

HENLEY CHORAL SOCIETY
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at d:two, Henley-on-Thames at 8.45pm on Monday 12th October 2015

In the absence of a President of the Society, Susan Edwards (SE) as Chairwoman opened the meeting.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Toni Aitken, Louise Earl, Jocelyn Lynch, Angela Law, Jean Lowery, Melissa Maple, Sally Palmer, Jundith Skeet, Ian Tiffin,

2 Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting

The minutes were passed following a minor alteration to wording on each line of items 7 & 8, with the inclusion of ':proposed by'; proposer Jan French & seconder Jenny Fleming.

3 Chairman's Report

The Chair gave a brief resume of the past year and thanked the large number of members who contribute to the running of HCS: full report below.

Henley Choral Society

Chair's Report October 2015

One year ago, it was with some trepidation that I agreed to be Chair of HCS. It has been a little busier than I had imagined but also lots of fun. In no small part this has been the result of working very closely with Fi Harding, the wonderful secretary of HCS and with lovely Sally Clark who has been acting as vice chair throughout the year. This is a great society, very friendly and with an ethos of members volunteering to do the many tasks that need to be done. I will return this after giving a brief account of the year 2014 – 2015.

This has been a busy year. As well as our three great concerts, we participated in the Living Advent Calendar and had a Saturday workshop each term. In February this year, Angela Law and Jenny Fleming organised a wonderful St John Passion workshop, which was not only run most efficiently but also produced great singing (as well as great cakes) and lots of visitors: thanks to everyone who brought something to the feast. The summer term workshop was led by a really cool dude, Randolph Matthews, an inspirational suggestion from Ben. Randolph got us clicking, humming, swaying, singing in rounds and then finally drawing on his African-Caribbean heritage, he talked to us about the spirituals we were to sing at the summer concert. We worked to absorb what he had to say about the slaves' day, their sheer exhaustion, into our singing of Deep River. His reaction to our singing of this was a very moving end to a joyful morning.

In addition to all this music, we had three social events, a Quiz night which raised about £1000, a Christmas meal at one of our favourite pubs and ended the year at the HCS summer party in the Blaker's stunning garden. Special thanks to Fi, Emma Beasley, Jane Gardiner, Judy & Toby Greenwood, Ginnie & Robin Batchelor-Smith and to the many who were engaged in running the quiz night; to Jane Gardiner for organising the Christmas meal; to those who organised the summer party and to Peter and Hildegund for their generous hospitality. None of these events would be possible without a great band of other people willing to organise, help, lift, fix, drive phone, etc etc. Thank you each and every one of you.

New MD We start this season knowing that our concert in March will be Ben's farewell concert. We are so sorry that you are leaving, Ben, and we will miss your skill and expertise but I want to reassure HCS that we have an appointment committee in place and a programme for advertising and auditioning. This will be a very important activity for us and we will do everything we can to ensure it runs smoothly and successfully.

Constitution: last year, we worked to produce a revised constitution. The new constitution arises from work that **Melissa Maple** started when she was chair and the version you will be asked to accept tonight is clearer, reflects what we actually do and meets requirements of the Charity Commission. I am deeply indebted to **Arthur Weir** who patiently advised on the legal niceties and drafted about 7 versions before we reached the final version. I am also grateful to Fi, Sally and Stephen who commented on the various versions and to members of HCS who have sent comments on the final draft. I would like to record thanks to Melissa for setting up the task and for the large amount of work that **Arthur** has put into this task over many months.

Youth choir: Just over 12 months ago, Jo Dickson, Fi Harding, Sally Clark, Wendy Hawkins launched the Henley Choral Society's Youth Workshops – Henley Youth Choir for short. Ben proved to be a terrific motivating MD of the new youth choir and in addition to taking rehearsals he undertook a number of workshops in schools around Henley. The numbers of children rose and before long, we had two Youth Choirs – a senior and a junior choir. Alfie Hay, Sally Palmer, Barbara Ratings, Stephen Fisher, Felicity Bazell, Claudia Klaver, Angela Law, Emma Beasley and the publicity team and Jan French have all contributed to the running and administration of these thriving Youth Choirs. This has been a great success and I warmly congratulate all involved on this highly successful venture. As we move into the HYC's second season, we have a firm financial basis and lots of children spending time singing. I feel we are contributing to Henley's musical heritage: glorious!

