



Reading Male Voice Choir.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Friday 8th July 2022 at 7.30pm.

Present.

Ryland Lee, Andy Sherwood, Steve Richardson, Paul Smallman, Bob Hill, Geoffrey Million, Dennis Bryant, Bryan Verran, Derek Reigate, Neville Waites, Oswaldo Ravelo, Christopher Peck, John Oversby, Jim Grufferty, Alan Broodbank, Steve Andrews, Jeremy Jones, Richard Bolton, Chris Bintcliffe, Chris Carr, Stephen Dale, Kevin Boyle, Tony Rawlins, David Lloyd, Frank Neale, John Adams, Colin Hinks, David Paine, Tony Dunne, Ken Lunnon, Dave Allen, David Ewens, John Carr, Peter Woodward, Paul Lyden, Pat Connell, George French, John Kay, Clive Waterman, Alan Crisp, Hayley Tull.

Apologies for absence.

Ray Mantel, Jon Saverton, Paul Buckle, Paul Moir, David Pomeroy, Artur Stankiewicz, Dennis Bredelet, Seb Boston, Robin John, Nigel Shaw, Mike Jearey, Clive Wiley, Paul Champion, Martin Butler, David Brownhill. Ray Little, Ray Holloway.

Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Chairman's report. (Extract from written report)

I start this report with a profound appreciation for my predecessor, John Painter, and his committee. He did a remarkable job in keeping the choir together through sixteen months of lockdown and restrictions and this is reflected in the fact that our membership has been maintained and retained - unlike many other choirs nationally.

To coin a phrase, this has certainly been a year of 'two halves'. This was to be a significant and important year for RMVC - a celebration of our 50th anniversary (already postponed from last year). On taking over as Chairman in July 2020, I was unsure whether we would have to continue meeting remotely or whether there would be an opportunity to get together for face-to-face rehearsals. The first committee meeting in August focussed solely on developing a set of Covid protocols to ensure a safe, managed return to rehearsals and particular thanks goes to Chris Peck (H&S officer) for producing a detailed and professional set of guidelines. It was with a great sense of expectation, tempered with a degree of trepidation that rehearsals commenced on 3rd September with a good initial turn-out of choristers. It really was a moment we had been waiting for with keen anticipation - we were back! Well not quite, within two sessions we had a significant Covid outbreak within the choir, so we had to suspend rehearsals

for two weeks. So back to the protocols and guidelines for further amendments. Rehearsals resumed and without any further significant outbreaks of Covid we could look forward to performing in concerts. Our first opportunity was a publicity event in Broad Street Mall which was a success. We had three more concerts before the end of the year, including the Three Choirs Christmas concert in December. Unfortunately, this turned out to be something of a 'false dawn' as one by one these events were cancelled. We reached the end of 2021 having not performed in concert.

So, to the new year and on paper a full concert programme. At last, our first concert at Trinity Church, Earley in support of Parkinsons UK. What a great night, we put on an excellent display of singing to a very appreciative audience - it was as if we had never been away. We then had an unexpected opportunity to perform at two concerts in fairly quick succession, one at Christchurch, Woodley and another at St Edmund Campion, Wokingham in support of the British Cross Ukrainian Aid Appeal. Both concerts reflected very well on the choir both in terms of performance and money raised - in excess of £5,500. Thank you all very much for your support and commitment in delivering these concerts. We were now 'on a roll' and looking forward to our concert at Cauldwell Hall - but no, thwarted once again by Covid.

April had to be better and so it was. A much anticipated concert to celebrate the music and life of Gwyn. What an evening, six choirs in full voice, singing of the highest quality and high emotion - Gwyn would have loved it. This was followed by a new venture for the choir when we were invited to perform in the AB Walkers Service of Remembrance and our presence was much appreciated by both organisers and audience. To bring April to an end, we were off on a tour of Cornwall as part of the Cornwall Festival of Male Voice Choirs. It was a hectic five days with four performances and a bonus performance at a charity lunch at our hotel. The tour provided a great opportunity to sing with and meet other choirs. It also enabled the tour party to enjoy one another's company.

May saw us performing at Christchurch Henley-on-Thames and then in June, another first for the choir - an invitation from Reading Council to sing at the lighting of the Jubilee Beacon. Now to July and the culmination of our 50th anniversary year - our Gala concert on the 2nd July. Planning for this is well underway. This event promises to be an excellent showcase of the quality, talent, and professionalism of RMVC and ably supported by Lori Tingay-Weber, the Abbey School and Mayor & James. This will be followed by our anniversary dinner in September. Our successes and achievements this year have been due to the leadership and direction provided by Clive and Hayley; the hard work and dedication of the committee and the hard work and commitment of you the choristers - **so thank you all very much.**

Preview of 2022-23

We have a great deal to look forward to in the new year. There is a full concert programme (Another sterling effort by our Secretary Martin) and an opportunity to perform some new additions to our repertoire.

