

BURY CHORAL SOCIETY
Annual General Meeting
Tuesday, 7 June 2016 at Holy Trinity School, Cecil Street, Bury

A total of 38 members attended - list attached as Appendix 1.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Christopher Babbs, Jane Bisson, Paul Brown, Deirdre Elliott, Marion Kaufman, Jean Slater, Margaret Trivasse.

2./3. **MINUTES OF AGM 2015** had been circulated and were taken as read. The meeting approved them unanimously as a true record and they were signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** - a full copy is attached as Appendix 2.

Tina Dixon reported that the season had commenced with Elgar's *The Music Makers* and Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens* together with the challenge of a repeat performance of *Cotton Mills*, an enjoyable concert which received some very positive comments from the audience. Our internationally themed Christmas concert, with African drumming and other percussion accompanying a variety of languages, had again proven to be a great success musically and financially. The March concert, dedicated to the 400th anniversary of the deaths of Shakespeare and Cervantes was another diverse programme incorporating dramatic elements alongside the music. The season had closed with Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, a work which requires extraordinary dedication. The choir had risen to the challenge, augmented by extremely talented soloists and very adept orchestral musicians.

She thanked the officers, committee members, trustees and librarian whose diligence and hard work had supported her role as Chairman throughout the season, and her expressed her appreciation of financial support from our sponsors. She also thanked choir members who had become involved in concert tasks and offered suggestions for future concerts. It had been a pleasure and privilege to be Chairman of a talented and welcoming Society whose warmth and support throughout her term of office had made her job more rewarding.

In closing, she extended her good wishes to the incoming Chairman, Graham Bolton.

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT** - full copy attached as Appendix 3; accounts attached as Appendix 4.

Graham Bolton presented his report and distributed copies of the accounts for 2015-2016, the purpose of which was to reassure everyone that we were solvent, show the cost/income of our activities and compare the situation with the previous season. It had not been possible to have the figures independently audited, but this would be done before the start of the next season on 6 September. He would use rounded figures in his verbal report, but the issued balance sheet showed precise figures. A number of cheques from the final concert were at present uncashed.

The healthy financial situation at the end of last season remained, and despite our having spent almost £600 more than our income, our reserves were reduced by only £150, having benefited from substantial donations and *Cotton Mills* trust monies in past seasons, from a Gift Aid refund of £1,906, and from Naomi Jahoda for refreshments which had generated donations of £143. Concerts this season had been £2,000 more expensive because 3 of the 4 had required an orchestra, the final concert being particularly expensive in terms of soloists and accompanists, and sales of additional tickets had dropped by 24% to £2,100. The continued healthy income from advertisers (increased to £1,280 this season) had helped to off-set costs, and Keith Ball was thanked for his sterling efforts.

Overall, the season had lost £1,264 in comparison with a surplus of £417 last year. Only 40 additional tickets were sold for the final concert, against 62 last year, which was sad, given the positive comments he had received from audience members. The Shakespeare and Cervantes concert had generated 29 additional tickets. The Christmas concert does not require obligatory tickets but attracted at least 157 adults, the majority of whom paid at the door. A bigger push for advance sales would have relieved the situation at the ticket desk and make June Bowker's job easier.

Attention was drawn to the rising costs of insurance and particularly music hire, which would have been considerably higher without the benefit of donation monies.

Income this year was £16,000, down from £18,680, and expenditure of £16,550 was up by more than £2,000.

Membership numbers were slightly down, despite an influx of new men! Membership was the vital underpinning of our financial security, in both subscriptions and ticket sales, but most importantly in continuing the choral heritage and passing it on, hopefully in a healthy artistic and financial state, to future generations. We should all be encouraging new members to join us. Audience comments generally suggested that we sounded good, were improving, and were entertaining. However, the venture to try to attract students and older school children by offering free tickets to the Shakespeare and Cervantes concert had been a dismal failure, with not a single ticket taken up. As incoming Chairman, he proposed to try again, and would welcome any suggestions toward increasing membership, particularly of younger people (ie anyone younger than him!).

This report was his last as Treasurer. His recommendations, taking account of the current financial situation, were:

- No increase in subscription, but...
- Increase membership - real effort required
- No increase in ticket costs, which were already at the top end compared with other choral societies, but the incoming Committee were encouraged to review this issue in the light of specific programmes
- Continue to control costs where possible
- Consider alternative and additional means of fundraising, which might help us socially

The Director of Music had received an increase in stipend last year, plus additional fees for work in writing up music for concerts and for the Christmas concert, as detailed in the balance sheet. Despite that this season's income had not covered our costs, the Treasurer recommended an increase of £100 per annum (approximately 3%), and £1 per session for the accompanist, subject to both being reappointed. In concluding, he extended best wishes to the incoming Treasurer, Maureen Price.

