and we were almost perfect by the time we sang them at The Summer Spectacular.

We don't seem to have done very many small Concerts since Christmas apart from the URC Bitterne although there were some that we had said we would do but had to pull out at the last moment, which was very disappointing and we should try and avoid in the future.

Many of you did sing at the Wedding at the Tithe Barn on the 22nd of June which was very well received and a great day by all accounts. Many thanks to Marg for organising and Sarah for driving the mini bus.

This leads me to thank the rest of the Committee as well. They spend a lot of time on the choir's behalf which you don't see, I think they all worked particularly hard for the Summer Spectacular which was new to us all, and took a lot of organising, especially the cakes, and by George we pulled it off. It was a brilliant success.

Thanks Sandie for her secretary bits, Sharon for her Treasury bits, Sarah for selling and organising the tickets, and everyone else for their amazing work.

There are a lot of people that are not on the Committee that help in many ways, and we are always grateful for all contributions, I can't name you all but I will name a few, Jerry for doing the programming of the music, Louise for her Christmas decoration skills, and spell checking things that I send her, you all know what my grammar and spelling is like on my emails. She also rounds up and organises the people that come on the mini bus. Special thanks to Hilary who stands in to play the piano when we need her for sectionals or when someone can't make it and sometimes at very short notice. We are very grateful, Ron is not here, but I would like to thank him for driving his truck to pick up the staging from Eric's church and take it back again, for the summer concert at KCC. He was not there for the Summer Spectacular but he organised his nephew to do it for us. He also made another podium for us.

I would like to thank John, although he has left, he and Janet have said that they would help front of house for us, and of course Monica for making the tea and washing up. She will need help it is too big a job to do on her own.

I would like to thank my Chris, he does such a lot of work for the choir, and just recently it has been very frustrating with the webpage and getting access, and also our internet provider, it all seems to have happened since we got struck by lightning. He also produces tickets, the programme and a million other things. He is much happier just doing the sound at concerts and I think spreading the compering around works well, thank you Sharon, Tony and Eunice.

My usual thanks to our Musical Team, Lillian, Chris, David and Matt who has been a bit quiet, but we have found Myles who has been very useful at rehearsals and singing and playing at the Concert.

I said in my report last year how lucky we are to have found Lillian and Chris and what a fantastic job they both do. Lillian does a lot of pre rehearsal working out, and always comes up with a schedule for our rehearsals. And Chris is happy to step in to do sectionals and run Concert Party

events if David is not available. I know he likes to practise the music before playing it at rehearsals. Both of them put in a lot of extra work it is not just the two and half hours at Rehearsals.

Lillian started with us in September 2016 and Chris started on September 2014. When we took Lillian on we said that we would review her fee after the year, and we should review it each September according to her Contract which we have not done she has not had an increase since she began. Chris has had one increase but is probably due another one. We have discussed it at the Committee Meeting and would like to increase both of them by £10.00 a session. I don't think Chris would ask and to be fair Lillian has never mentioned it but I would not like the embarrassment of them having to ask for a pay rise. They both do an amazing job and we would not like to lose them.

We have currently 55 members. The Alto who came to a rehearsal said that everyone was very nice to her in the Alto Section and would like to join in September, and we have a gentleman that Hilary and Tony knows who would like to join. We have got a waiting list of sopranos, we could do with some more Altos after losing Nora, Bernie and Margaret.

Well, a very exciting year in 2020, the choir will be celebrating 50 years which I think is incredible, so let's hope we are better than ever.

5. TREASURERS REPORT

The 12 month period to 31 March 2019 is showing a net deficit of £1051 (2018 £70 surplus). We started the year with a balance of £7694 and have closed with £6643. The budget was for a deficit of £1670, as we were allowing for £1500 towards new uniforms. However, we underspent by £200 for this. Music was £590 more than budgeted with the addition of some summer scores being purchased. We budgeted £500 for the summer concert but managed to make a surplus of almost double that amount. The Christmas concerts had a surplus of £400 over the budget figure.

We remain a member of 3 associations – Making Music, National Association of Choirs and One Community.

In December 2018, our Christmas concerts gave us a surplus of £930 compared with £682 in 2017. Ticket sales amounted to £1392 compared with £1135 last year for the two concerts, and the raffle brought in £341 compared with £311 last year.

We received £168 during the year from Easy Giving (£192 2018). Our collections over the Christmas period amounted to £1000 which was donated to Southampton General Hospital Children's Intensive Care Unit.

The Methodist Church Hall rental remained at £11 per hour until January 2019 when it increased to £12.50 per hour.

The concert at the KCC in Hedge End in June 2018 gave us a surplus of £996 compared with £483 for June 2017 at the Berry Theatre. Ticket sales were £1555 compared with £1240, and the draw brought in a profit of £279 compared with £223.

Our concert at KCC in June 2019 has given us a surplus of £890, well ahead of our budget of £500.

Music – the net cost for new music amounted to £1089 compared with £1467 last year.

Our total net deficit on other concerts was £360. In most cases, a token donation was received from the venues.

