

HADLEIGH CHORAL SOCIETY
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on-line via Zoom held on Tuesday 1st September 2020

1. Welcome & Apologies

Liz Turnbull welcomed everyone attending. Apologies for absence had been received from Cath Anderson, Sally Caston, Sheila Harris, Bernard Woods, Marie Paddon, Jean Newble and Pru Simons.

2. Minutes of 2019 Annual General Meeting

The Minutes were approved. Proposed: Angela McGonnell; seconded: Gill Riddle. There were no votes against.

3. Minutes of 2019 Extraordinary General Meeting

The Minutes were approved. Proposed: Gill Riddle; seconded: Doreen Wilson. There were no votes against.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Conductor's Report - Chris Phelps

Chris said it had been a "weird" time, with the Easter, Summer and now Autumn concerts cancelled. He said he was looking forward to getting back together with the choir.

In terms of what we did do this year: Elijah – Chris felt that the soloists and semi-chorus had been wonderful, and the orchestra and chorus did a fantastic job, all giving of their best. It was a huge undertaking, especially as nothing was left out. Peter Newble's recording had borne out what he had said – it was not perfect, but "we got right the things we needed to get right".

To what we didn't do: Durufle, Bernstein, Vaughan Williams – Chris felt it would have been a very special concert, varied and demanding. The Summer concert had also fallen by the wayside. With regard to the Autumn concert – Dvorak's Requiem – the Music Committee had agreed that we would try and do this at the first opportunity a large-scale production would be possible.

To the future, Chris stated that we should do our very best to present something at Christmas. Whilst it would probably involve socially-distanced choir/audience, he proposed a small scale, half-hour work with half an hour of carols if possible. The Music Committee would be meeting shortly to look into this. Whilst Chris acknowledged it would be difficult, options being considered included holding 2 rehearsals a week with split choir (preferable to splitting soprs/altos from tenors/basses). Whatever was possible, he emphasised it was important to show that the Choir was still here, and intent on managing the situation.

6. Treasurer's Report (attached) – Laurie Denton

The accounts had been circulated to all members in advance of the meeting, and Laurie presented the Statement of Financial Activities. Two questions had been raised by members prior to the meeting, to which Laurie responded:

Sarah Roper: Were any costs paid for the cancelled concert, other than rehearsals costs for Chris, John etc.?

Cancellations costs to vocal and orchestral soloists: £810

Chris Phelps paid as contract, John Cooper paid up to last rehearsal on 10th March

Ansell Centre paid up to 17th March

Ipswich Library paid for full hire period for music

St Mary's Church had waived concert fee

Hillside Tabling had rolled forward deposit for hire of chairs to next concert

Sarah Roper: What is cost described as hire of chairs?

For concerts at St Mary's Church, we have to hire 120-150 chairs for choir/orchestra

Sarah Roper: What had to be repaired under note 4 Hire of Music and instruments?

Related to portable digital piano and tuning of harpsichords

Cath Anderson: Note 4 rehearsal venue, has Ansell Centre been paid in full for the year and how are we supporting them for benefit of everyone in area?

As mentioned, they were paid to 17th March 2020. Fees for 5 further bookings 20th April were waived (£140). The Committee has agreed to pay a retainer of £5 per rehearsal session for period 8/9/20 to 8/12/20 plus 5/1/21 and 9/1/21, amounting to 18 sessions (£80)

Cath Anderson: Query ongoing costs should the Society be unable to start up in near future

All costs are on rehearsal basis. There are a few overhead fixed costs but none material. There will be no need to fund costs from reserves whilst the Society is unable to rehearse; subscriptions will be suspended until the new year.

The Meeting adopted the Accounts. Proposed: Roger Loose; seconded: Jeffrey Rudman. There were no votes against.

7. Chairwoman's Report – Liz Turnbull

What a difference a year makes. Since last year's AGM, Liz said the Choir hadn't met for 5 months, our Spring and Summer concerts had been abandoned and we had no idea when we would be able to return to normal. However, she stated that the Committee was working hard to keep the Society alive, that HCS was an important strand in the arts fabric of our region and could not be allowed to fall by the wayside.

