



BRIGHTON ORPHEUS CHOIR

MINUTES OF THE AGM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY
17th OCTOBER 2018 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 Valerie Powell, Claire Enever, Kate Law, Sylvia Reed, , Ros White, Hilary Forrester, Sue Ewebank, Nuno Ferraro, Joy Weston.

3. Minutes of the last AGM (11 November 2017)

These had been circulated in advance and taken as read. They were accepted as correct and signed by the Chairman. Proposed: Elizabeth Hughes, Seconded: Richard Jayawant. Approved: Nem Con.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's report

Robert Eastwood addressed 2 areas: The first was his assessment of the state of the choir; which he concluded was in excellent shape, including a strong co-operative ethic; the second was 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.. At the moment whether we continue with the Argus appeal concert beyond 2018 is currently in doubt. Feedback from members on both these issues is welcome.

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. Sarah Saward will try to put in place systems for organising the distribution of publicity.

c) We agreed last year that approximate index-linking on an annual basis as the 'default' makes sense, since all of our costs rise with inflation. Having established that principle, we have immediately departed from it, as the rise for this year would have been too low to be practicable. The policy remains in place, though, even if we might raise subscriptions less frequently than originally planned. We might also choose to deviate from it – for example, if the finances are particularly healthy, as is currently the case, partly as a result of successful recruitment.

d) OYS - At this time last year we had resolved on financial grounds to wind OYS up after the Christmas concert, unless there was a material change in OYS finances. That change did happen. The generosity of individual choir members meant that funds were forthcoming to allow OYS to continue through to the present. On top of this, £1200 of external funds have been raised more recently (special thanks to Caroline for her efforts on this), so that the financial position looking ahead to the rest of the academic year is fine. However we now face a problem of insufficient numbers, so the survival of OYS into 2019 is uncertain.

6. Treasurer's report

The financial statements and Trustee Report had been made available electronically prior to the meeting. These show we ended the financial year £10.5K better off than we started it. This was attributable to:

a) The subscription was raised at the start of the 2017/18 year.

b).Successful recruitment initiatives led to increased size of choir, so more revenue from subscriptions (and eventually from Gift Aid).

c) The choir received £5.5K in legacies.

d) The concert deficit for the year was only £6K compared to £9.5K the previous year. This was partly attributable to good ticket sales for the Mozart Requiem in March.

We currently hold restricted funds of £2770 for use by OYS.

We currently hold funds well in excess of the value defined in our reserves policy. It is the committee's intention to review matters in the summer, after the 2 major concerts.

7. Election of Officers and Committee Members

There were 3 vacancies for ordinary Committee members. The vacancies arose from:

- the resignation by rotation of Sarah Saward.
- The resignation by rotation of Sylvia Reed.
- The resignation to stand as Chair by Linda Newsom-Ray.

Robert Eastwood was standing down as Chair.

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

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

A presentation was made to Robert to thank him for his service as chairman.

8. Musical Director's report and programme for 2018/19

The season started with a performance of Handel's Jephtha which was a first for everyone: choir, soloists, orchestra and conductor! Thrown into the tragedy of the consequences of Jephtha's rash, unsolicited vow, we were all immersed in a drama wonderfully brought to life by our soloists Anthony Hawgood as the misguided warrior, Shona Knight as his unfortunate but serenely resigned daughter, the countertenor Hamish McLaren as her lover, Jane Money as her distraught mother and the baritone Matthew Sprange playing Jephtha's loyal warrior half-brother. It was an operatic experience for us all with the chorus fulfilling a wide range of roles.

In December the Brighton Orpheus and the Orpheus Young Singers again led the Argus City Charity Christmas Concert in aid of the Martlets. As well as leading the audience carols we performed five of our own.

In the spring we performed Mozart's Requiem, his motet Ave Verum Corpus and Schubert's Magnificat. The alternating fiery turmoil and peaceful tranquillity of Haydn's *Insanae et Vanae Curae* opened the programme. With a fine quartet of soloists from the Royal Academy of Music this was a beautiful concert from a strong choir, full of depth and dynamic contrast. We were again accompanied by the sensitive playing of the Musicians of All Saints, though a highlight of the programme was to be the pianissimo unaccompanied Schubert Sanctus.

Sing for Joy! was the title of our summer concert which was performed jointly with OYS. It's a compliment to the choir that we sang more unaccompanied pieces than ever before: from the complexity of Palestrina, the wonderful harmonies of Bruckner and the magical Bluebird to some lively spirituals and Bernstein, discovering along the way some of the vocal music of Max Bruch and Samuel Barber's unforgettable arrangement of his Adagio for strings. Seven varied songs were performed by OYS who also joined with us in the music of West Side story.

Our new season 2018-19 opens with Bach's joyful Christmas Oratorio on Saturday, December 1st. Then on Thursday, Dec 6th we perform in and lead the City Charity Christmas Carol Concert and Carol singing on Brighton station will be on Wednesday 12th. Our spring concert on March 30th will be Elgar's masterpiece the Dream of Gerontius. Our summer concert will be on June 29th and we hope to hold a choir outing with concert on July 6th from 11-4 in the lovely setting of Alfriston.

Stella thanked the officers, the committee, the marketing committee physical helpers and fund raisers. She also thanked the accompanist. Thanks were also given to those generous individual members who have enabled OYS to survive and find its feet this year, together with Caroline and Linda who were instrumental in obtaining outside sources of funding into this coming season (Brighton & Hove City Council and the Chalk Cliff trust).

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 Richard Jayawant that Reg Squire act as examiner for 2018/19.

10. Any other business

10.1 Concerts with other choirs

Annette Bell asked whether the committee would consider running concerts jointly with other choirs. Jeremy Shaw noted that this happens with other choirs. Burgess Hill and ESBC are combining for a concert. They might be interested.

10.2 Use of the Attenborough Centre

Annette Bell asked whether the committee would consider using the Attenborough centre. It was noted that the acoustics of the building following the refurbishment are very damped.

10.3 George Bowles

It was noted with regret that George Bowles (who was Chair of the choir for many years) had passed away during the last year.

10.4 Publicity

Sarah Saward will be trying to co-ordinate the distribution of publicity, based on where choir members reside. Details to follow later.

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 / 25-Sep-2019 / Rev C