Laurette Evans sought information on the duties of the Director of Music other than taking rehearsals. They included preparing, arranging, and in some cases actually writing music for orchestral players (and choir if necessary), and finding orchestral personnel and soloists. Richard Youngman commented that we should not underestimate the time it takes for Juan to prepare to run a rehearsal and plan for a concert

Naomi Jahoda put forward a counter proposal that the accompanist's fee be increased in proportion, therefore by £1.50 rather than £1.

Following discussion, Members were invited to vote on the proposed increases in stipend. An increase of £100 for the Director of Music and £1.50 per session were duly agreed.

6. FUTURE PROGRAMME - at present, the following were being considered:

Tuesday 15 November 2016: Haydn's *Creation* at Bury Parish Church

Tuesday 13 December 2016: *Christmas Festivities* at Bury United Reformed Church

Saturday 4 March 2017: either a Victorian themed concert or an operetta-based concert, venue to be decided

Saturday 13 May 2017: Jenkins' *The Armed Man* and Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* at Stand Parish Church

The Committee would work towards firming up the programme at their next meeting.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

Graham Bolton would take over as Chairman, having been Chairman-Elect this season.

Tina Dixon would become Vice-Chairman.

Maureen Price, the only candidate to come forward, would become Treasurer, and the meeting confirmed her election.

Jean Seymour was willing to continue as Secretary and was re-elected unopposed.

Two retiring members and one new member were seeking re-election/election to the Committee:

June Bowker	proposed	Rosemary Artley	seconded	Jean Seymour
Sarah Taylor	"	Laurette Evans	"	Kate Clarke
Rachel Riley	"	Jean Seymour	"	Noelle Williamson

All were duly re-elected to the Committee and would serve until 2019.

Deirdre Elliott was stepping down from the Committee.

Continuing Committee members (2014-17): Rosemary Artley, Naomi Jahoda, Tony Patten, Chris Babbs and Geoff Stokes.

Naomi Jahoda, Chris Babbs and Richard Youngman were confirmed as the three non-Officer Trustees of the Society.

8. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER OF THE ACCOUNTS - David Owen was thanked for his imminent services this year, and had indicated that he was willing to continue. This offer was accepted, with gratitude.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A formal proposal had been lodged by Laurette Evans and seconded by Kate Clarke that the Committee devise a system for regular feedback to choir members after meetings, so that they are fully aware of decisions that have been made. This was accepted for discussion at the next committee meeting. The current plan was that Tina Dixon would take on responsibility for the website with Sarah Taylor, who would continue to manage FaceBook and Twitter issues, and they would work together toward creating a Members' Area on the site, where minutes and concert programmes could be viewed. Tina reminded the meeting that all members shared responsibility for increasing our profile and membership.

Naomi Jahoda raised the subject of audibility at rehearsals. A microphone had been trialled, but it was felt that regular use of it would be too much trouble for the short time involved.

In bringing the formal agenda to a close, the incoming Chairman thanked the retiring Chairman and the continuing Secretary for their contributions toward the smooth running of the Society over the season and presented both with a bouquet, after which he put forward some ideas for consideration including the name of the Society to be used in marketing, a short tour and perhaps putting on a performance in collaboration with another choir/orchestra.

Mike Cawley suggested that orders via Amazon could generate commission for our funds. He would provide information.

David Gremson suggested that we could arrange a day of singing, open to the public, with a view to raising our profile locally and recruiting new members. Laurette Evans felt that at such events it was better to work on a stand-alone piece of music rather than what was currently in rehearsal. Rosemary Artley wondered how we could attract tenors in particular, to which

Graham responded that it was a permanent problem in most choirs. Naomi Jahoda suggested that we circulate Church choirs. Keith Ball expressed his appreciation for John Elliott and Preston Hulse, co-opted tenors for the recent concert.

There was general agreement with Richard France and Naomi Jahoda that the particular score used and the arrangement of the two choirs were not helpful. Graham would raise such matter with Juan in due course. Susan Neininger felt that tickets need to be available earlier, so that members could sell them in advance rather than rely on verbal assurances that people would pay on entry. Richard Youngman reminded everyone that season tickets are available. Thirteen of his contacts had become season ticket holders at the start of the season, and he hoped they would do so again.

The Committee would discuss such issues further at the next meeting.

10. DATE, TIME, VENUE OF NEXT AGM - the aim is 2 weeks after the last concert, therefore 30 May 2017, or 6 June if financial matters cannot be completed in time. There being no other business, the incoming Chairman announced the date of the first rehearsal of the next season as Tuesday 1 September 2015 at 7.30p.m. at Holy Trinity School, closed the meeting at 9p.m. and invited members to stay for refreshments and socialisation.

I certify that these minutes are a true record _____ Chairman _____ Date