Many, many of you contribute to the running of our choirs and the more who volunteer, the lighter the load. I now need to highlight some and beg your forgiveness if I leave out! You will notice that many of the names crop up more than once!

Voice Reps. You are essential to the democratic running of the choir as well as being the main conduit for contact between committee, MD and members. Bernard, Jenny, Meg, Jenny and Paul, thank you for everything you have done over the last year. Not only do you keep us all informed but all of you do additional tasks, workshop organising, taking minutes when necessary, loading and unloading the van, erecting and dismantling the staging, helping with putting out and packing away the chairs and so on.

Officers of HCS

On behalf of all of you I would like to thank **Stephen Fisher** who has served a HCS treasurer for 3 years. Stephen has been a great treasurer, careful, cautious and very quick to respond to requests. He has regularly guided us through budgeting for concerts as well as the annual income and expenditure. He is leaving our finances in good shape and in very good hands. Thank you Stephen. I would also like to thank **Nigel Grundy** who quietly gets on with the relentless job of banking money – a big job after concerts and other events.

Special thanks to **Fi Harding** who works tirelessly for HCS most of it unseen by the members. Fi liaises between HCS and venues, negotiating dates and costs; she writes reports; minutes meetings; keeps us all in touch with each other; reads and comments on documents that are circulated; and acts as a great liaison person between voice reps and our Musical Director. She is always smiling and charming and seems to have endless energy.

Special thanks too, to **Sally Clark** who this year has taken on a new role of Vice Chair. Sally has worked hard on many projects and been a great support to me. I would especially like to thank her for her innervations, the signing-up to jobs for concert preparation and for working with Fi to produce the highly efficient seating plans for concerts. Reading Concert Hall will certainly be a challenge but one I know she will crack. She is also a great proof reader, always ready with helpful comments and always so sunny.

Angela Law and Emma Beasley have led a terrific publicity team including **Cath Reynolds** who nurtures our website. The materials they produce give us a professional look and those, with the press releases and interviews they arrange, help to lift our profile. Thank you both for a truly great, professional job.

Judy Greenwood and Toni Aikin I would like to thank **Judy** for working with Angela and Emma to produce the concert programmes and to thank **Toni** for her trekking around Henley looking for advertisers for our programmes. The advertising revenue contributes to covering the cost of our concerts.

Felicity Bazell deserves many thanks for organising the music we sing from – rent or buy – this is a really big, essential job. Felicity thinks ahead and reminds us that she needs to know what to order in good time. Every week, Felicity is here, with her spare copies and each term sorts out the distribution of new music and then, after concerts, the return of the hire copies. Please, please help her by returning your copies as requested, on the dot. Late or no returns costs HCS a considerable sum of money.

Concert managers: Francis Piesse has been an absolute essential person in organising the heavy work required to erect and dismantle the staging for each concert as well as organising the storage of the staging. And so much more; contacts for electrics, screens, and fun outings seem to be in his remit as well. **Nick Richardson**, who is very experienced with the staging, will be taking on Francis' role although I expect to see Francis on site for a long time yet. Thank you Francis for all the hours and thank you Nick for coming forward to take on this role. This year will be challenging – only one concert (well 2 but on the same day) using the staging at St Mary's but then different challenges organising us at Reading Concert Hall and the Christ Church Centre in the summer. I would also like to highlight thanks to **Peter Ransome** who is always available, sane and reliable, checking and refining the lighting of our concerts, and all the many members of HCS who roll up their sleeves, get the staging in and out of the van and erected and dismantled and stored away. This is tricky heavy work and we only manage to get it done in a timely manner because so many of you turn up to help. Many thanks to you all. Without a big team, this job would stretch way into the night.

