

**THE NEW MUSIC MAKERS
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 17th JULY 2025, 19:30 HRS
AT HEDGE END METHODIST CHURCH**

The meeting opened at 1935 hours, with Eric Gerrey in the Chair.

Present:

Eric Gerrey, Sharon Thomas, Sarah Turl, Beryl Gerrey, Eunice Deuchar, Eileen Eysers, Maggie Jacobs, Alison Baker, Craig Morey, Percy Knight, Mike Ward, Naomi Holloway, Jerry Gamble, Elizabeth Townsend, Elaine Walter, Natalie Heppel, Rosie Adams, Jacqui Clift, Kerry Holcombe, Wendy Westby, Tony Jardine.

1. Apologies:

Deborah Swan, Steve Swan, Margaret Whale, Margaret Ballard, Jane Courtenay, Liz Manser, Beccy Coppen, Maureen Pay, Hilary Green, Philip Hounslow, Gilly Jeffery, Lin Kellaway, Rebecca Lewis, Rebecca Williams, Vanessa Wilkinson, Marg Dunn.

2. Minutes from previous AGM:

Agreed by all as correct. Proposed: Percy Knight, Seconded Natalie Heppel.

3. Matters arising:

None reported.

4. Chairman's Report:

Report at end of these Minutes. Eric reiterated the point that it was important that once members commit to taking part in concerts and events, they are expected to show up. It is embarrassing when we tell an organiser that we have a certain number of people coming, then only a fraction of that number actually take part, without having given notice that they would not be able to attend. It was suggested that once the commitment has been made, the members who have signed the list to say they can go should be notified so that they can ensure they have made a note of the date. Report Proposed: Percy Knight, Seconded Tony Jardine.

5. Treasurer's Report:

Report at end of these Minutes. Three questions were raised from the report – whether our insurance covers members over 80, which it does, how we managed to reduce the rent on the unit (achieved by a visit to management asking for a reduction in line with their online offer to new businesses) and what was actually held in the unit (all crockery, tablecloths and other items connected to the Summer Spectacular, sheet music and sound equipment in the main.) Proposed by Percy Knight, Seconded by Tony Jardine.

6. Musical Director's Report

Report at end of these Minutes. Chris has prepared some "crib" sheets for members to use who cannot read music. These will be available at the first rehearsal in September. It was suggested that empty chairs be removed before the rehearsal actually started. Another suggestion was for the whole of a new song to be sung through before it gets broken up into sections to concentrate on. Chris took both of these on board.

7. Music Librarian's Report

Report at end of these Minutes. Tony offered a vote of thanks to Jerry Gamble for his efficiency in producing the music on-line for practice purposes. He advised that all Christmas music would be ready for September. A question was asked as to whether we use all the music stored at the unit. Tony advised that in some cases there were not enough pieces for each choir member, and the arrangement used may not be available to purchase. At some point in the future we will try and sell these pieces that cannot be used. A lot of new copies are now purchased as digital, but the cost is not cheaper as we still have to print the music onto good quality paper. However, in some cases, this is the only way it can be purchased. Proposed by Maggie Jacobs, Seconded by Elaine Walter.

8. Local Vocal Report

Report at the end of these Minutes. Eunice mentioned that Local Vocals had been entered for a "Make a Difference" competition run by Radio Solent, for our work towards helping with Dementia, but we did not make it to the final.

9. Election of Officers

Eric, Sarah and Sharon are happy to continue in their roles as Chairman, Vice-chairman and Treasurer respectively. Proposed by Percy Knight, Seconded by Elizabeth Townsend. The position of Secretary was discussed, making it clear that the role did not need to be onerous, particularly as a set on hand-over notes had been prepared by Naomi. As a result, Jacqui Clift agreed to step up to the role. Proposed by Elaine Walter, Seconded by Eunice Deuchar. Motion carried.