There is also the launch of an exciting new initiative, the Gwyn Arch Young Singers' Competition. This has been set up as a celebration of Gwyn's support for and interest in promoting young singers, the intention being to provide an on-going legacy to ensure the continuation of his work. Planning is well underway, with the initiative being launched at the Anniversary Concert. Entries will be accepted from September to November; auditions will be held in March 2023 and the 'All Winners' concert in June.

Although we have maintained our membership over the past 16 months, continued recruitment is essential to ensure the quality and future of the choir. To date, we have recruited 4 new members, mainly through their experience of hearing the choir perform - we really are the best ambassadors for recruiting. To further promote recruitment, the intention is to be pro-active with 'open evenings' and 'bring a friend' events through the year and also supported through our website and social media.

Finally, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to the Trustees and Committee. They are responsible for ensuring that the choir continues to thrive and has a viable future. We also need to remember our objectives to; entertain; raise funds for charity and other worthwhile causes whilst enjoying ourselves.

Have a good, restful summer break.

Musical Director's report.

Well, from a slow start at the beginning of this calendar year, events have come thick and fast! It all began with our first full concert at Trinity Church in late February, closely followed by one at Christchurch, Woodley, and a further concert at St Edmund Campion in support of the Ukrainian Aid Appeal. I am proud to be able to say that these last two concerts raised a sum in excess of £5,500 – a great result!

The very special Gwyn Arch Celebration Concert was the next major event in which we participated. This was indeed a concert to remember, and it was a privilege and a pleasure to be one of the five Choirs who participated. Over 320 singers took part together with Gwyn's family and friends – all very talented people.

Then, for the first time, we performed at the Walkers Memorial Service in Reading Minster. This was a quite different occasion where we were able to contribute specifically at the point when the congregation lit candles for those who had been loved and lost.

Then came our Cornwall trip with the Choir performing on four occasions. Having the opportunity to be able to listen to other choirs is a very valuable experience and can teach us all a good deal. The first of these was one of the most demanding events I have been involved with. The situation was difficult, the Church packed with Choristers, all heavily involved with their own preparations, the problem of seating everyone in a position where they could perform at least properly, not to mention the sorting out of keyboards – there were four in all! To add further interest to this situation I had to conduct the Choir, who were seated in the balcony on the far side of the church, from our own keyboard, positioned some distance away! Well, we got away with that, thanks to the concentration and support of all involved. We also had the pleasure of hearing some great Male Voice Singing, which was a particular feature of this trip.

The second was alfresco in a beautiful garden, and the third in the rain on Newquay's seafront. Although on the face of it, this was not the best of situations in which to perform a concert, it turned out to be a most enjoyable occasion! Everyone was relaxed, we were in the dry (mostly) and the small audience which had gathered seemed to enjoy our singing while sheltering under umbrellas – they smiled and clapped, and we loved doing it!

There was one additional sing, a short one in the Hotel to raise further funds to the Ukrainian Appeal – which we were all very happy to do.

The last concert was similar to the first but had none of the tensions that we had experienced there. Several first-class Male Voice Choirs sang at this event. We performed last and gave a very good account of ourselves. To be able to stand in amongst so many wonderful singers was a great privilege, and RMVC's contribution was very well received. This concert also gave us the opportunity to hear other Male Voice Choirs performing very different music, and also some pieces that we have sung ourselves in the past. Always interesting to hear how choirs interpret the same material!

Only a short time later we were performing in Christchurch Henley where our Soprano soloist was beautifully accompanied by our own Hayley Tull. Then came our performance at the lighting of Reading's Beacon in celebration of the Queens Jubilee where we had to perform the special song composed for the occasion – learnt by heart in only three weeks!

The very next morning we were performing once again, this time for the public in Broad Street Mall. Yet another very different experience!

So now we focus on the final preparations for our 50th Anniversary Concert in Reading Town Hall. Here we are joined by Simon Mayor & Hilary James, together with Lori Tingay-Weber and also the Abbey School Junior Choir. I am hopeful that this event will be yet another very special occasion. By the time this report becomes part of our AGM this concert will have taken place. It is then that I can pass comment on this landmark event!

So, to sum up, we have gone from a very slow start to the year to the most involved, most condensed, and most demanding past few months that I can remember. Events have come thick and fast. I am very conscious of the demands that this has made on the Choir who have responded so positively and so well to each and every occasion. The dedication and commitment have been there for all to see, and I commend each and every member for their efforts. These past few months have tested us all, but the Choir has more than met each of the challenges we have been set. It has also allowed us to really focus on a core of our repertoire to the point where this music is really well known and can be performed to a really good standard when and wherever needed. We end this quite remarkable season on a high, looking back on such a variety of occasions undertaken with pride and satisfaction. We now look forward to our summer break, and then to the next challenging season where new and different music can be learned and added to the current repertoire.