Membership Secretary As we all know, **Wendy Hawkins** is Henley Choral Society. Not only does she take care of members, especially new members, but she gives us extra coaching, helps us memorise German words, organises the stewards for concerts, makes sure there are presentations for soloists, sells tickets, is a leading light at the Youth Choirs and so on. We all owe you a really big, special thank you Wendy.

Cakes and Ale: our events are always fun events and a glass of wine or tea and cakes helps make the event. Thank you to **Peter Ashby** and **Nigel Grundy** and their helpers for running a bar at concerts and other events. Thanks to **Meg Ashby, Jenny Wager, Mary Wood, Jo Farr** and the many other women who bake and serve tea and cakes on the occasions when they are not serving wine.

Ticket Sales Thanks to Jan French who master minds the tricky job of selling tickets. You do a great job, Jan.

Secretary to HCS Friends: Jan Stanton took over this role from me last year. Sadly, Jan has left the choir but I would like to thank her for her work over the past year.

Carol Brook-Partridge has been helpful liaising between HCS and St Mary's and I am also grateful to **Mary Wood**. Thanks to both of you.

Mike Hails raises an extraordinary amount of money each year on the wine raffle. He also sells people's produce (often the Hawkins') and concert tickets, when asked and reads and comments on stuff I send out! Many thanks, Mike.

John Legh and his son Hugh do a great job assisting with the staging and lighting our concerts and Hugh has been helpful liaising re the Living Advent Calendar. Thanks to both.

And finally to the professionals – who accompany, direct and coach us so magnificently.

David Smith: thank you Dave, for coming along every week, braving the dreaded M4 and playing like an angel when you arrive. You always seem to be so in tune with Ben and then when you practise through the break – well – you really, really delight your fans!

Benjamin Goodson: as you know, Ben, we are all so sorry that we are not able to keep you longer. You are an inspirational musical director, full of feeling for the music we labour to sing, a great teacher, full of energy, ambitious and a real pleasure to work with. I guess we all knew that we would not be able to hold onto all this talent for very long but we continue to value you while we have you. Thank you for all your teaching, tutoring, good advice and above all ... patience.

4 Treasurer's Report

SF stated that financially the 2014-15 year was a good one with a surplus of income over expenditure of £4,401.75. This compares with a figure of £1,476.21 for 2013-14 and excludes Henley Youth Choir activities which have been recorded separately. The balances in the bank accounts at the end of the year totalled £25,056.96 for Henley Choral Society and £6,924.00 for Henley Youth Choir.

There was a loss of £2,457.03 across the three concerts performed during the year which was against a budgeted loss figure of £3,834.00. The St John Passion Workshop made a profit of £655.00.

The gift aid claim submitted for the 2014-15 year was for £3,228.75 which was an increase on the previous year's figure of £2,637.50. Higher subscriptions and a few more members signing a declaration helped to achieve this increase.

SF thanked Nigel Grundy and Mike Hails for their help in banking cash and cheques and also Yolanda Goldthorpe for agreeing to take over as Treasurer – he wished her well in her new role.

SF then briefly went through the Accounts Summary for 2014-15 (that all members had received a copy of):

HENLEY CHORAL SOCIETY - ACCOUNTS SUMMARY 2014-2015

| | 1st Sep 2014 | | | 31st Aug 2015 |
|--|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | Opening Balance | Income | Expenditure | Closing Balance |
| CAF Bank Current | £53.23 | 66,963.47 | 66,816.70 | £200.00 |
| CAF Bank Deposit | £15,402.25 | 19,884.56 | 3,650.00 | £31,636.81 |
| HSBC Current | £6,268.15 | 1,376.00 | 7,500.00 | £144.15 |
| Total in Bank Accounts * | | | | £31,980.96 |
| Overall increase/decrease for the year ** | | | | £10,257.33 |

* Of this figure £6,924.00 is the balance owing to the Henley Youth Choir at the end of the financial year