10. Committee Members

Margaret Ballard, Eunice Deuchar, Gen Marsh and Jerry Gamble all happy to continue in their roles. Elaine Walter offered to join as a committee member. Proposed by Maggie Jacobs, Seconded by Wendy Westby. Motion carried.

11. Music Committee

Current positions held are Hilary Green, Percy Knight and Eric Gerrey. Maggie Jacobs wishes to step down, and Eunice Deuchar has agreed to take her place. Proposed by Eileen Eysers, Seconded Elaine Walter.

12. Any Other Business

Raffle prizes. It was mentioned that two prizes due to people at the Summer Spectacular were not available to be claimed, as someone else had taken them. Unfortunately, one of our helpers started giving out the prizes once Martyn had called out the numbers, so the tickets were not checked. This will not be happening again – all prizes will be collected at the end when the tickets can be shown and compared with the ticket drawn. Eunice also asked that when the draw is being set up, would people not take it upon themselves to move things around, as she sets up pairs of prizes. Also, if anyone wants to move the table of prizes, could they speak to her first.

Uniform. It was suggested that long skirts could be worn instead of trousers at the Summer Spectacular for those that wished to do so. Proposed by Naomi Holloway, Seconded Eileen Eysers. Votes for – 10. Against – 2. Abstentions – 9. Motion carried.

Summer Concert. It was felt that the Rose Theatre, Eastleigh, had proved a successful venue. The café needs more help to cater for the people at the interval. It was suggested that an urn could be left in the choir's rest area so they did not need to use the café. Cold drinks were available from the drinks machine at the entrance. This will be investigated if we use the Rose Theatre again. Eric to see if we can book it for next year.

Summer Spectacular. It was agreed that it worked well having the extra tables in the hall. However, it was also mentioned that some of the choir at the back did not have enough room to move and could not hold their music folders up properly without knocking into the person in front of them. One solution suggested was to change the folders to something slimmer. It was acknowledged that space is tight, but there is not much that can be done to change this, as having four rows of singers would encroach on the space for the tables.

Waiting list. There is currently one person on the waiting list (Jane Nunez).

Committee Meetings. It was requested that the choir be informed of the date of each meeting a week beforehand, so that any issues to be discussed can be forwarded to a committee member.

A vote of thanks to the committee was made by Percy Knight, which was extended to all members who have contributed to making the choir events the success they are.

Meeting closed at 2030 hrs.

THE NEW MUSIC MAKERS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 17 JULY 2025

Well, what a year we have had, talk about changes.

We started getting into our Christmas spirit ready for our Christmas concerts at the Hedge End Village Hall at the start of September. We again made a profit which was used to purchase some new songs for our Summer 2025 programme. We were delighted to welcome the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of Eastleigh for the afternoon concert.

During the running up to Christmas, Lillian informed me that she would be leaving us after the Christmas concert as her family were moving back to the States so the Phillipe could help look after his elderly parents. After a brief discussion among the Committee Members, it was agreed to ask Chris to take over the role of Musical Director, which meant we had to find someone to take Chris's place as our Accompanist. After an extensive search, we manage to find Keziah who joined us in January, and we have not looked back since.

We were also able to go and sing at John Lewis's on a Thursday evening in the run up to Christmas, and although the staff very much enjoyed our singing, there were few customers in the store. We have asked if it is possible to go there on a Sunday afternoon, 7th December, but I am still waiting to hear back from them.

We also went back to Haskins, our first time since Covid, and we sang there on their late-night openings on the Thursday and Friday before Christmas, but again although the staff enjoyed our singing, there were not many customers. I have been in touch with them for this year and we are going to be singing there on Sunday, 14th and 21st December, singing from 3.00pm to 4.0pm.

We had Bitterne URC book us for a Private Concert Party in April, and this concert always seem to go down well with the audience, and we have already been asked back next year.