Reading Male Voice Choir is a great team of people. We are blessed with a hard-working and constructive committee who do so much for all of us behind the scenes. My particular thanks go to them, and to the Section Leaders for all their support and guidance over so much that we as a choir just absorb or take for granted. It is at this point where 'thanks' becomes a feature, and it is so easy for me to trip up and to miss the name of a really key player within our choir. In a bid to avoid such a situation I am not going to mention any names – there are so many on my list that I am certain to make a significant error. I do try to acknowledge my thanks on an individual and personal level as and when appropriate, so, here is a general and heartfelt 'thank you' to all who have contributed so much and in so many ways throughout the year. It is this team spirit and team commitment that makes us the effective organisation that I firmly believe us to be.

Having said all that, I am still going to mention four people who I just cannot pass over. Firstly Ryland, who has guided us through the most complex of times, battered from all sides by demands that I bet even he hadn't thought of when he said 'yes' to being Chairman. To John Kay – the voice of sense and reason, particularly when it comes to money. To Martin, who appears to know every key person on the planet and has set us up with so many memorable events. I only wish I had even half of his ability to remember detail – times, places, names and so on. And of course – Hayley Tull, without whom I would find it difficult to function. This season has helped me to realise what a fine accompanist she is, what a fine flute player she is, and what a great asset she is to our Choir.

It is this friendly, dedicated, and willing attitude of all our members that produces the team spirit that brings about progress and success, and I offer my thanks and appreciation to you all! You make a small conductor very happy!

What an occasion this 50th Anniversary concert eventually turned out to be. In the end we managed to include all the important elements in what I felt was a balanced and well distributed way. Considerable thought and effort had been given by all concerned to ensure the success of this venture and to cater caringly for all taking part. The logistics of this concert were well thought out in order for it to flow easily and get the maximum interaction between those contributing. My thanks to all who strove successfully to achieve that!

Timing is always important, and every attempt was made to keep things on track. Sadly, not everything remains in one's control. I usually recommend that any concert involving children should start at 7pm, this one somehow escaped - starting at the usual time of 7:30. A small thing, but small things tend to add up to larger ones. Could the interval have been shorter? Should our guests have performed less than they did? I personally thought that the balance between all the contributors was pretty good, and there was little that I would have changed. It was sad that the event went on so late, especially for the children and their parents. There was more potential to be had. This said I have not had any adverse comments or feedback on this issue.

This aside, the evening was filled with great things. I thought that your first group of songs was sung to the highest standard I have heard you sing. The concentration and commitment to each song was excellent. The opening did work well in the end, and I am pleased that you responded so well while I sorted this out on stage. I have to say you were all very positive and professional in your attitude and presence when on stage, and indeed when getting on and off it!

The Abbey School Choir were as charming and classy as I imagined they would be. They were a very good capture, and I am glad that we are building a positive relationship with the school. Their commitment and interest to things both so far, and in the future, is very positive.

African Trilogy will stick with me for some time to come. The stumble in the middle was a shame, but most folk I have talked to since, didn't even notice. I have no idea what brought that about – could have been me, could have been you – to this day I have no idea and will wait to hear the recording with interest. The DVD of Allan struggling with the drum and its failed harness will also be interesting to view!

My special thanks to all our soloists and musicians, all of whom did us proud.

The second group of songs just prior to the interval suffered just a little from the choir getting excited and pushing the pace. No damage was done, and the pieces were performed well and with great enthusiasm. The audience loved them! Shenandoah was particularly good, and beautifully sung!

The interval could have been shorter I think, and the trial of a long concert therefore reduced. Hindsight is a wonderful thing!

The set of songs after the interval were all really well sung too. Danny Boy was performed with great feeling, the heart and soul were there in abundance, and Hayley's solo just added that extra-special dimension.

It was great to have Lori back singing with us, and her own songs brought back many memories of the concerts we shared over the years. My thanks to Hayley for sharing the accompanying for Lori. It helped to take the pressure off me, and she has the ability to play all the right notes, in the right order!

Simon and Hilary are always great on stage – they are so talented and have such stage presence. It was a shame that time was a pressure at this point and that we were not able to attempt all that we had planned with the children. This said their contribution to our evening was a great one. I now look forward to hearing more from them at our 50th Anniversary Dinner in September.

Our two joint items were a great end to an evening that I feel did justice to this being our 50th Anniversary Concert – one that will leave us with many fond memories and the sense of a ‘job well done’! It was a great evening, and I came away from it feeling exhausted, but very proud of you all.

With his usual panache, Ryland launched our new Young Singers project in memory of Gwyn. Much has already been achieved with this in a short space of time, and our new liaison with the Abbey School will, I believe do much to support the success of this venture as time passes. I look forward to taking this project’s progress further during the coming season.

One particularly interesting thing has come out of this concert experience! For the last couple of months, I have been concerned about the sound that I am getting from our keyboard equipment. The sound I hear seems to have lost its clarity and much of its treble sounds (unless this is due to my age and general decay). I have played with the settings on the keyboard many times, thinking that it was how I was setting it up, or that something had changed within the speaker that we use with it. It feels as if the sound it produces is being ‘clouded’ and has lost its cutting edge. I have discussed this with Hayley on several occasions this past few weeks, and I began to wonder if it was just me! The pace of rehearsals has been such that we have just continued with things, while I have continued to wonder about it.

