



BRIGHTON ORPHEUS CHOIR

**MINUTES OF THE AGM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY
11th OCTOBER 2017 AT
VARNDEAN SCHOOL,
BRIGHTON, at 7.00 pm**

Registered Charity 260887

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Robert Eastwood thanked those present for coming. The AGM gives members the opportunity to become involved in the running of the choir.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Gavin Henderson, Claire Enever, Kate Law, Hilary Forrester, Naomi Sack.

3. Minutes of the last AGM (17 November 2016)

These had been circulated in advance and taken as read. They were accepted as correct and signed by the Chairman. Proposed: Annette Bell, Seconded Murray Park.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's report

Robert Eastwood addressed 2 areas: his assessment of the state of the choir; which he concluded was in excellent shape and a summary of the main issues to which the committee has given attention in the past year. These were:

- a) Musical programme - The system for selecting works and deciding what concerts to perform in is working well.
- b) Publicity - This is a central concern and we are most fortunate to have an excellent marketing committee, whose members run the website, produce publicity materials and handle ticketing. He encouraged members to individually support these efforts through putting up posters, selling tickets and recruiting new members.
- c) Subscriptions - Subscriptions were increased this year by £20, restoring them in real terms to the level they were in 2011 when they were last raised. The expectation going forward is that they will be increased in line with inflation.
- d) OYS - The OYS project was conceived three years ago as a method of reducing our excess reserves. It was hoped that numbers would allow this youth choir, in time, to be financially self-sustaining. After one year, despite low numbers, the committee decided to fund a further year. Net spending on OYS amounted to roughly £7K over the two years 2015-17. This, along with other factors, eliminated our excess reserves. OYS membership has been consistently about 10: financial self-sufficiency would require membership of 30. The committee decided to give financial support at a reduced and capped rate for one more term, allowing OYS to participate in the Charity Concert in December, as well as giving a final chance for us to discover whether increased numbers combined with external charity funding might allow OYS to cover its costs. As it stands, OYS will cease to exist after the charity concert. Robert expressed his thanks to Stella for her tireless efforts in promoting OYS and concluded that we should not forget the valuable musical contribution that OYS has made to a number of our concerts.

6. Treasurer's report

The financial statements and Trustee Report had been made available electronically prior to the meeting.

Referring to this document, the Treasurer stated that the choir had £7000 less at the end of the year than at the beginning; this would have been £8000 less had there not been a legacy donation from George Bowles in August.

The reasons for this loss were giving further financial support to OYS and performing the Dvorak Requiem. Both of these actions were part of the planned strategy for reducing the accumulated surplus. In addition, money had been spent on music and a number of our regular outings had increased in cost.

The choir's reserves are now considered to be at a prudent level, so it will be important to try to balance income and expenditure going forward.

The proposed subscription structure for 2017/18 was confirmed. Proposed by Richard Jayawant, Seconded by Rachel Goode.

7. Election of Officers and Committee Members

There were 2 vacancies for ordinary Committee members. The vacancies arose from:

- the resignation by rotation of Naomi Sack,
- The resignation by rotation of Rachel Goode.

The outgoing committee members were thanked for their service to the choir.

The following nominations had been received: Robert Eastwood (Chair), Richard Jayawant (Secretary) and Elizabeth Hughes (Treasurer). Linda Newsom Ray (to 2020), Vicki Lywood Last (to 2020). Full details of proposers and those seconding can be found in the secretary's AGM file. All 5 nominees were elected unopposed.

8. Musical Director's report and programme for 2017/18

Our winter Gloria concert featured Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* (with soloists tenor Paul Curievici and baritone Matthew Sprange) together with Vivaldi's *Gloria* and the *Gloria* by John Rutter. BOC was joined by the OYS in the Angel's carol. OYS' also performed *Walking in the Air* from Howard Blakes' *The Snowman* and Chilcott's *This Joy* as they had done when joining the adult choir when we led the annual City Charity Christmas Concert. We have been invited to return to lead this concert again this year.

In the spring we tackled the Dvorak *Requiem*. The work was new to us all - choir, conductor, orchestra and wonderful soloists Emily Blanch soprano, Kate Symonds-Joy contralto, Nicholas Warden bass and especially the replacement tenor Graham Neal who incredibly had only seen the music the day before.

Our summer concert took its title "How can I keep from Singing" from a song of that name. This was an uplifting concert for audience and choir alike. The Orpheus Young Singers had given two cameo concerts during the year and they joined the adults for this final concert of the season, singing many items including Frank's *Panis angelicus*, a rousing Russian *Kalinka* and *Gonna rise up singing!* Both choirs combined for Rutter's *Gift of Music* and *Do you hear the people sing?* Several songs had been previewed the week before in a memorable half-hour performance by invitation of the Blaker's Park Picnic event

On behalf of all the children who have benefitted from and greatly enjoyed OYS so far, Stella thanked the Orpheus for their charitable support. She outlined the contribution that OYS was making to the life of the adult choir including increased ticket sales and in making repertoire consequently accessible to BOC. Membership of OYS has increased by 50% this term and the members are now paying market rate fees.

Our autumn concert on November 25th will be Handel's *Jephtha*, an oratorio which will feel like playing the role of the chorus in a very human opera. The City Charity Christmas Carol Concert is on Thursday 7th December and Carol singing on Brighton station will be on Wednesday 13th. Our spring concert on March 24th will feature Mozart's *Requiem* and our summer concert is on June 30th. The Blaker's Park event will provisionally be June 16th.

9. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Thanks were expressed to Reg Squire for carrying out this year's examination. It was proposed by Elizabeth Hughes & seconded by Robert Eastwood that Reg Squire act as examiner for 2017/18

10. Any other business

There was a discussion on how other choirs organise their youth sections.

NOTE: the reports of the Chairman, Treasurer and Musical Director have been summarised. The full text is retained in the Secretary's AGM file.

RJ / 29-oct-2016 / Rev A