The Committee decided to try and find another venue for our Summer Concert, and after a lot of searching, we came up with the Rose Theatre at Barton Peverill College, which was cheaper than KCC and had raised seating for the audience, so everyone would be able to see the choir better. There was some discussion among members as to whether we would get any audience being that we had moved the venue to Eastleigh from Hedge End, but in the end, the audience numbers were slightly up on last year, and we managed to make a healthy profit from the concert. Also, the stage area was bigger so were able to spread out, which seemed to make us more relaxed and this came over to the audience. Due to the success of the concert, we have already booked it for next year. We were also honoured to have the Mayor and Mayoress of Eastleigh joining us for the concert, and they thoroughly enjoyed it so much that they asked if they could come to the Summer Spectacular in July.

Churches Together in West End, Hedge End and Botley decided to organise a concert formed up of local choirs, to raise money for the Mountbatten Hospice and the Local Food Bank. Following a show of hands at one of our rehearsals, it was agreed that we would participate in this event as it seemed that we had a fair few members who would attend the

event, but if we had known that only 15 would turn up in the end, then we might not have accepted the invitation. Those that did attend did us proud, but if we are going to do these types of events, then we need your support otherwise it gives the choir a bad reputation.

We finished our season with our normal Summer Spectacular, and what a "Spectacular" it was. It was so popular that we sold all the tickets on the day they went on sale. We were able to get another 20 seats put into the hall and these tickets were for our members family and friends. It has already been agreed that next year's event will be for family and friends first, then if there are any tickets left then they would be open to members of the public.

We were lucky to have the Mayor and Mayoress of Eastleigh join us again, and they thoroughly enjoyed the concert and have the date in their diaries for our Christmas concert.

The positivity that was around from the start of setting up to end was tremendous. It seemed that we were again more relaxed, which meant we could enjoy ourselves better which came over to audience, which meant they were able to enjoy themselves better as well. It seems in the past year that we have managed to come out more which improves our performances, so well done to everyone.

None of our concerts would be able to be put on without the willing band of helpers who are not choir members, but come along to each concert and help setup, help during the event, and then help pack away. I am eternally grateful to them in supporting us, as we would not be able to do our events so well without their help.

The choir, as a whole, is on sure footings and we are lucky enough to make profits at our concerts which goes towards purchasing new music and equipment when required. This is achieved by your committee working diligently on your behalf and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the hard work over the past year to keep the choir moving in the right direction.

Naomi and Rebecca joined the Committee last year, but due to personal reasons, they are both stepping down, so we are looking for a new Secretary and Committee Member to take their places.

Chris, as our new Musical Director has done a magnificent job since January, which we knew he would, and Keziah has also done an exceedingly good job as well. It looks like we made the right choices when we hired them, so thank you both for doing an excellent job. I can only say that I hope this is the start of something better for the choir.

Regards

Eric Gerrey - Chairman

THE NEW MUSIC MAKERS
TREASURER'S REPORT 17TH JULY 2025

Analysis

The 12-month period to 31 March 2025 is showing a net surplus of £3085 (2024 £592 surplus). We started the year with a balance of £4243 and have closed with £7328. The annual forecast showed an expected surplus of £165. In brief, compared with the annual forecast, we increased our overall surplus by £2921. In part, this was due to a renegotiation of the website fees, a surplus for the Christmas concerts, a reduction in storeroom rental, the majority of which was put towards purchasing more music, fund raising and the increase in subscriptions.

Annual Fees

We remain a member of Making Music.

The Making Music fee was £230 compared with £219 2024. Other fees paid were to cover our website £155 (£308 2024). We changed our host provider during the year, as their costs were excessively high, and negotiated a 4-year deal with Hostinger, so apart from a very small amount to cover to .com renewal (£20) there should be no other costs against the website for the next 3 years. Insurance was £107.