I approached our Anniversary Concert still with this in mind but knowing that the sound guys would link me to their in-house system I waited to see what transpired. Well, as soon as they did link it up things were back to normal – that crystal clear sound and quality had returned, allowing us to really enjoy the sound it made and the quality of its touch.

After the concert, having packed everything away, I found Stephen Dale standing on the pavement by the van. I asked him how he was getting home as it was rather late! He told me that he was just about to get a taxi. I couldn’t just leave him there and offered him a lift home which he was happy to accept. As we made our way to Caversham, Stephen brought up the subject of the keyboard and how good it had sounded in the Town Hall, and how it had sounded a little odd these past few weeks – muffled and difficult to hear clearly. I have now been in contact with our tech guy Steve Richardson who has given it some thought. We could just change the speaker to see what affect that has, but it still begs the question of whether there is something wrong with the one we normally use. We have some time now to explore this before September – which we will do!

We have come through this extraordinary season in a very positive way. We have achieved a great deal despite the trials and tribulations thrust upon us.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment throughout. This linked with that high level of care and consideration for each and everyone in the choir, or associated with it, is the mark of a great team, enabling us to do what we do, to the best of our ability, and I congratulate you all.

After some rest and recuperation we will set about the coming season and its new challenges (once we have had the dinner!) and I look forward to extending our repertoire and making music together once more! Thank you for taking the time to send in your thoughts and ideas on future repertoire – always welcome.

I am sure you will agree with me that we all deserve the break that appears ahead of us. Time now to undertake some planning and preparation for the season ahead. We already have a programme set out for the coming year – courtesy of our industrious secretary Martin (who we value greatly), and I will now review all the suggestions you have all kindly sent me, and link these to a few of my own in order to start developing the repertoire for the months ahead. My particular thanks also to Ryland and indeed your Committee for steering us through this past somewhat dramatic season.

Lastly, my sincere thanks to you all in whatever role you play in supporting the Choir. You all matter, and in the immortal words of some politician (can't remember who,)

Together we can – (and I can add) – and we do!

Secretary's report.

Since the end of covid restrictions we have had successful concerts in Lower Earley, Woodley, Maidenhead, Henley on Thames, and trip to Cornwall. Also, part of Gwyn's celebration in Reading. Add to this the events around the Jubilee in Abbey Ruins and Broad Street Mall all leading up to the final concert – our 50th Gala concert on 2nd July. This has definitely been an extremely busy 5 months which after the disappointments of the previous 2 years to Covid, a challenge which all the choir have taken on board.

As reported in the annual report financially this has proved very good for the Charity's we have supported and 2 concerts supporting Ukraine, which as free concerts were well attended and financially raised a lot for Ukraine. Cornwall Festival was a great success, and everyone that attended both choir members and partners found the trip and enjoyable time with about the right balance of performance and free time. The hotel also seemed popular and accommodating to us all as was the coach company as always.

Covid has played a large part of our time in recent months. This has seen some members affected with Covid and in total 50% of our choir have at some point had covid (34).

Choir members have remaining fairly static in the last 2 years despite covid and people moving away, with a very few number of members not returned. There are currently 65 members (17 Top Tenor, 16 Second Tenor, 15 Baritones, 17 Basses), 3 of which are new members for this season, 2 top tenor and 1 second tenor, plus Clive and Hayley.

Weekly updates and where possible mid-week update have continued throughout to ensure everyone is kept informed at all times.

I am currently in contact with some of Male voice choirs interested in performing with us and also looking for possibility of an overseas trip for 2024.

We will start next season off with a belated celebration of your 50th anniversary dinner. Saturday 3rd September 2022 7.30pm - 50th anniversary Choir Meal, Sindlesham Court

Dates for next season.

Start of Autumn Term Friday 1st September 2022

End of Autumn Term Friday 16th December 2022

Start of Spring Term Friday 6th January 2023
End of Spring Term Friday 31st March 2023

Start of Summer Term Friday 14th April 2023
End of Summer Term Friday 30th June 2023 (AGM)

Plans are in place for the following concerts for next season 2022- 2023

Tuesday 8th November 2022 @ 2pm (informal event)
Oddfellows, Oxford Rd Reading

Saturday 12th November 2022 @7.30pm (Rebooked from this season)
Greyfriars Church (for RMVC)

Sunday 11th December AM (informal event) To Be Confirmed
Reading's Santa Run @ Reading University

Saturday 17th December 2022 @5pm
Three Choir's concert
Christmas at Reading Minster (for sanctuary)

January 2023 / February 2023 To Be Confirmed

(Rebooked from this season)
St Edmund Campion Church, Maidenhead (for church funds)
Saturday 25th March 2023 @ 7.30pm (rebooked from this season)
St Mary's Church Purley on Thames (for church funds)

April 22nd 2023 7.30pm
All Saints Church, Downshire Square, Reading

Saturday 20th May 2023 7.30pm (rebooked from this season)
Christchurch, Christchurch Rd Reading (for church funds)

Saturday 10th or 17th June 2023 7.30pm (Gala Concert for young singers)
Abbey School.

