



Reading Male Voice Choir



Minutes of an annual general meeting held on 6 July 2018 at Hawkedon School, Lower Earley, Reading.

Present: Steve Richardson (SR), chairman; John Painter (JP), secretary; John Kay (JK), treasurer; Clive Waterman (CW), musical director; and 51 members who are listed in Appendix A.

1. Welcome: The President, Gwyn Arch was not able to attend the meeting but had sent a message of welcome which was read out by SR. GA first apologised for his absence. He then went on to say how much he had enjoyed playing a little jazz at our last concert, that the choir had clearly had a very good season and that he was very pleased to see it going from strength to strength.

In accordance with the constitution SR then chaired the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Gwyn Arch (GA), Seb Boston, Jim Docherty, John Adams, Ron Curtis, John Gutteridge, Mike Heather, Colin Hinks, Martin Butler, Artur Stankiewicz and Alex Turner (AT).

3. Minutes of the annual general meeting held on 7 July 2017 were approved as a correct record.

4. Chairman's report on the management of the choir: SR noted that this has been yet another busy and successful year, tinged with some excitement but also with some sadness. The year started well with the recruitment of a talented deputy musical director, Alex Turner, who is working well with both CW and the choir. He then thanked those who arrange our concerts and preview each venue, and the teams who load, unload and deliver our equipment for each event. Moving on to the very successful Italian trip, he thanked the planning team and - to great applause - Andrew Evans, for his pivotal role; those who had gone enjoyed beautiful surroundings, wonderful weather, and great hospitality from our hosts. SR then went on to say that as a mature choir we have to expect our share of illness and infirmity but that the first four months of the year had sadly seen us singing at the funerals of four members. He then moved on to the contributions made by so many in the choir; SR wanted to thank in particular our musical directors, committee members and choir officers, Ryland Lee for entertaining our audiences, our vital tea and coffee makers, our rafflers and our supporters for their help and encouragement. Finally SR was pleased to note that we have revised our constitution, written and updated our handbooks and prepared a number of policies. He ended by wishing the choir trustees every success in the future.

5. Musical Directors' reports on artistic and musical matters. CW began with a message from Alex Turner who was not able to attend. Alex extended his thanks for the warm welcome he had received from RMVC; it had been a wonderful year from his point of view and he hoped the choir had enjoyed it as much as he had. He was grateful to CW for his leadership, delighted to be able to work with a large group of musicians, and believed we had made large steps forward together. He was looking

forward to progressing with new things in September. Commenting on his first tour with the choir he ended by saying that the memory of conducting 'I'm Goin' Up Yonder' in the church in Italy will stay with him for a very long time.

Moving on to his own report CW began by saying how sad he was that our president Gwyn Arch could not be present and on behalf of the choir extended very best wishes to him and to Jane. CW then said that he would not go into the year's events in detail as he preferred to do this after each individual event when it was most likely to be useful. Instead he chose to focus on a number of key matters. Alex Turner was top of his list in this regard; he has quickly integrated into the life of the choir and his skills and abilities are now fully recognised and appreciated by all, and CW wished to thank him for all that he had done to support and develop the choir during the past season. He went on to say that our season had also been tinged with sadness for the loss of a number of long-standing and much valued members and that the choir had attended a number of emotional funerals. Some of these past members had made generous contributions to the choir which was most kind. Happily we have been very pleased to welcome new members into the choir who through their dedication have rapidly progressed to full concert performance.

CW felt that the choir had become more confident, more focused and more sensitive during the past season, and that this had been evidenced by the consistent quality of our concert performances. So far as repertoire development was concerned, he reported that after some tricky moments a thoughtful and measured process was now in place and that he would be sending out a comprehensive list very shortly. He also looked forward to recording some of the new music the choir has learned recently, and expected the best songs to contribute to the much delayed new choir CD.

Continuing, CW said that he felt a great strength of the choir was that the variety of members' backgrounds provided skills which made us collectively very strong, with each and every member playing their part - this in turn had engendered a tremendous team spirit and support for one another.

