

MACCLESFIELD MALE VOICE CHOIR

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Held 14th January 2025 at Macclesfield Methodist Church

PRESENT Mr Ciaran Fleming (Chair) Mr Laurie Kennard Mr Neil McArthur
Mr Paul Nadin Mr Tim Neale Mr Shane Owens
Mr Bryan Peak Mr Martin Tute

- 1 **Welcome –** CF welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2 **Apologies –** Mr Chris Cromar Mr Max Hartley Mr Keith Jones

3 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the meetings held 26th November 2024 were agreed and signed.

4 Matters arising - None not covered in the agenda

5 Finance update

5.1 Provisional year end 2024

PN presented the full accounts which have been examined by Amber. These show an overall net deficit of £1,474. Concert net surplus was down to £3,243 notwithstanding we staged more concerts. Unfortunately this reflects the decline in the desire from the general public for our type of entertainment. Although we held fewer Wednesday rehearsals, the cost of those has had a significant impact on the overall finances in the absence of the funding proposed by Robert. Without a large increase in subscriptions, we shall not be able to undertake the same number of Wednesday rehearsals during 2025.

5.2 Budget 2025

The draft budget shows a break even position. It is though proposed to increase subscriptions to £195, with the increase of £20 intended to cover a specific piece of work targeting recruitment, which is seen as essential if the choir is to survive.

6 Events

6.1 Social Event – Packhorse Bowling Club, review

MT & GM were thanked for arranging a very pleasant evening which was well received by members. It was agreed to hold a similar event on 21st November this year, provisionally again at the Packhorse.

6.2 West End comes to Macc, review

PN expressed concern that costs for this event were high and, with a smaller than hoped audience – not helped by the weather - the event produced a surplus of only £253. Audience feedback re both Denise and Stefan was good though sight-lines for Stefan could have been better. CC commented that St Michael's is not ideal as a venue but we have currently booked Macc URC for the equivalent event this year.

6.3 Christmas concerts, review

- **Prestbury House**
- **The Bridges**
- **Mottram Hall**

Overall, these all went mainly well. CC suggested that perhaps we could field fewer singers for such events in the future which would have the advantage of spreading the load around the choir. PN felt we could consider singing fewer verses of some carols in order to have a wider range. MT said we should wear jumpers rather than suits for these informal events. The old burgundy jumpers are though not necessarily available to all members and it was suggested that members should wear their own Christmas jumpers instead.

6.4 2025 programme

- **Belong –** January 24th. CF will visit again to ensure arrangements in hand. CC will distribute the programme. BP confirmed there are approximately 25 members available. **Action: CF and CC**
- **Groobarb, High Legh –** March 1st for their St David's Day event. LK is planning to visit this week. A fee of £350 was agreed (as previously discussed with them) subject to their not wanting more than is currently planned. **Action: LK**
- **Macclesfield Mayoral Awards –** March 30th. LK pointed out that this event is *March 30th* not *April* as previously recorded in the minutes. BP will reissue the concert schedule to clarify. **Action: BP**
- **Bollington Singers –** April 5th Macc URC. CC has agreed we shall sing the "Armed Man" as a joint item. We shall use copy for this item. LK will coordinate.
- **St John's Knutsford –** May 9th. This has now been confirmed with Knutsford Star Choir. LK said he thought that this concert would need two people to act as coordinator as it could be a large event in a new venue.
- **Congleton Town Hall –** June 14th. Agreed that the emphasis on this concert should be one of "massed" singing as that is what the audience will expect. It does therefore require cooperation between the choirs as to what the programme is and who conducts what. LK will put CC in touch with Biddulph's MD. It was felt that, with three choirs singing both together and separately, a soloist would not be needed. **Action: LK**
- **St Bartholomew's Wilmslow –** September 20th. Anna's trio may be an option as "guests".

- **Caravanettes** – October 18th Macc URC. Although currently scheduled for St Michael's, in view of concerns re suitability, it was agreed to investigate switching to Macc URC. **Action: LK**
- **Remembrance concert**– November 8th St Peters Prestbury. CC felt that RBL did not generate a significant increase in audience in 2024 and we should therefore proceed without their involvement this year but make early enquiries of dignitaries.
- **Anniversary concert** – November 29th Macc URC. This will now be our main 70th anniversary event, featuring songs from the last seven decades. Agreed to ask Gemma Sutton if she is available as soloist for the concert. **Action: LK**

7 Section Representatives

Nothing to report.

8 AGM arrangements

BP advised that he had now received nominations for Treasurer, T1 and T2 reps and the two general members. B1 and B2 reps and Vice Chair were asked to organise nomination forms. BP emphasised that he is not able to continue as Secretary for a further year. Agreed he would issue an outline job spec to members, seeking volunteers. It was suggested that the rôle could be split into smaller chunks and shared. **Action: BP**

9 Recruitment

The committee received BJ's thoughts on the subject. CF will discuss with him. **Action: CF**

10 Anniversary activities

As mentioned above, it is essential we promote our anniversary year at all opportunities, to culminate in the November concert. LK said he would like to pursue the idea of links with local charities and specifically mentioned East Cheshire Hospice. This has the potential to raise awareness of the choir considerably. NM offered to make an introduction to the hospice. **Action: NM**

11 Any other business

11.1 Coordinators

PN is still concerned that we lack volunteers to take on these roles. He will meet with LK to discuss ways forward. There are several members who regularly undertake specific tasks, e.g. TENs application, providing refreshments, tickets production and sales, and who are willing to continue doing so. It is important that these offers are made known to the overall coordinators. Previously, a Section has taken on the task but that was when we had significantly more members. Although the current concert planning checklist is comprehensive, it may come across as daunting and perhaps therefore needs simplification and/or splitting, i.e many of the initial tasks are carried out by the Concert Secretary and don't therefore need to be included. Also, limiting local concerts to one venue would make that part of the planning easier. **Action: PN and LK**

11.2 Confirmation of rehearsal dates

BP produced a full list of the rehearsal dates for 2025, identifying specifically which Mondays won't be used and which Wednesday will. This is mainly so that we can confirm our needs to Broken Cross. BP will check with CC and then publish the dates on the website **Action: BP**

11.3 Monthly "raffle"

PN said that he had learned that other choirs have a monthly "raffle" amongst members which provides a significant extra income source. It was pointed out that we did indeed previously run such a scheme known as the 100 Club, though it produced only a few hundred £s each year. If someone is willing to run it again, there is no reason why we could not do so.

11.4 Long service badges

MT pointed out that members with these badges should be encouraged to wear them. Only the most recent award though should be used and any previously earned badges should be returned to GM.

11.5 Secretary

The meeting expressed their thanks to BP for his work as Secretary.

12 Date of next meeting

Monday 3rd February, 6:15pm at Broken Cross Methodist Church.

Signed

Ciaran Fleming.....3rd February 2025