Treasurer's report.

Here is a summary of the Choir's finances. The full Annual Report and Accounts is also being circulated by email and can be downloaded from www.rmvc.net.

Balance at the end of:	May 21	31 May 22	May 23
	Actual	Actual	Projected
Account:	£	£	£
Assets	18	18	18
Debtors	-	-	-
Metro Bank Current Account	25,878	27,070	25,675
NatWest current account	0	0	0
NatWest Reserve	229	0	0
Metro Bank Reserve	0	229	229
Cash and cheques	10	-	-
Creditors	-	-	-
TOTAL	£26,135	£27,317	£25,922
RESERVES (net current assets)	£26,117	£27,299	£25,904
DISCRETIONARY Funds	£11,227	£15,388	£13,041

Notes:

Discretionary Funds are net current assets less reserves (our target increased to £10,000 from 2017))

Core income are subscriptions, tuition fees, tax refunds, weekly raffle

Core support costs are MDs' honoraria, hire of rehearsal hall, music

Core management/administration includes Trustees' expenses, insurance

From 2017, Financial reporting and budgeting is calculated on a Cash Basis.

The balance as at the end of May 2021 is as in the Annual Report and Accounts. Reserves are as defined by the Charities Commission. They are represented in our accounts by the subtotal Net Current Assets. Since we write down our fixed assets to nominal values, in most years our total balances only slightly exceed our reserves.

Income and Expenditure 2021/22

The Choir resumed face-to-face rehearsals, post COVID, in September 2021 and have performed in 7 concerts including 2 pro bono concerts for Ukraine, 2 concerts and 2 daytime singing appearances during our participation in the Cornwall International Festival. Only two concerts have been 'fee earning'. We participated in Gwyn Arch's successful Celebration Concert which resulted in a net cost of £209 to the choir.

Although our accounts are currently showing a surplus for the year of £1,182, bear in mind that we are currently holding £1,650 in accrued payments for the 50th Anniversary Dinner and we expect to pay c. £1,100 for the hire of Hawkedon School plus expected invoices totalling c.£1,800 not yet received at the end of May. In addition, we have already received £400 sponsorship for the Gwyn Arch Young Singer initiative. We have yet to receive a further £752 net payments for our Cornwall trip. Consequently, taking these factors into account, the outturn for the year would be a net expenditure of c. £3,000 compared to net expenditure of £500 as reported to the AGM last year. Net Core expenditure was £-1,864 and Net Non-Core income was £3,046.

Main variance -v- budget were as follows:

Income: £1,003 under budget in subscriptions arising from a membership total of 64 paying members -v- 71 anticipated in the budget. This also resulted in £249 shortfall in our Gift Aid refund. Total sponsorship received was £800 (£400 specified for the Gwyn Arch Young Singers project). Concert fees and tickets were £1,436 below budget due to cancelled concerts during the year.

Expenditure: £1,835 below budget expenditure on hiring the rehearsal hall – full hire charge for the year has not yet been invoiced; Administration expenditure was £857 over budget due to unbudgeted costs relating to Service Awards, Zoom Subscription, Making Music subscription, the purchase of a Sum Up Card Reader and a repayment of £440 to a member who had made a payment to RMVC in error.

Income and Expenditure 2022/23

The Committee recommends a budget for the year to 31st May 2023 as attached. This budget proposes a deficit on the year 2022/23 with a projected outturn that expenditure will exceed income by £1,395. Bear in mind that this is offset by 2022 income included £1,650 accrued payments for the 50th Anniversary Dinner which will be paid for during the budget period.

Significant assumptions in this budget:

- We will perform 8 fee paying concerts at £400 each in addition to our Anniversary Concert in July which I have assumed will be self-funding.
- Subscriptions will increase by 8% to £130.00 full and £90.00 concession, both including a tuition fee of £20
- MD Honoraria will increase by 8%
- We will launch the Gwyn Arch Young Singer Competition this year and will receive a further £4,100 in sponsorship (already pledged).

The Committee proposes that member subscriptions will increase to £110 annually and £70 for concessions. Tuition fees, which do not qualify for Gift Aid, will increase to £20 annually.

Concessionary subscriptions are not 'age related' but are available to members who are genuinely not in a financial position to pay the full rate subscription either as a one-off payment or on a staged payment basis.

At this level, our Reserves would reduce to £25,904, about £13,041 above our long-term target of £12,863 (£10,000 at 2017 prices). Net Core expenditure would be £1,320 net non-Core income would be £2,715.

Possible projections to 2023/24

I have attempted to develop a possible budget for the year ending 31st May 2024 – see attached. You will see that this budget would deliver a further deficit of £2,042.

Significant assumptions in this possible budget:

- We will perform 8 fee paying concerts during the year and that our fees will remain at £400.
- Subscriptions would increase to £136.00 including £20.00 Tuition. Concession rates would increase to £94
- No further significant expenditure is anticipated in this financial year.

At this level, our Reserves would decrease to £23,862, about £11,373 above our long-term target of £12,489 (£10,000 at 2017 prices). Net Core expenditure would be £1,179 net non-Core expenditure would be £863.

