

MACCLESFIELD MALE VOICE CHOIR

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held 27th January 2025 at Broken Cross Methodist Church

PRESENT – 35 members were present

1 Welcome – CF welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies – 2 members gave apologies.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 22nd January 2024 were agreed and signed.

4 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5 Treasurer's report

Before I start on the figures for last year my thanks to Ciaran and Bryan for their help and support during the year, also to Neil for all his work in dealing with the Gift Aid which amounted to nearly £1,800 during the year, and especially to Amber for acting as auditor, we couldn't manage without her.

Regarding the accounts, the usual mixture of good news and bad news, the good news being that we are still solvent and bad news being that despite all the good work that has been put in by Chris and choir members we have not had a very good year financially, the final figures showing that we have around £1,500 less at the bank at the end of December 2024 than we had at the end of December 2023.

Concert income and profits are down, due partly to the reduction in audience numbers but also to the continually increasing costs of putting on an event, so we need to examine this carefully in the coming year and trim the costs wherever we can.

We are looking at other ways of raising funds, possibly a monthly lottery within the choir and also an appeal for more patrons, so if you know of anyone who might be interested then please let us know.

In view of the continually increasing costs associated with the running of the choir it has been proposed by the committee that we increase the subscription by £20 this year and we shall need your approval for that increase. The extra £20 per member will be ring-fenced in the accounts and will be used to promote recruitment to the choir, that being a priority in the view of the committee. so we hope that you will be able to approve that increase as we have been able to hold the subscription at the same level for the last two years.

6 Finance

6.1 Appointment of independent examiner

PN proposed that Amber Owens be appointed to continue as our Auditor for 2025. The meeting unanimously approved.

6.2 Subscriptions rate for 2025

As mentioned above, PN proposed an increased subscription rate of £195 to include £20 ring-fenced for recruitment. The proposal was carried with 32 members for and 3 against. Any suggestions or offers of involvement in the recruitment are most welcome.

7 Chairman's report

I think that we have had a great year with the Macclesfield Male Voice Choir. Many memorable concerts and lots of very gratifying feedback from our audiences. The spirit in the choir has been very positive throughout the year even during the period of uncertainty in the early months in respect of our music team. Robert Owens health difficulties were not resolved and so he had to step down as MD unfortunately and our best wishes are with him and his family. Chris Cromar has settled in as our permanent MD and he and Anna have worked together very well to maintain and, by degrees, improve our performances.

Rehearsals have been hard work at times, however it has paid off I think in respect of performance values.

The committee have worked hard to secure our future against a background of dwindling interest in male choral singing and have identified recruitment as a major focus for the choir. This work will continue during 2025 with a determination to increase membership. To this end we will be reinvigorating our recruitment drive with a coordinator to direct our efforts in this project

The financial picture, so well managed by Paul, has been maintained in a generally satisfactory condition and we remain optimistic about our future. It is of concern that our income from concerts has reduced as the costs continue to rise so containing our expenditure will be required in 2025.

Laurie has worked very hard in preparing a full programme of events for the year ahead and is to be congratulated. For the first time in some years we have firm arrangements in place well in advance and so can concentrate on programme development so that our audiences can experience refreshed concerts and our income may be restored.

I want to thank the whole committee for their sterling work and steadfast support throughout the year. Every man has made a valuable contribution to our success. In addition I want to extend a very special thanks to all who have worked so hard at front of house, publicity, ticketing and refreshments to ensure every event was run as professionally as possible.

Toward the latter part of 2024 we started talking about our 70th anniversary of 2025 and started developing themes to mark it appropriately so the ideas will be shared as they become more solid. In the meantime please let us know any thoughts you have on what you think we should do. 2025 promises to be a wonderful year and I am looking forward to it - I hope you are too.

8 Musical Director's report

I was fortunate to be writing this report against the backdrop of two occasions when the choir sang particularly well: the funeral at Prestbury on 20th January and last week's rehearsal when the choir was in outstanding voice.

Favourable remarks from audience members and distinguished musicians about the quality of your singing is testament to your bearing with my methods with almost consistent good-will.

Enlarging and varying the repertoire is an aim as close to my heart as anyone else's but it should be noted that this can only be achieved by a very high level of attendance at rehearsals, and sectional rehearsals. It is up to the choir and committee to decide if the cost associated with a small number of additional Wednesday rehearsals this year is consonant with the desire to enlarge and vary repertoire. We need to maintain the quality for which we are being acknowledged whilst enlarging repertoire and we are not at the point, many other positives aside, where we can achieve all this and maintain our current number of engagements.

We discuss the type of repertoire we sing and what "more modern" might appeal to an as yet untapped membership but do not reach agreement what "more modern" might be. We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that the quality of our singing (regardless of the repertoire) is a huge but often overlooked recruitment tool.

Finally, I wish to politely draw members' attention to the fact that my contract states that the decision about who is at the right standard to sing in a concert rests with me. This is a decision I would always take in the best interests of the whole choir and our paying public. In a similar vein, if you are going to miss rehearsals immediately before a concert, please discuss your involvement in the concert with me. I try to be as accommodating as I can be but this is an important and courteous part of how we operate within the spirit and letter of my contract.

Than you for an enjoyable year.

9 Election of Officers: Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer

Chairman – Ciaran Fleming was elected unopposed

Vice Chairman – Martin Tute was elected unopposed.

Secretary – No nominations have been received and it was proposed that the job rôle would be split across 3-4 people as a temporary measure. It was stressed though that members need to come forward for this and other roles that are essential for the continued operation of the choir. BP was thanked for his service over the last three years.

Treasurer – Paul Nadin was re-elected unopposed.

10 Election of two General Committee Members

Neil McArthur and Shane Owens were re-elected unopposed.

11 Election of Section Representatives

T1 – Tim Neale was re-elected unopposed.

T2 – Keith Jones was re-elected unopposed.

B1 – There has been no formal nomination and MH agreed to continue to undertake the section coordinating rôle but will not be able to attend committee meetings.

B2 – Laurie Kennard was elected unopposed.

12 Appointments to be made at the next committee meeting:

- Musical Director
- Principal Accompanist
- Librarians
- Concert Secretary
- Fire Safety/security Steward
- First Aider
- Welfare Officer
- Membership Secretary/Registrar
- Uniform Secretary
- Website administrator

13 Any other business

- CC was asked whether, in his experience, there is an optimal number of members for choirs such as ours to which the answer was "not really".
- DC proposed a vote of thanks to Anna for her contribution during the year.
- GM advised that Sections Reps had been issued with attendance figures for rehearsals and concerts for 2024. He pointed out that, on average, 10 members were missing at each concert.

- NS queried whether we do in fact have too many concerts this year but it was pointed out that the number is significantly less than what it was before Covid.
- DH asked what the process is for determining repertoire. This remains as always the ultimate decision of the MD but suggestions are welcome. Most of the repertoire in the library can be established by reference to the practice music on the website.

Signed

Ciaran Fleming..... January 2026