

Macclesfield Male Voice Choir

An online meeting of the Macclesfield Male Voice Choir (MaccMVC) General Committee was held on Thursday 14th January 2021.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 7:30pm.

The Chairman thanked Robert Owens for setting up and controlling the Zoom facility.

The Chairman then asked the Secretary to record the Committee's sadness on learning of Stuart Mill's recent death. He confirmed that he had sent a card from the Choir to Stuart's family.

The meeting was also advised that due to Mike Evan's illness Mike Batson had very kindly agreed to act as B1 Section Representative until such time as proper elections can be held and that he would be attending this meeting. The Choir have been made aware of this change.

1 - Present:

Chairman-Harry Newton, Vice Chairman-John Robinson, Treasurer-Bob Jenner,
Secretary-Graham Waters.

Keith Jones, John Powell-(B2 Rep), Bryan Peak-(T2 Rep), Mike Batson-(B1 Rep).

Neil McArthur.

Director of Music-Robert Owens.

2 - Apologies for absence:

Dave Collins-(T1 Rep).

3 - Minutes of the previous Meeting - held on 16th November 2020.

The Minutes were unanimously approved. A copy will be sent to the Chairman for signature.

4 - Matters arising from 3 above.

There were no matters arising.

5 - Financial Report for 2020.

The Treasurer reported that our financial guidelines for the operation of the Choir are in accordance with the general guideline laid down by the Charities Commission. Namely, we must be able to pay our debts and maintain a "rainy day" fund sufficient to ensure that we can continue our activities without incurring any debts that would remain outstanding in the event that we cease operating.

We have translated this into an annual forecast of a balanced budget (i.e., we spend what we receive) and we aim to maintain a "rainy day" fund of £5-6000. This is not a static target, over the course of any year that fund will be higher or lower as the fund is used or supplemented.

We opened 2020 with a reserve fund of £8682 and a forecasted balanced budget based on nine concerts and a choir of c55 choristers. Regrettably, no concerts took place.

The Uniform Project did not spend any money and the Cornwall event was postponed. Membership attracting Giftaid contributions resolved to 49 choristers (during the year sadly we lost Geraint and Peter Dawson moved up to Scotland). These were all the significant contributors to our balance.

In March the Committee resolved to continue payments to the Music Team. These were the only significant payments made from the balance.

In June an appeal for "support donations" was made, under the banner of Friends of MMVC. This resulted in £3729 and enabled the Committee to continue payments through to the end of the year.

The response was overwhelming. A large number of donations were made, many from non-choristers and their generosity undoubtedly played a major part in sustaining the Choir. Although all of the donors were thanked personally at the time, I want to take this opportunity to, once again, thank them; their generosity has ensured that our two most valuable assets, Robert and Tatyana have been able to stick with us.

I also want to thank the Committee for doing fantastic and mostly unseen job in keeping the Choir going.

The following is a broad outline of the Choir accounts that will be submitted to Jeremy Bostock (Choir's auditor). Once audited, a full copy of the Accounts will be circulated to the Choir:

We commenced the year with a balance of £16682, this contained ring-fenced funds for the new uniform (£8000).

During the year we received £15482 and spent £16164.

The balance carried forward into 2021 is £15999 which contains a number of prepayments and accrued funds.

January fees for Morton Hall were paid in December to secure the facility (£240) and we ringfenced three deposits:

- 1 - Uniform project £8000.
- 2 - £350 deposits for Cornwall 2022.
- 3 - £250 early payment of 2021 subscription.

So, on a "like for like" basis" our reserve fund carried forward into 2021 is £7639.

R. Jenner,
Treasurer.

6 – Appointment of Auditors.

In lieu of the AGM the Treasurer requested that the Committee accept Jeremy Bostock as Choir auditor for 2021.

The committee gave approval.

7 – Finances for 2021 – Membership subscriptions and Donations.

Subscription rate for 2021. The finances for 2021 require detailed discussion and will be a separate item at the next Committee meeting.

8 – MD's Report.

Dear all,

2020:

Well, it has been a rubbish year and we have not achieved a lot in terms of our singing technique and sound production.

However, what I have been really enjoying during 2020 is working alongside the Committee and the Strategy Group to put a plan together for our future.

2021:

Well, "who knows".

I am hoping for this year to be a much more positive year than last as we continue our plans to slowly bring back rehearsals in a safe way.

I want to encourage the committee to keep looking 12 months ahead with the choir calendar for us to be able to make sure that we are fully prepared well in advance.

This year's focus for me will be getting us back into the swing of things and finding our place in this new world we find ourselves in.

During 2021 we need to remain flexible and be able to adapt to our situation and to always stay optimistic.