You will see that, despite our deficit budgets, our Reserves remain well above our long-term target and the Committee will need to consider whether this target is set at an appropriate level and what

actions will be necessary to bring the actual Reserves closer to our target whilst ensuring that our financial model continues to be sustainable over the longer term. To this end I will work with the Committee to identify necessary steps to review and amend our Reserves position throughout this financial year.

Decisions required of the AGM

Consequently, at the recommendation of the Committee, the AGM is requested to approve the following:

1. The adoption of the Consolidated Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st May 2022. - **APPROVED**
2. The budget recommended by the Trustees and Committee for the year ending 31st May 2023. - **APPROVED**
3. The MD Honoraria recommended by the Trustees and Committee for the year ending 31st May 2023 be increased to £4,650 p.a. for the MD and £3,977 p.a. for the Accompanist. - **APPROVED**
4. The subscriptions, including Tuition Fees, for the year ending 31st May 2023 increase to £130 and £90 respectively. - **APPROVED**
5. The adoption of this Treasurer's Report. - **APPROVED**

John Kay was thanked for his ongoing dedication to his role as Treasurer.

Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts.

This is the second year that Sukey Joshi has examined our accounts and Sukey has indicated that she would be happy to continue in this role should the AGM approve her appointment for the current year. - **APPROVED**

Safety Officers report.

Annual maintenance.

- Testing of all choir portable electrical appliances was completed on 02 Sep 2021. No failures reported.
- Inspection of concert staging was completed on 06 Nov 2021. All items were deemed to be safe to use.
- The Annual Fire Safety Briefing was given to members at the rehearsal on 26th November 2021.

Covid Risk Management.

- A Covid 19 risk assessment and Back to Rehearsal Notice for members was prepared in July 2021. It was reviewed following a number of Covid cases among choir members in September 2021. Changes were made to the rehearsal arrangements to try to reduce the risk of transmission during rehearsals.
- In November, colder temperatures conflicted with the need for good ventilation in the rehearsal hall. Levels of CO2 on the school monitor at the back of the hall varied from 500 to 750ppm, which was less than the action level of 800ppm (when ventilation is becoming poor). We therefore allowed the main doors to be closed while keeping windows open.
- In February, despite the relaxing of Covid 19 rules by the Government, the Choir chose to maintain the pre-Christmas mitigation measures. Members were encouraged to continue to take lateral flow tests before coming to rehearsals and to continue using hand-sanitiser and to wear masks when entering and leaving the Hall and during mid-rehearsal breaks.
- Following the stopping of free Lateral Flow Test kits, in April, we have asked members not to come to rehearsals if they have cold, flu or Covid symptoms.

Health & Safety Documentation.

- The RMVC Health & Safety Policy Statement was last reviewed in January 2015. In line with good practice this was reviewed and updated in February 2022 and agreed by the Chairman.
- The new documentation now comprises:
 - HS1 – Health & Safety Policy Statement and Individual Responsibilities
 - HS2 – Good Practice Documents – Concert Activities
 - HS3 – Good Practice Documents – Rehearsal Activities
 - HS4 – Good Practice Documents – Emergencies
- These are waiting to be uploaded to the new website. All members are encouraged to read them when they are uploaded.

First Aiders.

- Our first aider Allan Crisp is undergoing his 3-yearly re-training this summer.
- We need to ensure that our other first aid volunteers attend a refresher session planned for September 2022. New volunteers welcome.
- We now have access to the Defibrillator at Hawkedon School. In addition, we check availability at every concert venue and will try to ensure that information is put on the Concert event details sheet.
- One member recently completed a Defibrillator familiarisation session.

Concert Venue Inspections.

- Concert venue inspections normally attended by the Secretary and Stage Manager have also, where possible, included the Health & Safety Officer.
- The intention is to check:
 - The size of the auditorium, ventilation, level access to the stage and adjacent areas, distances, and stairs.
 - Space for the staging and easy level access from car park.
 - Area for pre-concert assembly, changing rooms and toilets.

- Local car parking.
- Accessibility for those with impaired mobility.
- Particular visits were made to Cauldwell Hall at Holme Grange School; Reading Minster; Reading Town Hall; Christchurch Henley.
- We have now sourced a wheelchair lift, which can be hired, to allow access to the stage at the Town Hall. This will be used at the 50th Anniversary Concert.

Choir Accidents and First Aid Incidents.

- The choir requires members to report any accidents or incidents that occur while at rehearsal at Hawkedon School or setting up and performing at a concert venue.
- This year we have recorded 6 incidents:
 - An unmarked step caused a trip during a concert,
 - Standing or sitting for long periods caused two first aid incidents,
 - A fall occurred in the rehearsal hall due to PE matting left in the route to the toilet,
 - Collision with a loudspeaker stand caused a dangerous occurrence during a concert with the potential to cause harm,
 - Moving onto our staging caused a trip/near fall during a concert.
- All these incidents were investigated with a view to identifying the root causes and to try to prevent recurrence.