Christmas Concerts

Ticket sales for the two concerts amounted to £1780, and the two draws brought in £231. We made an overall surplus of £1100, (£871 2024) against a forecast of £500. Half the proceeds of the draw were donated to Southampton Mission, our chosen charity for the year.

Fund Raising

We received £169 during the year from Easy Giving (2024 £142). Collections from Haskins were donated to Southampton Mission – the total donated with the proceeds from the Christmas draw was £381.

Donations

Miscellaneous donations totalled £25.

Storage rental

Following a re-negotiation with Shurgard, who took over from Lok'nstore during the year, we managed to reduce our monthly rental considerably from £192 to £107 per month, including some back-dated credit. This amount increased to £123 in June 2025.

Other concerts

The Summer Spectacular show brought in £826 from ticket sales, (£922 2023) and £223 from the draw (£299 2023). The overall surplus was £585. Other concerts at URC Bitterne, Hedge End Methodist Church, St Andrews Church, Bishops Waltham Christmas fayre and John Lewis gave a net deficit of £325. The overall surplus was therefore £260, against a forecast of £500.

Subscriptions

The subscriptions increased to £22 from September last year. During the year we lost Jane Nunez and Sheila Stokes-White, but welcomed new members Emma Anderson,

Kerry Holcombe, and Craig Morey. Total subs received was £10204 (£8518 2023). We had 48 paying members at the end of the financial year. The increase in subscriptions still covers our fixed costs, and there is no requirement to increase them this coming year.

Other

Miscellaneous items amounted to a surplus of £180. (2024 £470). We had two Shuffleboard social events which contributed to this surplus.

Gift Aid

We received a refund on gift aid of £1671 (£1349 2024). All members who can sign up to gift aid have now done so.

Summer Concert June 2025

For information, the net surplus from the single summer concert at the Rose Theatre will be approximately £900 (final invoice still to be received from the Theatre.) Ticket sales alone were £1134, and £300 was taken for the draw. This is a terrific result, considering we were experimenting with a new venue in a town we are not normally associated with. In comparison, KCC in June 2024 was £129 surplus in total.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have established policy whereby unrestricted funds are not committed or invested in intangible fixed assets. This policy equates to having between £2,000 and £6,000 in general funds to be able to continue the current activities of the charity. At 31st March 2025 reserves were £7329 (£4243 at 31 March 2024).

Sharon Thomas
Treasurer

Dear Choir Members,

This report covers the period from January to July 2025, the period that I have been Music Director of the New Music Makers. I would like to begin by thanking you for asking me to be your Music Director. Having served previously as accompanist and assistant musical director it is a privilege to now lead the choir. Filling Lillian's shoes is not an easy thing to do as under her leadership we have really improved in both sound and technique. I am keen that we continue to build on what she taught us, especially with regard to breathing, diction, range of dynamics and phrase endings.

It has also been a pleasure to welcome Keziah to the choir as our new accompanist. She has fitted in wonderfully (on piano and trombone!) and I am sure you will agree is already a huge asset to the choir.

Musical Focus and Development.

Since January, I have wanted to focus our rehearsals on three priorities – (an ABC!)

A = Accuracy (of notes, rhythm, words)

B = Blend and Balance (Ensuring clarity of melody lines and a well-balanced overall sound. Repositioning the tenors and basses from the back to the centre has positively helped with this)

C = Confidence and Communication (Encouraging expressive performances, familiarity with the music, consistent eye contact and audience engagement).

I feel like we have made headway in all these areas. I am grateful for the practise tracks that Jerry creates and to all of you who used these (and the additional tracks I created for "Galway Girl") to help us learn the music. Our weekly rehearsals are a good length and practise in between helps us to use the time we are together more effectively. Each week I will let you know the songs that we will be practising and anything I particularly want to focus on so any time you have to prepare for rehearsals can be best used. We will continue to focus on **Accuracy**, **Blend and Balance** and **Confidence and Communication** when we return in September and begin to learn our Christmas Music.

