

The Lllysfaen Singers

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 22nd July 2020

[This meeting was conducted by Zoom Video-conference](#)

Attendees: Susan Anthony, Angela Archer, Joanna Burdett, Val McBroom, Bronwen Andrews, Martin Bye (MRB), Alison Dickinson, Cath Evans, Kath Evans, Bruce Cross, Viv Griffiths, Harriet Jenkins, Tom Lazell (TL), Anne McGuffin (AMcG), Peter McGuffin, Karen Mingay, Eirlys McNeil-Watson, Diane Rhoden, Emma Smith, Carolyn Tranfield (CT), Jan Jones, Maria Konsbruck, Philip Husband, Bryn Ennis, Ann Lewis.

Apologies: Lorraine White, Jane Williams, Gloria Lindsay, Kathryn Armitage, Simon Armitage

1. Opening Remarks

AMcG welcomed Choir members and referred members to the AGM minutes of 3rd July 2019 and actions arising therefrom.

2. Actions Arising

- 2.1 {Item 4, (viii) (a)} Starting a school choir. Carolyn has spoke with the teacher in charge of the choir at Lllysfaen Primary School. This will be revisited when the local school is back to normal. Action: CT
- 2.2 {Item 4, (viii) (b)} Accessing recordings. It appears from discussions with Ian that SoundCloud is running out of space. We may need to pay for more space. An alternative (Google Drive) is being investigated. Action: TL
- 2.3 {Item 9.1} TL will consider more Tenor and Bass spotlights in forthcoming concerts. Action: TL
- 2.4 {Item 9.2} Performing more medleys. On hold pending return to normal rehearsals. Action: TL
- 2.5 {Item 9.3} Regular entry in the Lisvane Link calendar. Action completed.

3. Chair's Report

See Appendix 1.

4. Music Director's Report

See Appendix 2. TL also mentioned the possibility of setting up a "virtual choir".

Action: TL

5. Treasurer's Report

See Appendices 3 and 4.

6. Election of Officers and Committee

6.1 Anne McGuffin had previously indicated that she is not seeking re-election and is therefore standing down as Chair. Joanna Burdett has agreed to be nominated as the incoming Chair of the Choir, thus relinquishing her position as Social Secretary. Kath Evans has agreed to be nominated as the new Social Secretary. No other nominations were forthcoming.

Remaining Committee members have indicated their willingness to be nominated for a further year. The 2020/21 Committee is as follows (Emma Smith proposed and Eirlys McNeil-Watson seconded). Approved unanimously.

- i) Chair: Joanna Burdett
- ii) Secretary: Martin Bye
- iii) Treasurer: Carolyn Tranfield
- iv) Committee Members:
 - Soprano Rep: Alison Dickinson
 - Alto Rep: Karen Mingay
 - Bass/Tenor Rep: Peter McGuffin
- v) Librarian: Cath Lynn
- vi) Social Secretary: Kath Evans

6.2 Following the election, Anne’s contribution to the running of the Choir was recognised in “appreciations” by several members.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Karen has been in touch with Susan Foster in connection with organising a community event to celebrate the life of Alan Prosper.

Action: KM

7.2 The question of subscriptions for next term was raised. It was agreed that this matter would be included in the agenda for the next Committee meeting – to be arranged.

Action: MRB

7.3 Choir questionnaire completed last term showed nearly all members were in favour of organised choir social events. This will be actioned at an appropriated point in the future.

Action: JB/KE

8. The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Martin Bye
23rd July 2020

Appendix 1

Chair's Report: Llysfaen Singers Annual General Meeting 22nd July 2020

In normal circumstances, the Chair's report would consist of a summary of the Choir's achievements over the previous year with thanks to all those who have helped make them happen. It would highlight the 2 concerts and other performances, mention the charities we would be supporting and appreciate the efforts of our Musical Director, Accompanist, Guest Singers and Committee members.

This year all that has been turned on its head. Covid-19 has shut us down. Rehearsals ceased abruptly in mid March and at the time of writing it remains unclear when we can restart singing as a choir once again. All our lives have been changed by this epidemic and loss of the weekly opportunity to make music has been keenly felt.

When rehearsals ceased in March we were looking forward to our summer concert. We were practising a mix of new material alongside some of our previous repertoire and everything was progressing nicely. We had no inkling until almost the last minute that we would have to stop so suddenly and completely for months. Communal singing is one activity where the lifting of "lockdown" will take longer due to the increased risk of transmitting viral particles. Hence we will have to be even more patient before we can meet again in person.

However our Christmas concert was a great success and much enjoyed. The report in the Lisvane Link written by Ann Doubler's husband Paul was fulsome in its praise of our efforts. Once again Tom had devised a mixed programme of new material as well as old favourites from our back catalogue. Our guest soloists were Heledd Eleri and Gwen Moucher our very own Accompanist! Heledd sang the "Alto's lament" which as an Alto myself had me convulsed in laughter – the words are so true! She also reprised "The twelve days of Christmas" which also has very funny lyrics. Gwen was able to temporarily leave her supporting role of our vocal efforts to shine as a soloist herself by playing "Sonatine" by Ravel. For the choir, "Finnish Oik" - which I think it's fair to say is a choir favourite - got proceedings off to a good start. Our efforts to sing in German, French and even Welsh were much appreciated. Something which we should try to do more of in the future in my opinion. We all enjoyed Peter Gwatkin and Bryn Ennis's solos in "Star of Wonder". It's wonderful to see members of the choir confident enough to take a solo in front a full Memorial Hall audience. More of this please.