Reflecting on overseas trips generally, CW felt that one of their great strengths was that they provided more time to get to know folk away from the total concentration of Friday night rehearsals. However, whilst trips provided special occasions for particular musical focus these are not always planned, and he highlighted our singing of The Rose in the little marble chapel within a beautiful Italian garden in Bellagio which moved some to tears (of the right kind!) – a memory we will all hold dear. Our concert in the beautiful Italian church was a real pinnacle of musical achievement for us, and the Schubert Sanctus which we sang with such heart, soul and reverence at Mass on the Sunday morning was his highlight of the trip and made him feel very proud of both the singers that were there and those we had left behind. For these reasons and more he was looking forward to our Polish trip next year.

Finally CW wanted to thank all those who provide help and support to the choir. He highlighted Hawkedon school for their support and hospitality, and also for the participation of their school choir in a joint concert with RMVC. He then went on to thank the hardworking choir committee and in particular the section leaders. Thanks were also due to many other members of the choir for the wide range of help and support they provide throughout the year, but rather than try to read out a long list he preferred to thank each individual at a personal level as and when it was appropriate. He especially wished to thank our loyal group of ladies for providing their support and encouragement. In conclusion CW thanked the choir for a truly memorable season, said that we had another fulfilling programme mapped out for the coming year, and wished everyone an enjoyable summer break.

6. Secretary's report: JP began his report by informing members that during the past year we had sung in nine concerts in the UK and raised just over £9,000, and that Andrew Evans (Assistant Secretary) and he had managed to line up some new and interesting support acts including a soprano, a viola duet and a bass bassoon. We also sang at a number of informal events in support of a variety of UK charities, and during our trip to Italy we sang on four other occasions including one on the banks of Lake Como itself.

Moving on to next year's programme which he had already circulated, JP pointed out that it included a number of new venues and also a visit by the Abertillery Orpheans MVC for a joint concert. In addition we have accepted an invitation from the Harfa MVC to visit Warsaw next June. He then touched briefly on the 2019/20 programme, for which a number of bookings have already been taken, and advised members that an invitation to Coro Delphum for them to visit the UK had already been made. JP then thanked the equipment and transport team, the supporters group for supporting us at the Trinity concert where we were raising money for ourselves, John Adams and Chris Bintcliffe for arranging choir walks and Andrew Evans and photographer Mary Mantel for the choir's wonderful website. On the social side David Ewens had organised a most enjoyable Christmas dinner last year and members have recently returned from a very successful theatre trip which he had also arranged. Looking forward to a new CD and CD display, JP commended the CD sales team and the positive effect they have on the choir's balance sheet. Finally, answering a question from David Lloyd asking if the choir was considering entering any choir competitions, CW responded by saying that he was quite keen on the idea and would investigate further before discussing it with the new committee.

7. Treasurer's report: JK had sent out two documents to members in advance of the meeting. Firstly 'The Consolidated Report and Accounts' for the year ending 31 May 2018, and secondly 'The Treasurer's Report', which deals with the budget for the year ending 31 May 2019.

a) Consolidated Annual Report and Accounts 2017/18: JK explained that this was a consolidation of three separate documents: the Trustees' Annual Report, the Receipts and Payments Account, and a copy of the signed Independent Examiner's Report. These are the documents which will be submitted to the Charities Commission following the AGM. JK went on to highlight two particular elements of the Trustees' Annual Report: firstly that it detailed the trustees who served during the year and secondly that it listed the 10 concerts the choir delivered during the past financial year. Moving on to the Receipts and Payments Account, JK advised that as a deficit budget of £928 had been approved, the outcome shown looked spectacular at £30,637 in credit, however once the delayed payments for Dervio had been taken into account, net income was just £2041, though this was still almost £3,300 better than budget. He went on to explain that this improvement was largely due to sponsorships, donations made by the families of Derek Richings and Gavin Roynon and better than expected income generated by the Harfa Choir visit. Moving on to the effect on the choir's budget of the Dervio tour, JK advised that due largely to the tour budget being set before firm estimates had been received from BA and Italy, and also to the negative effect of the exchange rate during the booking process, the trip had to be subsidised by £2,600. This will show up in the 2018/19 accounts. The treasurer then moved that the Consolidated Report and Accounts for 2017/18 be adopted. **Approved.**

