

DRAFT MINUTES

CHIPPING NORTON CHORAL SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 10th October 2012

Toby Blundell welcomed everyone to the AGM which was his first as Chairman.

APOLOGIES:-

Apologies had been received from Sarah Cobb, Vicki Pike, Peter Barber, Wendy Barber, Roger Stein, Marian Stein, Elma Marshall, Margaret Davies, Rosemary Wilson, Edwin Wilson, Margaret Bond, Marcus Smith, Vivian Woodall, Angela Sorrell and Herbert Newton

APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF AGM MINUTES OF 12 OCTOBER 2011:-

Matters Arising:-

- **Toby Blundell to check that the 2011 minutes are on the website and to inform everyone**
- A query regarding the deficit from last year's concert was raised. The Treasurer explained that with the two bank accounts, the monies from the "reserved" bank account are transferred to the current account to allow sufficient monies to be available. There is circa £13,000 in the reserve account at present.

Minutes proposed by Doreen Phillips and seconded by Brian Jones – all in favour – signed by Chairman, Toby Blundell.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – TOBY BLUNDELL:-

- Toby thanked Sarah Cobb for all her hard work as Chair during the past five years and to Beth Sinclair for taking the minutes.
- Toby thanked all members of the committee which was a well organised 'machine'.
- Betsy Tyler-Bee who was a member of the committee is sorely missed and her sudden passing away in the Spring was very traumatic.
- The choir remains very healthy and there are now over 140 active members which is the biggest number since the choir began. Thanks went to Sarah Cobb for taking over the administration of the database.
- The two concerts held were both amazing and ambitious thanks to the dedication of Peter Hunt and Bernard West. Thanks were also paid to Shauni McGregor for her connections with soloists and percussionists around the country.
- The finances remain reasonably healthy following last year's two big concerts – Verdi Requiem and Carmina Burana. We need to continue to increase the audience figures. The financial loss made over the two concerts had been expected, but the increase in membership fees this year will help pay for this loss, as will the substantial increase in membership.
- Thanks went to Peter Hunt as Musical Director and Bernard West as Assistant Musical Director – the choir is very lucky! Thanks went to the committee for all the tireless work that it does. Thanks also went to those who organise the raffle, compose the Leading Notes and those who organise the refreshments at concerts.
- Finally, thanks went to all members of the choir who cope so well during the long hours of the concert days themselves.

TREASURER'S REPORT – DENIS WYNN:-

- Apologies were made for the accounts not being available in time for the AGM. The accounts will need to be discussed and approved at an ordinary rehearsal once they are available.

- The choir remains well off with a cumulative balance of circa £17,000 and it was planned that monies would be spent on large concerts over the last few years. The majority of the monies are spent on the splendid soloists and orchestras.
- The increase in subscriptions shall assist in having sufficient monies in the future. However, costs are rising and a budget for the Christmas concert is awaited.
- With the rising numbers of choir members, the only venues available can only seat around 300 people apart from Banbury.
- Betsy's sudden passing was sad as she had been a great strength to Denis as she collected all the subscriptions and enforced payments. It is with thanks that Becky Horton has agreed to take over this role which will help regulate the process.
- A legacy of £500.00, to be used for general purposes, had been received from Mr Michael Terry's Estate – he had been a bass and was such a jovial man. This legacy had been received with grateful thanks from the committee.

Questions:-

- Can the £4,395.00 deficit from last year be explained? i.e. was that an exceptional year? Denis explained that there will be a similar deficit this year and that the choir can continue like this for only the next four to five years at this standard.
- A plan to rebuild the monies would be required and should there be a specific fund-raising group rather than just relying on tickets and programmes?
- Toby explained that three to four years ago the charity held too much money and a deliberate decision to spend these monies was planned. It is the orchestral fees which cause the deficit so the committee and music committee shall consider its programme over the coming years.

The accounts to be prepared and circulated at a future date for approval

MUSICAL DIRECTOR – PETER HUNT:-

- Peter who was currently on sabbatical for a term was delighted to return for the AGM.
- He thanked everyone for another successful year which had been full of challenges. The society continues to thrive and grow and new faces were most welcome! To hear that the choir now has over 140 members was quite a shock!