** Of this figure £5,855.58 relates to HYC activities and so the increase for HCS is £4,401.75

NB The above Income and Expenditure figures include transfers between the accounts

| Concerts | Income | Expenditure | Profit/Loss | Budget |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Christmas | 5,211.62 | 4,335.40 | £876.22 Profit | £805.00 Profit |
| Spring | 8,122.48 | 12,849.51 | £4,727.03 Loss | £5,679.00 Loss |
| Summer | 4,919.71 | 3,525.93 | £1,393.78 Profit | £1,040.00 Profit |
| | | | £2,457.03 Loss | £3,834.00 Loss |
| St John Passion Workshop | 2,394.00 | 1,464.66 | £929.34 Profit | £655.00 Profit |

We can look to Friends' Donations, Raffle Income and Gift Aid to cover the net loss on the three concerts

Income streams and cost centres**2014-2015 Income**

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Ticket sales | £16,543.20 | Includes £2,394.00 re SJP Workshop |
| Programme sales | £778.85 | |
| Members' subs | £21,565.00 | Includes £7,635.00 HYC Workshop Fees |
| Friends' Donations | £2,896.00 | |
| Gift aid tax relief | £2,638.26 | =2013/14 Claim-14/15 claim submitted £3,228.75 |
| Bank interest | £48.57 | |
| Donations | £4,714.00 | Includes £4,394.00 re HYC |
| Hire and sales of music to members | £1,862.90 | |
| Advertising revenue | £2,875.00 | £275.00 from 2013/14 - £350 o/s for 2014/15 |
| Bar takings (net) | £485.34 | |
| Sundry | £2,830.92 | Includes £265.50 re HYC |
| Income from Raffle | £1,335.99 | |
| Total | £58,574.03 | |

2014-2015 Expenditure

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|---|
| Conductor's fees | £11,835.00 | Includes £3,320.00 re HYC+£1,285.00 re W/Ss |
| Acccompanists' fees | £4,965.00 | Includes £825.00 re HYC+£335.00 re W/Ss |
| Orchestra fees | £7,008.70 | |
| Soloists' fees | £3,278.90 | Includes £150.00 re SJP Workshop |
| Other fees | £2,217.10 | |
| Hall hire | £4,206.70 | Includes £679.70 re HYC |
| Equipment hire | £3,805.84 | |
| Music hire | £368.11 | |
| Music purchase | £2,632.77 | Includes £687.97 re HYC |
| Publicity | £3,794.73 | Includes £283.80 re HYC+£66.50 re SJP W/S |
| Sundry | £4,203.85 | Includes £642.45 re HYC |
| Total | £48,316.70 | |

Breakdown of larger items of Sundry Income and Expenditure

(Not Concert or Workshop related)

| Sundry Income | £ |
|---|--|
| Quiz Night | 1127.34 |
| Summer Party - ticket and raffle sales | 700.00 |
| Hiring out staging units | 444.00 (£300.00 donation from Rupert House School) |
| EasyFundraising (on-line purchases) | 56.46 |
| Sales of marmalade and calendars | 137.20 |
| Sundry Expenditure | £ |
| 'Making Music' Subscription & Insurance | 475.00 |
| Expenses re Friends' Mailings | 216.27 |
| Printing of Newsletters | 393.80 |
| Quiz Night Expenses | 171.44 |
| Summer Party Expenses | 162.93 |
| Ben Goodson – Committee Mtgs | 235.00 |
| Deposit to Reading Concert Hall | 592.50 |

Re Dream of Gerontius 2016

| Other fees | £ |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Re-design of HCS Website | 945.00 |
| Accountancy Fees | 85.00 |
| Equipment Hire | £ |
| Container Hire (Staging) | 574.08 |
| Container Site Rental | 998.40 |
| Workshops | |
| Costs for Nov 14 & April 15 Workshops | 1360.00 |

SF stated that HCS Members' Subscriptions would not increase 2015-16 & remain at £120.

The HCS Accounts 2014-15 were passed, proposed by Michael Kay and seconded by Mike Hails.

5 Musical Director's Report

6 New Constitution

Please see HCS Constitution 2015 attached.