During the year we lost 2 members. At the end of the financial year we had 53 paying members. Setting the total subscriptions against the musician fees and hall hire shows a surplus of £696 compared with a surplus of £1040 last year.

We received a refund on gift aid of £1234, and have received a refund of the same amount for this year. All members who are able to sign up to gift aid have now done so.

Within the fundraising account, the bonus ball brought in a profit of £175 compared with £226 last year and the Skittles evening made £247 compared with £180 the previous year for the Beetle Drive.

The Games evening held in May this year gave a surplus of £141.

The budget for 2019/20 covering hall hire and musician costs with subs for 55 people gives an estimated deficit of £590, as we are allowing for an increase in musician and MD costs. It has been suggested to the committee that we increase both by £10 per week.

Obviously the hire of the unit needs to be factored into our costs, but the gift aid payment we receive from HMRC will help to cover this. However, I would expect to see a deficit of around £990, for the year.

We have managed to maintain subs at £12 for several years now since 2013, and my considered opinion, as Treasurer, is that this should now be reviewed. Next year will be an expensive one with the intended 50th birthday celebrations, and it is important not to be too complacent with the amount of funds currently held in the bank. The committee suggested a £1 per month increase from September, which may well be increased by another £1 the following year. It is up to the choir to decide whether they are happy with this or would prefer to have a £2 increase now with nothing further next year.

I am sorry I am not here to answer any questions, but hopefully the accounts are self-explanatory.

Thank you Sarah for your help with ticket selling.

A discussion followed and it was agreed that we would increase the members' subs by £2.00 per month starting from the 1st September 2019.

6. MUSICAL DIRECTORS REPORT

This year has flown by. I've been your musical director for three years now! This year was the first year that I felt we knew each other well enough to get overly prepared with our music to then make the strangest mistakes! Our Christmas programme was a joy, especially being able to perform in the newly renovated Chapel at Royal Victoria Country Park. Chris Allison introduced us to a beautiful young singer who stole the show with her voice in "Walking In the Air" and "O Holy

Night". I still think it's not a Christmas concert without singing "O Holy Night." We also worked out the kinks in our Christmas Concert at the Village Hall and I felt we sounded our best ever.

When it came to the summer programme, once again, I felt like we all worked so hard and felt like we really knew our pieces well. The concert at KCC, however, was a bit funny as we made some mistakes that we had never made in rehearsals. We've learnt our lesson; we will never have a perfect dress rehearsal ever again. I quite enjoyed my early summer break whilst you were preparing for the wedding. It's amazing how much you do without me! And lastly, I was delighted with our last concert of this season, the Summer Spectacular. It was a joy singing for this audience in this setting. We sung our very best and it seemed to have sparked joy in our audience and inspired some to possibly join us singing in the autumn!

Year after year, we continue adding to our repertoire with foreign languages, added instruments, and movement. I'm already thinking of the next thing we can do to make our concerts unforgettable. I'm so grateful for the choir members who have been able to come to every single rehearsal. It makes a big difference when you have well-attended rehearsals. In the upcoming season, I plan to start us seated in an arrangement similar to our concert seating. With the addition of Eric's platforms, I think our Christmas Concert will sound even clearer and balanced than before. I hope you could hear the benefit of the platforms from our Summer Spectacular.

Please be thinking about how we can improve as a choir and individually. I know that with better rehearsal attendance, we will improve greatly. Individually, we can work on memorising words earlier, and possibly have some Christmas music memorised! (I won't push this). Thank you for being a dedicated group. Every person is essential to a successful choir. Keep up the good work!

7. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

The following nominations had been received and were elected for the forthcoming year:

Chairman:	Lin Kellaway
Vice Chairman:	Eric Gerrey
Secretary:	Sandie Farnell
Treasurer:	Sharon Thomas
Committee:	Margaret Ballard Sarah Turl Rebecca Williams Marg Dunne Steve Swan

Music Librarian:	Sandie Farnell
Music Committee:	Lin Kellaway, Lillian Sediles, Chris Allison, David Farnell Hilary Green, Percy Night, Maggie Jacobs,

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Since the Dementia choir series it has brought to light how singing helps people with Dementia. It has been suggested that we go to care homes and sing for them. We thought that we could produce a backing track, something like we do at Christmas with some popular songs from our library. This was thought to be a good idea.

- b) Bonus Ball: As numbers seem to be dwindling for people entering the bonus ball it was asked if we should continue. It was generally agreed that we should. So please can we ask people to participate. You got to be in it to win it just like me in the July one!
- c) We had a discussion about the Summer Spectacular. Generally thought that it went well with a few teething problems, mainly with the hot water, which we think we can solve. We are also going to try and get our own tea sets so we don't have the problem of sorting out who things belong to. So if anyone knows of any pretty cups saucers, teapots etc or even odd pretty dinner/breakfast plates that can be turned into cake stands, all donations would be gratefully received.
- d) We also discussed Social Events, It would be really nice if more people would attend these occasions, it is a chance to get to know our choir members and not be restricted to just chatting in the tea break.
- e) Annual Dinner: Members were encouraged to watch out for the date and make an effort to attend.