Our Summer Programme

The Summer Concert on Saturday 7th June

Our Summer programme has contained a wide range of music, from songs that are more contemporary than we have previously done (e.g. Galway Girl), to other pop/rock songs (e.g. Bohemian Rhapsody, the Beatles and Elton John Medley), alongside Jazz, Rutter, and other songs from films and shows. I was very pleased with how all of these came together for our summer concert at the Rose Theatre, and that after months of practise we put on a very good performance. This was backed up from many comments I have subsequently heard from people who were in the audience (including quite a lot of people who had not previously heard us) and in listening back to the videos.

Thank you also to our soloists in this concert – Jerry, Ron, Maggie, Craig, Rebekah, Mike, Tony Lin, Keziah and a guest appearance from Amelia. The tech team also did a brilliant job in making sure the sound was balanced and filled the auditorium. A technical rehearsal in which we practise walking on/off, opening folders, soloists, and musicians moving between songs will help with presentation but musically I felt we had done well.

The Summer Spectacular on Saturday 12th July

I am writing this the morning after our concert and am still “buzzing” with how well this went! We were a slightly smaller choir and really missed everybody who could not be part of our Summer Spectacular this year. I am aware that this concert is a massive undertaking and thank you to everybody who helped with set up, cooking and providing cakes and scones, front of house, refreshments, sound, tidy up etc. Musically, from the opening notes it felt like we had the audience’s attention. There was a great atmosphere in the room and the few extra rehearsals we have had since our concert at the Rose Theatre has allowed us to further improve accuracy and perform even more confidently. It was lovely to have the Mayor of the Borough of Eastleigh, Councillor Janice Asman and the Mayoress, Councillor Sarah Turl, with us again and they were once again very complimentary about the choir. There were many in the audience who have been to this event before and again I received many positive comments from these people. There were also a lot of people who had not heard us before who thoroughly enjoyed the performance and are already asking about future concerts! Once again, a special thanks to all our soloists and a special mention must go to Roy who almost brought the house down!

For me, this concert was a wonderful finale to our first term of working together. It sets a bar from which I want us to build but I left feeling extremely proud to be MD of a choir that can produce this quality of music.

Next Steps – Autumn, Christmas and Future Direction.

I am looking forward to both a summer break(!) and resuming work on our Christmas music when we return on Thursday September 4th. We already have some events booked in including singing again at the Bishops Waltham Christmas Fayre (Thursday 27th Nov), John Lewes and Haskins as well as our main Christmas concert on Saturday 13th December. These extra events we do provide excellent extra publicity for the choir.

There are many choirs in and around the Southampton area and, with the success of “Rock Choir” and the local “Sing Now Choir” franchise, we compete for both new members and audience in a much bigger market than we have previously had to. I want to make sure we stand out and are well thought of as a choir in this area. Going forward, I want to continue to develop our repertoire – we will always sing music with wide appeal across a range of styles and periods, but I also want to ensure we include good quality and a good quantity of contemporary songs to appeal to both new members and a new audience. I also want to keep key features that are distinctive to us as a choir – we are a choir that people need to audition for; we use music and sing often quite technical music in 4-part harmony. These things help to define us as a choir. Our forthcoming Christmas programme will reflect all these values. Thank you for your continued commitment and enthusiasm. I look forward to an exciting and productive season ahead.

With best regards,
Chris Allison
Musical Director

THE NEW MUSIC MAKERS **MUSIC LIBRARIAN’S REPORT JULY 17TH 2025**

Dear fellow singers,

First of all, thank you for continuing to look after the music entrusted to you. I know your personal libraries grow each season, and I truly appreciate the space and care this requires. Without your support, the librarian's job would be significantly more demanding—so thank you again!

As you know, the Music Committee meets twice a year: once in October to select the following summer's programme, and again in May to choose the Christmas music. This schedule allows me to order music in good time (usually!) so that you receive a complete set at the beginning of the rehearsal period. It also means learning tracks can be uploaded to the website in a timely manner—many thanks to Jerry Gamble for his continued work on that.