Risk Management.

- We are now more aware of the issues arising from impaired mobility, balance, or eyesight, particularly when moving about in the rehearsal hall or at an unfamiliar concert venue.
 - Pre-concert walk throughs by the Stage Manager and Health & Safety Officer are now accepted as good practice, both in advance of the concert and after the staging and equipment has been set up.
 - Section leaders are asked to designate guides or escorts for those members who may need assistance when moving about or onto staging.
- Moving equipment around particularly at night (in poorly lit areas) and over rough ground can easily result in trips and falls:
 - The choir has a sack truck, and this can more easily transport awkward, bulky, or heavy items, e.g., podiums or refreshment boxes and urns.
- The choir has a conductor's podium, and it is relatively easy to erect. It is good to see this in use at recent rehearsals.
- Members are asked to bring any concerns to the attention of the Health & Safety Officer, so that they can be investigated, and adjustments made as necessary. Thank you to all who have helped me through the last year.

Chris was thanked for his work dealing with Covid as well as with the normal workload.

Section Leaders and other Choir Officers reports.

1st Tenors - Dave Allen.

It is with some sadness that I write this report this year, as after nearly five years, I am standing down from a job I have really enjoyed and would recommend to anyone. The support of the F1s has been outstanding throughout those five years. We are lucky to have such a great section.

Now that we seem to have motored out of COVID and we are almost back to normal, it has been good to see so many return after the enforced break.

We currently have 17 First Tenors including a new addition this year, Clive Willey. Whilst, at the moment, Clive is not quite ready for concerts, he sang A Life Lived with Grace with us at the Queen's Jubilee and I think really enjoyed it; welcome Clive. We also have a new prospective first tenor, Bob Hill, recently introduced by Steve Richardson. Bob is an experienced singer, and we hope he will join us on a permanent basis in due course. It was also good to see Frank Neale return after leaving us temporarily. As we come up to our 50th Anniversary concert we have good numbers.

In addition to this, we have two members who have not yet returned, but have said they are likely to come back in September: Keith Knee-Robinson and Andrew Searle. This could bring us up to 20 first tenors, which is the most we have had since I became section Leader in 2017.

This year, in particular, we wish to thank Clive, Hayley, Ryland and by no means last, Martin for steering us through a very difficult time. John Kay also deserves praise, as we are in an excellent financial position which, after covid, many other Choirs are not.

Best wishes go to my successor. One word of advice, keep your reports short!

2nd Tenors - Dave Ewens.

I don't intend to dwell too much on the period between the last AGM and now as these were not normal times, and we were all dealing with the after effects of Covid and the realisation that the next 12 months were going to be a tough ask. We had several major events to prepare for and execute. The amount of work that had to be undertaken particularly by Clive must have been daunting but there was never a doubt in anyone's mind that he would delivery. One of the things that helped to bring about the necessary results was the fact we had a strong and tireless committee and whilst it's never a sensible thing to highlight individual members without the risk of offending others, I must give special thanks to Ryland, John Kay, Christopher Peck (Health and Safety Officer) and Martin Butler who by virtue of their rolls were constantly having to step up. One last person to thank is Hayley who has been a tremendous support to Clive and the Choir and who must have wondered what she had joined given the workload this year.

We all know what events have taken place in the last 12 months so there is no need to go through them one by one, but suffice to say, that the performance of the Choir members at all the events was fantastic. Bring on the next tour!!!

Going back to November last year, it was a difficult time health wise for some of the section namely Paul Smallman, Ray Little, Geoffrey Million and John Oversby but I am delighted to say recovery is seemingly moving in the right direction (touch wood).

So now, turning to the second tenors, their support to the Choir and to me has always been exemplary with strong attendance at rehearsals and concerts, good humour and an evident discipline in learning their words and it is with regard to this that I must thank Steve Richardson for all the hard work that he took on in recording many songs which allowed the section to always be able to listen to the recording be it at home or away.

Baritones - Paul Lyden.

Friday 3rd September.

Rehearsals started on this date with restrictions in place. Well attended by Baritone Section. During this early period of 'going back to normal' a number of people contracted Covid, Neville Waites in September, Robin John in October, Ryland Lee in March and Andrew Evans in April, no others from the Baritones were recorded.

There was a period in September and October where rehearsals were cancelled due to an outbreak of Covid, so rehearsal were suspended and returned to normal on 18th October.

Attendance.

Generally, well attended apart from one or two exceptions due to normal holiday arrangements and family commitments.

Entertainment.

RMVC Xmas dinner was held on Friday 3rd December at Caversham Heath Golf Club. A good evening, well attended by the Baritone section with John Kay and Andrew Evans participating in the after dinner entertainment.

Concerts.

A number of early concerts were cancelled due to Covid restrictions. The Christmas concert on Saturday 18th December at Reading Minster was cancelled at short notice, again due to Covid concerns. An impromptu performance was arranged to be performed in Woodley Centre during the afternoon of 18th. It was a great success, again well represented by the Baritones.

I believe a generous amount of money was donated in our bucket.