b) Budget for the year to 31 May 2019: JK began by saying that he was not accounting for any major capital expenditure during the year. He then highlighted four items that would have a particular impact during the year: firstly the earlier mentioned final payment for the Dervio tour, secondly an

assumption that the Warsaw tour will be self funding, thirdly that we are expecting to receive an income from only five concerts this year – less than we would normally expect - and fourthly that a net cost of £500 had been included for the production and subsequent sale of a new choir CD.

c) Honoraria: JK advised that the trustees' recommendation is that the honorarium for the musical director should be £3,943 and for the deputy musical director should be £3,373 - an increase of 3.0%. He then sought the approval of members for this recommendation. **Approved.**

d) Subscriptions: JK pointed out that choir membership had fallen from 74 to 65 during the year, though it is hoped through recruitment to increase this number early in the year. Ryland Lee asked for clarification of the subscription rates payable by late joiners and other part-time attendees; SR advised that a paper on the subject had been prepared and that a decision would be made at the first committee meeting of next year.

JK then proposed that the 2018/19 subscription rate should increase from £111 to £115 and that the concessionary subscription rate should increase from £75 to £80. **Approved.**

e) Financial Projections: Looking ahead, JK advised that whilst we will meet our Reserve Target of say £10,600 at the end of next year, this can only be sustained if our income covers our expenses, and this will not be the case with our current model. This would lead to our having to draw on our reserves. The choir committee is considering what steps are needed to redress the balance.

f) Motion to adopt the treasurer's report: JK then moved that members adopt his report and the budget as recommended. **Approved.**

8. Appointment of independent examiner of accounts (Rule 7d): JK was pleased to confirm that Alan Harland had kindly agreed to act as independent examiner of the RMVC accounts for the year 2018/19 and moved that he be so appointed. **Approved.**

9. Section Leaders' and Choir Officers' reports:

Section Leaders

a) Baritones: Allan Crisp started by thanking the large number of members in his section who performed many of the vital roles essential to the effective running of the choir. He then told us that the section started the season with 20 members and ended with 19, and that he was very pleased to have been able to welcome two new members, John Gutteridge and Andrew Mickleborough, to the baritone ranks. On attendance, members achieved 83% at rehearsals and 84% at concerts with two members, Dennis Bryant and Ryland Lee, singing in every concert. AC's own highlights of the season were the trip to Italy, and the work and leadership of CW and AT, with AT's input improving both our offering and presentation, to say nothing of his excellent accompaniment.

b) Top tenors: Dave Allen thanked CW and AT for their support in what had, in spite of the sad loss for a variety of reasons of four long-standing members, been a really good year. To help counter this loss however he was pleased to welcome a very able new member in Martin Butler. On attendance he calculated that on average, of the 16 first tenors now in the section, 13.5 members had attended each rehearsal - with one member, Frank Neale, attending all 39 rehearsals - and 12.7 members had sung at each concert. DA particularly wanted to commend Pat Connell who had been ill for much of the year but struggled back, possibly earlier than he should have done, to attend rehearsals. Finally he thanked all members of the section for their support throughout the year.

c) Second tenors: DE began with an update on three members who are not at present very well. Due to their absence the section had only had 15 of its 18 members available to sing for most of the year. In September we were very pleased to welcome a talented new member in John Oversby, recently of the Reading University Choir. We were also very fortunate to benefit from the transfer of two

very able members from the baritone section in Ron Curtis and Paul Smallman. Our best attendance at a concert was 15 but on four occasions we only managed nine and DE was hoping for an improvement on this in the forthcoming season. Particular section developments during the year were the introduction of a weekly update email, and also of six-weekly section lunches which had the additional benefit of enabling some of our less well members to join us. DE then thanked CW, AT and all members of the committee, but in particular SR for ensuring that our choir documentation was fully compliant, and JP for managing what is an extremely heavy workload. DE then finished with a heartfelt and amusing poem.

