

MACCLESFIELD MALE VOICE CHOIR

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held 30th January 2023 at Broken Cross Methodist Church

PRESENT – 29 members were present

1 Welcome – JP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies – 5 members gave apologies.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 24th January 2022 were agreed and signed.

4 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5 Treasurer's report

Overall choir finances are still a little difficult even though we managed to come through Covid. Our aim for recent years has been to have a balanced budget and to carry c. £5,000 in reserves i.e. sufficient to cover up to three months' expenditure with no income. Unfortunately, partly because of Covid and partly because of cancelled concerts, we have failed to achieve a balanced budget for the previous three years.

In 2022, we budgeted for £7,000 of concert net surplus but, as a result of several events not going ahead and lower than hoped for ticket sales, managed only £5,000. We did though have three successful concerts in terms of finances. Our closing balance for 2022 was therefore £8,912 which includes ring fenced funds of £391 (uniforms), £1,512 (piano) and £800 (Llangollen deposits) meaning that our free reserves amount to £6,210. (This figure was bolstered by several donations (totalling c£700 with giftaid) specifically for the purchase of new music; hence three new pieces were purchased)

It was queried why we appear to have paid our accompanist more than the musical director. BJ advised that the cost of interim/emergency cover for an accompanist was inevitably higher than that normally paid and this was the sole reason for the discrepancy.

In response to a question as to whether the choir still owned a trailer, the answer was no.

6 Finance

6.1 Appointment of independent examiner

BJ proposed that Jeremy Bostock be appointed to continue as our Auditor for 2023. The meeting unanimously approved.

6.2 Subscriptions rate for 2023

In order to maintain a balanced budget, BJ explained that it is necessary to propose an increased subscription of £175. This would be the first increase for three years. Also, it will be necessary to reduce the number of rehearsals to 88, though this will be reviewed as the year progresses. BJ therefore proposed the increase which was agreed with one vote against.

7 Chairman's report

General Situation

There is much to be pleased about as we enter 2023:

- *We have sufficient proficient choristers to perform to a good standard led confidently by our musical support*
- *Feedback from concerts is very positive and we have clear plans in place for an appropriate concert series in the year to come*
- *Morale is generally high within the choir, with a good social spirit*
- *We have a wide repertoire which we sing well.*

On a less positive note:

- *Although our financial situation is adequate, we need to manage the income versus expenditure balance in order to maintain a safe end-of-year balance.*
- *Although we have recruited and have sufficient choristers it would be in our interest to recruit during the year, to increase both the singing cadre and the income*
- *We have had difficulty in finding members able and willing to take on the various short-term jobs which appear from time to time, such as concert direction. This has improved in recent weeks, with the welcome assistance of members volunteering to direct concerts, work on recruitment and on connections with potential sponsors.*

Progress/Change during 2022

As well as successfully navigating the final phases of lockdown, a number of changes have occurred or been instigated during the year:

- *Our repertoire has increased in terms of number and breadth in a directed attempt to be able to appeal to a variety of audiences*
- *We have successfully navigated the changeover of Principal Accompanist*
- *Communication regarding repertoire logic and developing concert plans has been improved.*

General Direction for 2023

The Committee has agreed to my suggestion that we should carry out a focused strategic review of the choir, covering aims and objectives, needs and wishes of members, operational policy. Members will be invited to contribute, both as informants to a questionnaire and as members of a working group.

It is important that we recruit during 2023 and an action group is in the process of forming to organise and implement the initiative. This group will need active support not only from the Committee but from the body of the choir as well.

Without intending to short-circuit the findings of this action group, I do expect the choir to establish stronger links with social welfare organisations within Macclesfield, such as care homes and welfare clubs. It is also my intention widen the 'footprint' of the choir to serve audiences in, say, Knutsford, Congleton as well as Wilmslow. It is highly desirable that our repertoire continues to broaden.

The number of rehearsals will be slightly reduced in the light of financial risks but with effective targeting, this will not affect our musical competence.

Likely Specific Projects and initiatives (not in order of priority)

- Increase geographical spread of concerts and catchment
- Introduce peripheral events such as singing days
- Maintain/increase number of combined/diverse concerts
- Recruit
- Investigate lower-cost facilities
- Increase sponsorship/donation monies
- Improve ticket sales
- Modestly reduce rehearsal numbers
- Combine some small concerts with rehearsal nights

I should like to express my sincere thanks to members of the Committee, to our music team and to members who have contributed their efforts during the year.

8 Musical Director's report

The aim has been to have greater clarity for future events, by planning "theme" based concerts rather than a number of concerts with general content. The majority feedback has been positive and we certainly attracted new audience members as a result – people who came because of the concert content rather than its just being a male voice event. Going forward, we shall try to continue this process, broadening the type of concert e.g. Gilbert and Sullivan, Disney, something with a religious theme, so again we can pick up new audiences. We shall also stage a Christmas event in response to popular requests and have another Songs from the Shows but slightly earlier. The overall idea is to provide a change of repertoire during the year for the benefit of both the audience and the choir.

9 Election of Officers: Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer

Vice Chairman – John Robinson was re-elected unopposed.

Secretary – Bryan Peak was re-elected unopposed.

Treasurer – Bob Jenner has stood down and Paul Nadin was elected unopposed. The meeting expressed its thanks to Bob for his work over recent years.

10 Election of two General Committee Members

Neil McArthur and Shane Owens were elected unopposed.

11 Election of Section Representatives

T1 – Tim Neale was elected unopposed.

T2 – Keith Jones was elected unopposed.

B1 – no formal nomination received; David Coggan will cover the position in an unofficial capacity.

B2 – no formal nomination received; Graham Jones will cover the position in an unofficial capacity.

12 Appointments to be made at the next committee meeting:

- Musical Director.
- Principal Accompanist.
- Librarians
- Fire Safety/security Steward
- First Aider
- Padre
- Membership Secretary/Registrar
- Uniform Secretary

13 Any other business - none

Signed

John Powell..... 2023