Elijah proved to be a monumental challenge but the concert was spectacular – a huge undertaking which the large audience enjoyed. A Celebration of Christmas produced a lovely programme with harp accompaniment and featuring Serendipity, with a larger audience that might have been expected and generous donations to Cancer Information at Ipswich Hospital.

Desert Island Discs during the Autumn term was a great success – a wonderfully sociable occasion for the Choir and very useful fund-raiser. HCS also participated in Hadleigh on Show in October, a showcase for all the societies and activities in the town.

The Spring production brought new challenges, with extra rehearsals/sectionals to master the Chichester Psalms and the Hebrew. The Durufle was difficult and then we had the Mystical Songs to negotiate. Just as the Choir was beginning to get the measure of it, the Coronavirus locked us down.

There have been changes to the Committee. Liz thanked all the members for their help and support, particularly in dealing with meetings via Zoom and the demands of cancelling activities/concerts. Helen had taken over from Jessica as Secretary and Laurie had worked hard to re-align the accounts to make them more understandable and transparent. Moya is stepping down as Vice-Chair but will be staying on the Committee to co-ordinate fund-raising events. The position of VC is therefore vacant and Liz asked for someone to step up to that post in preparation for a new Chair in 2021. Sue Macdiarmid has stood down as Librarian - Barbara Yorke-Edwards will take on her duties, although will not join the committee.

For the future, Liz said the Committee was keeping abreast of guidelines and as the Ansell Centre is beginning to open up, researching how rehearsals could start again, with social distancing/hygiene/risk assessment in place. From our survey, 85% of Choir said they were willing to return once the necessary provisions had been

put in place. The Choir is in urgent need of an individual or small group to co-ordinate our Covid compliance so would anyone willing to help please come forward.

Liz thanked Chris for his unfailing enthusiasm and belief in HCS, and our accompanist, John. There are many more who help to keep the Society running, too many to mention, but Liz expressed her appreciation and thanked them all. Finally, Liz stated her belief that we would get back to rehearsals, performing and being Hadleigh Choral Society again.

8. Election of Committee/Officers

Sue Macdiarmid was standing down. No nominations had been received to replace Moya as Vice-Chair. As the remainder of the Committee were willing to continue serving, Liz Turnbull proposed the Meeting vote on block. Proposed: Nansi Browne; seconded: Donald Green. Vote carried, no votes against.

Liz willing to serve one more year as Chair, Laurie Denton – Treasurer, Helen Rogerson – Secretary. Liz proposed vote on block. Proposed: John Bray; seconded: Maggie Quinlan. Vote carried, none against.

9. Serendipity Report – Nansi Brown

Nansi re-stated what Serendipity is for. First and foremost, a group of singers who love singing together, exploring wide and varied repertoire. Secondly, to provide a service to the wider community, providing music for charity and fund-raising events, private parties and community projects. Nansi stated that Serendipity regularly contributed their earnings to the Society although they were not primarily a fund-raising group.

Nansi reported that between January and December 2019, Serendipity sang at 4 weddings and 3 funerals, along with several other performances including a concert of mainly sacred music at St Joseph's Catholic Church, St Mary Elms Advent Service, The Shelley Carol Service, Chelsworth Christmas Fair. The activity which pleased Nansi most was their visits to the Hadleigh Dementia Group, and she was keen to restart this as soon as allowed.

Nansi said she was watching official government advice closely and was very keen that something could be worked out in time for Christmas.

10. Friends Report – Angela McGonnell

Angela reported that there were currently 25 members of the Friends, but despite 4 new members being recruited this year, numbers were declining. Angela said it was hard to forecast whether the Friends would want to continue their support in these uncertain times.

Going forward, Angela said she would like to propose the resumption of the Diner's Club, which many of the Friends and choir members had really enjoyed in the past. This could also generate further income and encourage more Friends to join, including ex-choir members. Angela said she hadn't heard from any Friends regarding a refund of their subscription or that they might be considering leaving, which was encouraging.

11. Any Other Business

Jeffrey Rudman asked if we were able to perform in the Spring, what would the music be? Chris responded that it was impossible to say at the moment, but probably not Dvorak's Requiem as had been hoped, in view of current restrictions.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm

HR 18/9/20