



Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 17th October 2017
St Mary's Church, Wallingford at 7:30pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous AGM
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Conductor's report
7. Election of Officers
8. Election of Committee
9. Any other business

Please notify any items for AOB in advance of the meeting

Current Officers and Committee members:

Chairman: Charlotte Kerr

Secretary: Yvonne Cutler-Greaves

Treasurer: Martin Mellor

Membership Secretary: Celia Barnshaw

Librarian: Mary Braithwaite

Friends Secretary: Tamsen Tadros

Tickets Secretary: Stephanie Martin

Webmaster: Henry Merryweather

Concert staging and set-up: Peter Mansfield and Adrian Smyly

Publicity & promotion: vacant

All current committee members have confirmed that they are willing to stand for 2017-18.

Publicity and promotion vacancy

We are keen to recruit some extra help with publicity and promotion of the choir in general, and specifically of our concerts, in order to optimise ticket sales. The list below incorporates the activities and tasks which need support, not necessarily by a single individual. Please do come forward or talk to the committee if there are any areas that interest you and/or of which you have some experience.

- Co-ordinate preparation of content and arrange production of annual brochure
- Produce advertisements and other material, e.g. leaflets, to promote both the society in general and also specific events, e.g. concerts, workshops etc.
- Liaise with concert venue regarding promotion of concerts on their website
- Produce/delegate poster design and oversee distribution
- Liaise with the choir webmaster to ensure all publicity and content on the society's website is relevant and up-to-date

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Benson Choral Society
Held on Tuesday 11 October 2016 at St Mary's Church, Wallingford at 8.30pm**

Present: Chairman, Officers, Conductor, Accompanist and approx. 80 members

1. Apologies for absence

Tony and Maggie Winters; Mike and Mary Marshall; Richard Wooldridge; Lesley Ogden; Honor and Richard Juniper; Chris Stammers and Françoise and Phillip Holt.

2. Minutes of previous AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM held on 20 October 2015 had been distributed to the members and were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed: John Griffin, seconded: Malcolm Payne

3. Matters arising

None

4. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman's report had been circulated in advance and is attached.

The previous season had seen 3 very good concerts, notably Mozart's Requiem, Bach B Minor Mass and two 20th century classic pairings of Carmina Burana and Bernstein's Chichester psalms. The year's concerts were:

Date	Works
28.11.15	Ola Gjeilo – Sunrise Mass (2008) Mozart – Requiem Mozart – Piano Concerto no 24 in C minor
19.3.16	Bach – Mass in B minor
18.6.16	Bernstein – Chichester Psalms Orff – Carmina Burana

We have continued to work very closely with the Abbey to ensure our concerts run smoothly and he thanked those involved with this.

Chris commented on the excellent report from Roger.

5. Treasurer's Report

The year-end accounts and Treasurer's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and are attached.

Adam Mills (AM) reported that this year the society's balance shows a significant increase with increased subscriptions. He noted that this was in spite of not receiving a donation from the Rowse Family Trust as in previous years.

Adam also stated that we have a new bank account with Lloyds, our old one is in the process of being closed.

Q. Peter Mansfield asked why does the income include ticket sale as this may add to our income

and reduce loss made at concerts?

A. Concert values are net of ticket sale and every concert makes a loss.

Q. Will we be able to pay monies directly to the new bank account?

A. Yes in future it is planned that we can enable this to happen.

The accounts were accepted, proposed by Alice Rowse, seconded Stephanie Martin.

6. Conductor's Report

Chris commented on the excellent and succinct account of the year by Roger Morgan.

He reported that he had very positive memories of the concerts and that it had been good to introduce new repertoire to the choir such as the Sunrise Mass.

We received great feedback from our audience and the professionals that sing and play alongside us at the concerts. I valued this from the professionals because they have a great deal of experience, and they were always delighted to come and perform with us and in the case of Liz Roberts she was willing to do a work shop with us.

He thanked the august, admirable, astounding, Anita and said she was 'the cat's pyjamas'.

He thanked the committee who get things done. He thanked Roger for being an enthusiastic and hardworking chair over the many years of service to the choir. He thanked Adam for his service over the years as treasurer. More was said about them at the celebration drinks after the meeting.

7. Election of Officers

Roger Morgan and Adam Mills stood down as chairman and treasurer this year, after many years of service to the choir. We thank you.