d) Basses: AB reported that the section finished the season with 20 members. He was very pleased to welcome two excellent new members during the season, Mike Newman and Jim Docherty, but sadly also lost two very long term members. Together with three members having to take long term leave the section was at times down to just 15 and was severely stretched on occasions, with a maximum 80% and a minimum of 60% able to appear at concerts. In spite of this, however, the section seemed to grow in confidence and was able to provide the choir with the good firm foundation it needs. AB repeated the importance of team work, pointing out that three-quarters of the section carried out roles which helped to ensure the smooth running of the choir, for which he thanked them. AB then thanked the musical directors and committee members for all their hard work in making this yet another successful season and also Gwyn Arch without whom none of this would have been possible.

Choir Officers

a) Health and Safety Officer: AB advised the meeting that the choir's staging was checked for safety at the beginning of the season reminding members they should in any case report anything they felt was not up to standard. The electrical equipment had also been checked and found to be satisfactory. He then reported there had been one accident and one dangerous occurrence during the year and advised members to refresh their memory by reading the choir's safety guidelines which are available on the website.

b) Equipment Moves Co-ordinator: Martin Deaves wanted to thank the 25 members who had helped with the staging over the last 12 months, with a special thank you to Jim Grufferty who keeps the container in order and helps him to gather all the right equipment. Thanks also to his Sunday morning crew of Paul Smallman, Neville Waites and Peter Woodward for turning out after almost every concert.

c) Transport Coordinator: Kevin Boyle organises the van drivers rota and wanted to thank all of the drivers. Once set up the rota operates very simply with everybody pulling their weight.

d) Teas & Coffees: Derek Reigate wanted to thank Chris Bintcliffe for his support throughout the season.

10. Presentations for long service:

20 Years - Robin John

10 Years - John Carr; Keith Knee-Robinson; Peter Woodward

11. Other motions from sections and members:

None were presented.

12. Election of Committee members and Officers:

Having been proposed and seconded, the following were elected unanimously and unopposed.

Choir officers:

Concert Coordinator	Nigel Shaw
Assistant Secretary	Andrew Evans
Librarian	John Clarke
Social Secretary	<i>No candidate</i>
Equipment Moves Coordinator	Martin Deaves
Transport Coordinator	Kevin Boyle
Health and Safety Officer	Alan Broodbank
Minutes Secretary	Peter Blake
Publicity Officers	Andrew Evans and Steve Richardson
Wardrobe Master	Robin John
Web Master	Jim Grufferty

Committee members/trustees

Chairman	John Painter
Deputy chairman	Geoff Gale
Secretary	Martin Butler
Treasurer	John Kay
<i>Section leaders</i>	
Top tenors	Dave Allen
Second tenors	Paul Smallman
Baritones	Allan Crisp
Basses	Alan Broodbank

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting. The next annual general meeting will be held on 5 July 2019 .

Appendix A:**Members attending 2018 AGM.**

Tenor 1	Tenor 2	Baritones	Basses
David Lloyd	Roy Mantel	Allan Crisp	Paul Buckle
Dave Allen	Paul Smallman	Derek Reigate	Derek Fowler
Pat Connell	John Oversby	Paul Lyden	Mike Newman
Paul Champion	David Ewens	Geoff Gale	David Adby
David Paine	Jim Grufferty	Dennis Bryant	Dave Pomeroy
Kevin Boyle	Geoffrey Million	John Clarke	Jeremy Jones
Andy Searle	Nigel Shaw	Martin Deaves	David Brownhill
Ken Lunnon	Ray Little	Neville Waites	Tony Rawlinson
Tony Dunne	Arnold Howell	Andrew Evans	Tony Batchelor
Peter Woodward	Rex Fenn	Ryland Lee	Alan Broodbank
Keith Knee-Robinson	Peter Blake	Paul Moir	Geoff Crabb
Frank Neale		Bryan Verran	Chris Bintcliffe
		George French	
		Stephen Dale	
		Andrew Mickleburgh	
		Robin John	