A performance by RMVC was held in Reading Broad Street Mall on 12th February, just to let everyone know we are still around, Baritones were represented well.

Our first normal scheduled concert was held at Trinity Church on Saturday 26th February, again well attended by the Baritones. It was very well received by the audience and all choir members were enjoying themselves, apart from feeling a little rusty.

After yet another concert cancellation, an impromptu Concert was arranged in Christ Church Woodley on Saturday 12th March for support of Ukraine. Again, well attended by Baritones, everyone pleased it is getting back to 'the old days' Another Concert was arranged for Ukraine in Maidenhead, but this was poorly attended by the audience thank heavens for our Friends of RMVC lady's support.

Gwynn Arch Memorial Concert was held at Reading Concert Hall, well represented by Baritones, staging was a little tight and claustrophobic, regrettably Mike Heather fainted, he was carried down and Allan Crisp administered First Aid. However, we all thorough enjoyed the whole evening Cornwall Festival Thursday 28th April to Monday 2nd May. After a lot of indecisiveness by some members of the Baritones, regarding transport and parking arrangements we made a good showing with nine members of the Baritone section who gave a good account of themselves at the various venues.

Concert at Christchurch, Henley on Saturday 21st May I was unable to attend due to a holiday.

Functions for Jubilee Celebrations included attending the Beacon Lighting in Reading Abbey Ruins on Thursday 2nd June and performance in Broad Street Mall on Friday 3rd of June. Naturally many of our section were involved in celebrations elsewhere, however probably about 12 attended.

Bass - Jeremy Jones.

Seventeen singers have attended rehearsals since their resumption following the lockdowns imposed due to Covid. Of those seventeen, sixteen have participated in one or more of the choir's subsequent public appearances. Seven members of the section took part in the trip to Cornwall for the International Male Choral Festival. Whilst this was a rather small contingent, those who went enjoyed the experience and maintained the finest traditions of the bass section.

On behalf of the section, I would like to extend its thanks to the officers of the choir, members of the committee, and the musical director and deputy musical director, who have kept the good ship RMVC afloat and moving forward during a period of very choppy water. That we have achieved so much this year is testimony to the success of their efforts.

It is not only those who serve on the committee who contribute to the success of the choir, and I would like to thank those members of the bass section who have done so in a variety of ways: Chris Bintcliffe (refreshments); Geoff Crabb (transport); David Adby and John Carr (raffle); Andy Sherwood (committee minute secretary). And I must also mention Tony Rawlins, who always seems to be on-hand to disassemble the concert staging at break-neck speed!

I would also like to express my personal thanks to the members of the bass for their help and support to me, and for always coming up with the goods with a cheerful good humour.

Equipment Moves Co-ordinator - Martin Deaves.

Martin thanked those who had helped with equipment moves since concerts had re-started, especially those who had stepped up to co-ordinate when he was not available.

Presentation of Long Service awards.

Pins had already been distributed to the following:

30 Years: Paul Buckle and Pat Connell.

20 Years: Jeremy Jones and David Brownhill.

10 Years: John Kay and Kevin Boyle.

The 10-year Tankards were awarded to Kevin and John at the meeting.

Other Motions from Sections and Members.

Clive took this opportunity to thank Hayley for her work during the past months.

Election of Committee Members and Officers.

There were no contested elections however the following were retiring: Dave Allen (SL T1), David Ewens (SL T2), Jon Saverton (Social)

The following were elected:

Post	Candidate	Proposer	Secunder
Chairman	Ryland Lee	John Kay	John Adams
Deputy Chairman	John Adams	Ryland Lee	John Kay
Secretary	Martin Butler	Ryland Lee	John Adams
Treasurer	John Kay	Ryland Lee	Martin Butler
SL Tenor 1	Mike Jeary	Dave Allen	Colin Hinks
SL Tenor 2	Arnie Howell	David Ewens	Steve Richardson
SL Baritone	Paul Lyden	John Kay	Andrew Evans
SL Bass	Jeremy Jones	Alan Broodbank	David Pomeroy
Concert Co-ordinator	Nigel Shaw	Ryland Lee	Martin Butler
Assistant Secretary	Andrew Evans	John Kay	Ryland Lee
Librarian	Kevin Boyle	Ryland Lee	Martin Butler
Social Secretary	David Ewens	Nigel Shaw	John Carr
Equipment Moves Co-ordinator	Martin Deaves	Ryland Lee	John Adams

Health and Safety	Chris Peck	Ryland Lee	Martin Butler
First Aid	Allan Crisp	Ryland Lee	John Kay
Minutes Secretary	Andy Sherwood	Ryland Lee	Martin Butler
Publicity Officers	Andrew Evans	John Kay	Ryland Lee
	Steve Richardson	Ryland Lee	Martin Butler
Wardrobe Master	Robin John	Ryland Lee	Martin Butler

Meeting finished at approx. 8:52pm.

Meeting dates for next year. (All at Hawkedon School.)

Commitee.

29th September 2022

24th November 2022

23rd February 2023

8th June 2023

AGM.

7th July 2023