Charlotte Kerr was nominated as new chairman. Proposed: Roger Morgan: Seconded. Adam Mills. Martin Mellor was nominated as the new treasurer. Proposed: Roger Morgan: Seconded. Adam Mills.

Roger Morgan reminded everyone that the officers and committee are all subject to annual election, with a limitation of 5 years for Officers. Yvonne Cutler Greaves has been secretary for five years and is happy to be re-elected for the coming year.

Malcolm Payne proposed the traditional motion that notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 4b, the meeting agrees that Yvonne Cutler Greaves be elected secretary for the coming year. Proposed: Roger Morgan. Seconded: Adam Mills.

The officers were elected unanimously.

Other current members of the committee were willing to remain – Peter Mansfield, Stephanie Martin, Celia Martin, Adrian Smyly, Tamsen Tadros, Henry Merryweather. Proposed: Roger Morgan. Seconded : Adam Mills.

The existing committee members were re-elected unanimously

8. New committee members

There was one nomination –Mary Braithwaite Proposed: Patricia Hunt, seconded: Amanda Griffin and passed by acclamation. Philippa Cullen is willing to act as Librarian in a non-committee role, and Mary will assist her.

9. AOB

Roger had received a request to review coffee breaks at rehearsals and whether we should have them. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next committee meeting.

There was a request for member of the committee to stand up and introduce themselves to the choirs this was actioned to great acclaim!

The meeting closed at 9:00pm. Drinks were served and gifts presented to thank both Roger and Adam for all their hard work over the years.

Chairman's report 2016-17

I stared at a blank screen for some time wondering how to start my first report as Chairman. Following in Roger's footsteps has been a little daunting, not only in the running of the choir which he did so admirably for so long, but also due to his considerable skill as a wordsmith. I think it is therefore appropriate to start by thanking Roger for always being available for advice and guidance, which I have called on many times during the year. He has in any event continued with some of the many and varied tasks involved in the overall organisation of the choir and so I am delighted that he has agreed to take on the new role of President, to support me and the rest of the committee.

I joined the choir in 2010 so I am a relative newbie compared with many of you. I first sang in choirs at school and then again in the 1990s when I worked for OUP who had their own choir, but I am not a musician by any definition and do not possess any deep musical knowledge or appreciation. I simply enjoy singing in a choir and have some organisational and management skills that I hope are useful.

We had another excellent season, starting with what would be considered a highlight of any choral society's repertoire, Verdi's *Requiem*. For the first time in the choir's long history we were faced with the prospect of having more singers than we had room for in Dorchester Abbey, so we had to establish some guidelines around participation. I am pleased to say that everyone embraced this and in the end I do not think there was anyone who wanted to sing who was unable to do so. Our spring concert Bach's *St John Passion*, and Beethoven ensemble in June were well received by audience and members alike.

We held a very enjoyable garden party in June in Kingwood Common; huge thanks to Rhona and Doug Ash for making their beautiful garden and house available. Our gratitude also to Tamsen Tadros and her band of organisers and chefs for making it all happen. The weather was kind to us.

We managed the year's business with 3 full committee meetings, and I would like to thank the Officers - Yvonne Cutler-Greaves, Secretary, Martin Mellor, Treasurer, and all the Committee - Tamsen Tadros, Peter Mansfield, Adrian Smyly, Stephanie Martin, Celia Martin, Mary Braithwaite and Henry Merryweather for their continued and committed participation. My especial thanks also to Chris for his outstanding leadership and guidance (not forgetting his seemingly endless collection of stories and jokes which make rehearsals such fun!) as the choir has grown ever more ambitious, and to Anita for her impeccable support as accompanist and concert soloist. We are indeed lucky to have them both.

We continue to run without a committee member responsible for publicity and promotion. This is a considerable gap and I urge anyone who would be able to help with this to come forward. I am most grateful to Richard Cave who designed and produced last year's concert posters, even when he was not singing! Roger, Chris and I again put together the annual brochure but we would really appreciate some new ideas and input. Concert ticket sales are increasingly important as the choir continues to grow and we are therefore able to perform more ambitious works, so we also need to broaden our promotional activities to maximise our concert income.

Although we finished the year with a small deficit, the overall financial results show us in a healthy position, despite receiving no external sponsorship for the second consecutive year. The number of paid up members rose slightly from 136 in 2015-16 to 138 in 2016-17. This is a very healthy membership level and I think is due to the strength of our repertoire and the warm welcome given by everyone to new members. My thanks go to Martin Mellor who took over as Treasurer this year. He has done an admirable job and has presented us with a clear and comprehensive set of accounts.