Verdi Requiem – December 2011 – Banbury:-

- Peter had received a lot of wonderful correspondence from the audience following the concert.
- The chorus was “thrilling” and the Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra were really pleased to be able to play the piece as only a few choirs can afford to pay for this orchestral piece.
- There was concern that several basses had fallen off the back seating.
- It was a great performance full of both power and energy; the soloists were excellent and thanks went to Shauni for organising these. Many of the soloists travel worldwide and are of such a wonderful quality, that many other choral societies cannot afford these, so it is wonderful that the audience can witness such thrilling pieces of music in and around Chipping Norton rather than having to travel to London.

Music Festival – March 2012

- There was a good turn out and a distinction had been obtained. The nice contrasting programme was better, compared to that of previous years.
- There had been great comments, congratulating the choir on its achievements. Any criticism was aimed at things that are not done consistently well such as word endings and balance.
- The basic techniques and quality are excellent and rooted in good practise – the tuning of the choir is fantastic!
- The choral workshop with Colin Touchin was fun and provided good bonding activity and it was great to work with someone else.

Carmina Burana – May 2012 – Deddington

- Although the notes and words are simple it is a difficult piece to perform well.
- It was a great performance but sometimes suffered from unsteady rhythms, which was no fault of the choir.
- It was sung with great spirit and the soloists once again were excellent.
- There were two good pianos with excellent pianists (Bernard West and Stewart Taylor) – it was good to welcome Stewart back!
- The Oxfordshire County Percussion Ensemble was brilliant and excellent to work with. Thanks went to Tony Mealings – it was good to see such a good example of local partnerships at work.
- It was the first time that two terms were spent over one piece and as a result of this, it was a challenge to keep everyone motivated – it probably wasn't the best piece to do this. However, the time spent on the piece paid off in the end as it was a very solid performance.
- Deddington is a first rate venue with everyone being so welcoming.

Christmas 2012 – Chipping Norton

- It will be good to perform again at Chipping Norton following all the building works. However, space will be a problem there.

To summarise, it has been a very good year and a review of finances will be required. Peter agreed with Denis that the quality of the soloists is excellent and that monies must be used wisely.

- A plan for fundraising may be required – e.g. sing from scratch.
- Two ambitions have been achieved – to spend longer preparing the work and to work with a different conductor as Bernard is musical director this term.
- Thanks went to Bernard for the past year and for his fantastic musical support.
- Thanks went to Shauni and to all the committee members for being so supportive, particularly Sarah over her time as Chair.
- The choir is a fun and dynamic group of people to work with resulting in outstanding achievements.

Peter suggested that the programme next year be changed to:-

- Dona Nobis Pacem – Vaughan Williams
- Hymn of Jesus – Holst

Both these pieces would require the Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra

ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR – BERNARD WEST:-

Summer Concert – Pomp & Pimms – Churchill

- It was a lovely concert celebrating the Queen's Jubilee at Churchill which is such a lovely venue and everyone is very helpful.
- It was a shorter schedule than previously which had required only two rehearsals.
- There was good audience participation with a fabulous accompanist especially on the organ.
- Thanks went to Graham Pike as Concert Manager and the librarian Vicky Pike
- Thanks went to those who organised refreshments
- The quartet's acoustics were excellent.
- With two trumpets and an organ it is hoped that a small profit has been made and we await the accounts to confirm this.
- The committee will discuss whether or not to have a summer concert
- Bernard explained that the costs for this term are being kept down – Shauni is organising the orchestra and soloists once more
- Bernard explained that he is taking a sabbatical next term
- Bernard thanked Peter for giving him the fabulous opportunity to be able to conduct this term's concert.

Toby thanked Peter and Bernard for their reports and all that they do for the choral society

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE:-

All members of the committee are happy to continue, as follows:-

Toby Blundell, Sarah Cobb, Denis Wynn, Beth Sinclair, Graham Pike, Vicki Pike, Caroline Johnston, Andrew Vaile, and Becky Horton.

Proposed by Tish Nicholls and seconded by Rachel Slade – all voted unanimously.

With no other business to discuss the meeting closed at 9.25 pm.