SE stated that the officers and committee had been working for some time to refresh the HCS constitution so that it accurately reflected how HCS conduct our business. Over the past year we have worked through drafts with advice from Arthur Weir (tenor), a solicitor. The full committee have seen and commented on this version and agreed that it should be presented to the membership for ratification. As a Society, our objects remain broad, the same as in the original constitution, but the new form is now in line with requirements of the Charity Law 2011, as advised by the Charity Commission and Making Music, an advisory body and HCS insurers. As such, it permits HCS to run the Youth Workshops as we have been doing. The plan is to continue much as before, although the committee hope to make the financial arrangements more straightforward.

There was a unanimous vote from all HCS members in favour of the new HCS Constitution.

The new HCS Constitution was passed, proposed by Peter Ashby and seconded by Claudia Klaver.

7 Election of Treasurer, Alto Rep, Friends' Secretary & Concert Manager

Yolanda Goldthorpe was elected as Treasurer: proposed by Lynne-Felicity Highfield and seconded by Mark Turner.

Judy Greenwood was elected as Alto Rep: proposed by and seconded by Mary Wood.

Jana Hutchins was elected as Alto Rep: proposed by Hannah Cowling-Rees and seconded by Sally McEwen.

Arthur Weir was elected as Friends' Secretary: proposed by Trudy May and seconded by Lynne-Felicity Highfield.

Nick Richardson was elected as Concert Manager: proposed by Peter Ashby and seconded by Francis Piesse.

8 Re-Election of Officers and other Committee Members

Susan Edwards was re-elected as Chair: proposed by Celia Anderson and seconded by Julia Wells.

Sally Clark was re-elected as Vice Chair: proposed by Christine Valentine and seconded by Diana Piesse.

Fi Harding was re-elected as Secretary: proposed by Carol Brook-Partridge and seconded by Peter Ashby.

Felicity Bazell re-elected as Librarian: proposed by Cate Avery and seconded by Fi Harding.

Jana Hutchins re-elected as Assistant to Librarian: proposed by Cate Avery and seconded by Susan Edwards.

Wendy Hawkins was re-elected as Membership Secretary: proposed by Jane Hutton and seconded by Francis Piesse.

Judy Greenwood was re-elected as Programme Editor: proposed by Penny Kay and seconded by Sally Clark.

Lesley Smith was re-elected as Assistant to Programme Editor: proposed by Jane Hutton and seconded by Felicity Bazell.

Emma Beesley was re-elected as Publicity Officer: proposed by Lesley Smith and seconded by Hugh Richardson.

Catharina Reynolds was re-elected as Web & PR Administrator: proposed by Jo Dickson and seconded by Francis Piesse.

Jan French was re-elected as Tickets Secretary: proposed by Josie Peddie and seconded by Susan Edwards.

Meg Ashby was re-elected as Soprano Rep: proposed by Romey Poston and seconded by Jane Gardiner.

Jenny Wager was re-elected as Soprano Rep: proposed by Fi Harding and seconded by Susan Edwards.

Paul Clayden was re-elected as Tenor Rep: proposed by Peter Ashby and seconded by Nigel Grundy.

Bernard Carter was re-elected as Bass Rep: proposed by Sally Clark and seconded by Paul Clayden.

Francis Piesse was re-elected as Concert Manager: proposed by Peter Ashby and seconded by Hugh Richardson.

9 Any other business

Cate Avery asked about HCS Summer Term 2016 proposed programme & conductor.

SE stated that BG is forwarding on a list of names and addresses for potential temporary Musical Directors for the summer term. SE also hoped that, by giving a starting date for our newly appointed HCS conductor to be 'not later than 1st September', HCS could start the contract from 1st April should we select someone who has agreed to do the summer term. If the person who has agreed to do the summer term applies unsuccessfully for the HCS post, then she would hope that they would still honour the agreement for the summer term.

SE stated that the HCS committee will be spending some time thinking out all the possible permutations because it could become slightly more complicated if two (one for HCS & another for HYC) rather than one Musical Director are appointed.

No other business was brought to the meeting.

MM closed the meeting at 9.45pm