I am currently planning and looking towards 2022 with some larger more exciting concerts and projects which we can advertise and brag about and which hopefully will attract the attention of new singing members.

Finally, I would like to stress the importance for us to plan a Remembrance / Celebration Concert at a sensible point in the near future to say our own farewell to the much loved and much missed members we have lost during this difficult year.

Here's to a happier and healthier future!

Robert Owens.
MD

The Committee thanked Robert for all his work behind the scenes in many ways and gave unanimous approval to his idea of holding a Remembrance / Celebration Concert.

9 – Strategy Committee Report.

An update was presented by Keith Jones. It covered the SC's recent recommendations and suggestions covering:

- a) Finance – the recommendations had already been included by the Treasurer's in his report, (see above).
- b) Communication Process - Laurie Kennard has agreed to maintain the choir contacts spreadsheet and the release agreed information to the press and other organisations. Dai Jones has agreed to work with Laurie and take on the social media side of our communications.
- c) Recruitment - John Robinson and Mike Batson plan to hold recruitment events, press releases and appeals on local radio. They don't propose to move on these until the choir has something to offer.
- d) IT/Website – Bryan Peak will be in charge of maintaining and updating the site when it is operational. Currently it is planned to have the site connected to our Facebook page.
- e) Future Strategy – Because we are clearly facing a different situation now, the SC will revisit the strategic outlook at their next meeting on the 21st January.
- f) Concert Procedure - Neil McArthur has been pivotal in reviewing our current process and with help of the group has produced a draft document for consideration by the General Committee at their next meeting.

10 – Chairman's Report.

I am now coming to the end of my three-year term as your Chairman. After two years of good progress with our new Director of Music Robert this year has not been what we expected, to say the least. In January 2020 we were looking forward to an exciting year of rehearsals and events throughout the year. We had not got far into the year when we were hit by the Covid 19 lockdown. This has been a great disappointment to all of us. Many of the things we planned have had to be put on hold.

Much work had been done on the new Uniform Project and thanks to the efforts of Bob Jenner and his team it is almost ready to roll out when we are able to meet up.

A Strategy Group was set up under the leadership of Keith Jones. They have been making plans for an upgrade to our website, recruitment of new members and ways to project the image of the Choir to potential new members and our audiences.

John Robinson has taken on the role of Recruitment Officer and will welcome all our support in this. We should all be on the lookout for new members. These plans will be ready to roll out when the Choir gets back to something like normal, or a 'new normal'.

It has been a very difficult year financially.

When we were forced to stop rehearsing your Committee decided unanimously to continue to pay Robert and Tatyana for as long as it was possible in order to retain their services and be ready to start

rehearsing as soon as it was possible. Without income from choir events this has only been made possible by your subscriptions and some very generous donations from choir members and "Friends of MaccMVC" for which I thank you all.

As we are not able to hold an AGM until later in the year, when hopefully COVID restrictions are lifted, your officers and committee have, with the exception of Mike Evans who has had to stand down on health grounds, agreed to stay in their positions until then; Mike Batson has agreed to take over as B1 Section Representative for the time being.

Despite everything, your officers and committee have continued to work hard to ensure a strong future for the choir and I would like to thank them all for the work they continue to put in.

In the meantime keep safe and I hope it will not be long before we can get back together again and do what we all enjoy, "singing together".

Harry Newton (Chairman)

11 – Section Representatives.

T1 – Nothing to report.

T2 – John Burgess now back at home.

B1 – Welcome extended to M. Batson.

B2 – Business as usual.

12 – Any Other Business.

i – The Treasurer confirmed that he had discussed GiftAid with Don Riseley and, until Don was back full-time, he would maintain the GiftAid process.

ii – The Treasurer explained his concern that, now that Peter Dawson wasn't available, he had no back-up in case he was out of action. Neil McArthur agreed to discuss this with him and see if he could help.

iii – John Powell raised the question of improving communication within the Choir. It was agreed to continue the Section Rep's telephone contacting and that we should look into running a Choir Quiz with prizes.

Bryan Peak reminded the meeting that, although he had control over the physical operation of the Choir website unless information/copy was given to him there was nothing he could do. The meeting acknowledged the work he has and is doing and agreed to work on finding a better way to get info to Bryan.

The same problems face the operating of Facebook and our other social media Neil McArthur pointed out that the last 'post' on Facebook was in September 2020.

Laurie Kennard and Dai Jones are now working together on Publicity but still need ideas and articles.

iv – Robert will reinstate his Zoom sessions with the Choir Sections.

v – John Robinson asked the Committee to thank David Hyde for reminding us that we will need to find a new home for the Choir staging currently stored in Stuart Mills' garage. Members were asked for their help as a matter of urgency.

13 – Date of next meeting.

Thursday 11th February 2021.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 20:58.