Purchasing music is not cheap, especially when we need 52 copies (one each for our MD and accompanist, and up to 50 singers). During this year, your committee has agreed on a policy to charge £5 for any piece of music that is lost or damaged beyond repair. I keep a master record of what each member is holding, based on the 2023 music audit and all music subsequently issued. If you lose or damage a piece, please let me know as soon as possible so I can provide a replacement. Please do not photocopy another member's music—it is important we remain within copyright guidelines.

Some members reported “missing” music during the year. In most cases, the music was “found” after checking their holdings against the master record or audit. That said, I have also corrected a few cases where pieces were never issued for whatever reason. I will publish a list of members' summer and Christmas music holdings on the website for easy reference. From now on, I will also ask each of you to confirm you have received a full set of any new music at the start of each season.

We are gradually increasing our use of licensed digital copies, which we print locally. Unfortunately, there is no cost saving with this approach, but it is sometimes the only option—and the speed of delivery is a definite advantage. I am building an electronic library of these licensed downloads, held on behalf of the choir, until I eventually hand over library duties. Printed copies from downloads are not always as robust, though, so we now use heavier-weight paper. Please help preserve them by applying ring reinforcements early, before wear and tear sets in. I am afraid I do not have the capacity to do this for you—so thank you for your help with that.

The Music Committee selected the music for our recent summer concerts back in October 2024. This included six new pieces (seven if you sang in the SA group). As mentioned previously, music orders are typically fulfilled within 3–4 weeks, though one piece did not arrive until January. Thankfully, this did not impact the rehearsal schedule Chris set for us. We also revisited a number of archived pieces, topping up our stock where needed and replacing worn-out or unusable copies.

Likewise, the Christmas 2024 programme—chosen in May—included four brand-new songs (one for SA voices only) and several older ones from our archive that have not been sung in some years. Almost all new music is used for at least two consecutive seasons, which helps us get more value from it and allows us to embed it into our long-term repertoire.

Most of the new music we consider is suggested by you, the choir members. You're welcome to make suggestions at any time—via Eric, your voice part representative*, or directly to me. I keep a running list of suggestions for the next Music Committee meeting. It is helpful (though not essential) if you can also point us to an SATB arrangement—YouTube is often a good place to start. You will be reminded in advance of upcoming meetings so you can submit last-minute ideas. In my view, this process helps ensure a balanced programme that includes both fresh challenges and familiar favourites. Of course, not every piece will appeal to everyone—but we hope most people enjoy most of the music most of the time!

As always, if you have any questions about the music library or anything else related, please do not hesitate to speak to me. I am here to make sure you have everything you need to enjoy making music together.
With best wishes,

Tony

Tony Jardine
Music Librarian

** Voice part reps: Hilary Green (soprano), [Vacant – new rep TBC] (alto), Percy Knight (tenor), Eric Gerrey (bass)*

**THE NEW MUSIC MAKERS
LOCAL VOCALS REPORT JULY 17TH 2025**

Local Vocals have enjoyed another wonderful year bringing music and joy to our local care homes.

I am pleased to report that we have recently added two new homes to our regular circuit. On average we sing once a week for residents, and our performances are consistently met with warmth and enthusiasm.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our dedicated choir members for their continued commitment and support. Without their time, energy and good spirit none of it would be possible.

Music has a powerful impact particularly for those living with dementia. It can trigger memories, lift spirits and where possible we encourage residents to join in singing, and sometimes even dancing. These moments of connection are at the heart of what we do. Looking ahead, we are booked through to Christmas including once again being invited to sing at the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Dementia Supporters' Christmas parties - a highlight for us. I hope that Local Vocals continues to thrive and grow reaching even more people with the joy of music in the year ahead.

Eunice Deuchar