There are many others to thank, too numerous to mention in full - our voice reps, the staging set-up squad, the bar organising trio, the St Mary's opening and closing crew, the coffee rota crowd - all their efforts are much appreciated and make my job as Chairman much easier. Particular thanks to Mary

Marshall and Allan Savage who recently stood down as voice reps, and to Liz Smith and Bill Ellison who have taken over from them.

I look forward to another successful year ahead.

Charlotte Kerr, Chairman
September 2017

Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31 August 2017

OVERVIEW

I took over as Treasurer at the start of the year and would like to thank the outgoing Treasurer, Adam Mills, for the invaluable assistance and advice he has given me throughout the year. Echoing Charlotte's remarks in her Chairman's Report I too am a relatively new member of the Society, having joined in September 2013 and so I was faced with a steep learning curve.

During the year a number of key changes were introduced

1. Following opening a new Treasurer's Account with Lloyds Bank in the previous year the CAF Bank Account, which it replaced, was closed and the balance transferred to Lloyds
2. In January a second (sub) account was opened with Lloyds to provide a facility for Members and Friends to pay subscriptions by bank transfer. This new system was introduced after the bulk of subscriptions had been paid for the year and was therefore essentially applied to new Members and Friends only. Therefore as such it was something of a test run and I am pleased to report that it was taken up by most of these newcomers to the society.

Collecting monies in this way greatly reduces the Society's administrative burden especially for Celia Martin and Tamsen Tadros, the Membership and Friends Secretaries respectively, and all members are therefore encouraged to pay their subscriptions by bank transfer where at all possible

3. I introduced a number of new procedures to facilitate the audit process, notably a claim form for reimbursement of members where they have incurred expenditure on behalf of the Society and a form to record the monies collected by members in respect of the various activities carried out in the course of the everyday running of the society. Both forms are available from the documents section of our website.
4. The accounts for the year are attached. I have revised the accounting method from Receipts and Payments to Income and Expenditure compared with previous years. In the case of BCS, as it suggests, the Receipts and Expenditure Account was essentially a summary of the bank account, whereas the Income and Expenditure Account takes into account receipts and payments that relate to previous and future years. To complete the set of accounts a Balance Sheet has been introduced which summarises the assets and liabilities as they stand at the financial year end.

Last year the accounts showed a surplus of £2,242 compared with a deficit of £528 this year. The main reason for this can be attributed to the increased total loss we made on the concerts the large part of which in turn relates to the budgeted increase in expenditure on the orchestras and soloists. The Committee believes that the ongoing success of the society depends on continually extending our boundaries in terms of the works we perform. With an Accumulated Fund of over £18,000, we are in a very healthy financial position and can continue to budget to break even. In any event, provided our level of membership is maintained, a small annual deficit of the order we have suffered this year can be absorbed readily for some years without putting our financial viability at risk. For this main reason the committee have proposed that subscriptions should remain unchanged.

Nevertheless, the committee have elected to increase ticket prices for 2017/18, but in the end the success of the society largely depends on the number of tickets we as members sell for the concerts.

ACCOUNTS

Please see the Notes on Page 4 of the accounts for supporting information.

In summary general points are as follows:

Income and Expenditure Account

Income

Income from Subscriptions, Gift Aid and Friends increased by £920 to £17,712 compared with 2015/16 reflecting increases in membership and Friends' contributions. In addition the income from renting out Staging increased by £120 to £340.

However against these was a reduced profit from the Garden Party and because a workshop was not held this year there was no income from that source, resulting in a net increase in total income for the year of £524 to £18,688

Expenditure

Total expenditure increased by £3,293 to £19,215 of which £2,907 related to increased losses on the concerts that I have already explained in my Overview above. The remainder of the general items of expenditure were broadly in line with the previous year.

Concerts

Page 3 of the Accounts shows an analysis of Income and Expenditure for each Concert.

Notably, Ticket Sales for the Winter Concert increased by £1,287 to £5,630 mostly on account of a special increase in ticket prices.

Apart from the increase in expenditure on the orchestras and soloists other expenditure was broadly in line with last year.

Balance Sheet

The deficit of £528 for the year shown on the Income and Expenditure Account served to reduce the Accumulated Fund to £18,171 that represents the net Assets and Liabilities of the Society as at 31 August 2017.

Martin Mellor, Treasurer
September 2017