However, our Christmas concert was followed by a devastating accident for one of our most well loved choir members. Alan Prosper, our President, slipped and fell on patch of ice outside his house after returning from the concert. His fractured hip led to a protracted time in hospital and although he returned home, he sadly died at the end of June. We will feel his loss keenly as he was a founder member of the choir and continued singing well into his 90s.

Two other former choir members also died during the past year. Peter Gough (bass) and Beryl Bowen (tenor) were also both founder members of the choir; indeed Beryl had also served as secretary, although both had left due to ill health and frailty. One of the joys of singing is that we can continue well into our senior years – voice permitting. However this also means that we lose members too. We shall miss them all.

Despite the Covid-19 shut down your Committee has continued its work and we have had one "virtual" meeting and exchanged a lot of emails. There has been much to consider: how to retain Tom and Gwen's services during an extremely difficult time for them (we are paying them, both a retainer); whether to hold this meeting virtually on line or wait until we could risk meeting face to face (we decided on the former). As I write we need to decide what to do about keeping our slot at the Memorial Hall since we have no idea when it is likely that we can restart rehearsals again. Also there is the financial difficulty of not having any income (subs) with which to pay retainers etc.

However, your committee: Martin Bye (Secretary), Carolyn Tranfield (Treasurer), Cath Lynn (Librarian), voice reps: Alison Dickinson (Sopranos), Karen Mingay (Altos) Peter McGuffin (Tenors and Basses), Joanne Burdett (Social Secretary) have been working hard on your behalf and I am most grateful for all their efforts.

Of course we wouldn't be a choir without the huge efforts of Tom Lazell our fantastic Musical Director and Gwen Moucher our wonderful Accompanist (and sometime Deputy Musical Director). We are so fortunate to have two such talented enthusiastic and endlessly patient people to support our music-making. Thank you both!

Finally, this is the last time I shall write this report as Chair as I have decided that after 6 years it was time for me to move aside. I have enjoyed chairing the Choir immensely and I am so grateful to fellow Committee members for making the job so easy! My especial thanks are to Tom, Gwen, Martin and Carolyn who are extremely professional, diligent and supportive in their respective roles. I shall miss working with you all so much.

So finally, I would like to say how much of a privilege and honour it has been to be your Chair over the past 6 years. Of course, I will continue singing with you all and support your new Chair as much as they wish. Good-bye and hope to see you all in person very soon.

Appendix 2

Musical Director's Report 2020

Well, what a year it's been! It's hard to believe how quickly the time has flown since lockdown began in March, and it's very hard to believe that we have gone through 4 months of basically no activity what so ever. We haven't sung for 4 months, and we may not be able to see each other again straight away after the summer, but I'm sure that as time goes by we will be singing together again very soon I'm sure.

Let's go back to the start of the year on a warm September evening (The perfect weather to rehearse Christmas songs in...), I'd just started working at Chepstow School and we were all really excited for the year ahead. I'd chosen lots of new repertoire for our Christmas concert, some of which was quite challenging. You absolutely rose to the challenge and we all put on a fantastic performance for our Christmas Concert. The audience seemed thrilled, and your Welsh Pronunciation was excellent (Chepstow School Head of Welsh Certified opinion!). I know that singing in Welsh is something that is quite daunting for a lot of you, however you actually do a really good job of singing in different languages.

Our summer concert this year unfortunately didn't happen thanks to Covid-19. I was so upset to see the news that we had to stop rehearsals all together. That period of time was quite the whirlwind for all of us. To put it into perspective, On Monday 16th March I was preparing my Year 11 and 13 pupils for exams. Wednesday 18th March, exams were cancelled. Friday 20th March, last day in school. Since Lockdown began I have had to put all of my energy into providing as much as I can, from home, for my pupils. Not just work but wellbeing as well.

I have had many questions from my music students, which I'm sure will also be on your lips as well, such as 'Do we know when we can sing again?' and 'Will choir and orchestra start back in September?'. The answer to this question, I'm afraid, is that we don't know yet. Believe me, I would love to start back in September as normal, but we just have to see how the ground lies in 6 weeks time. I want you to feel safe in the knowledge that your health is my top priority, and the last thing I want to do is to put any of you at risk.

But, it's not all doom and gloom! Oxford University are currently running tests and studies on how singing can spread Covid 19. There was an article in the Guardian this morning featuring Cheltenham Choral Society (funnily enough, Alex Thacker's new choir!) as the test subjects. Hopefully this will provide some answers for us soon! The one thing to remember, is that sound waves do not transmit viruses. It has been proven that Wind and Brass Instruments do not produce any air, so from what we gather, it looks like Orchestras can be given the green light to start up again in due course. Like I said, hopefully this study at Oxford will provide some more answers for us in due course.

It's now at this point where I'd normally discuss future plans with you all. If I'm honest, at this current time it's very difficult to discuss future plans. I have a Christmas repertoire list ready to go just in case, as if by magic, all of a sudden in September we can start up again. However there will be no new music in this list, as we don't know

what the turn around time will be, and it takes a while for new music to come through. We may not even end up using this repertoire list, who knows?! But it's always good to be prepared. Something else however which would be achievable in these current times is to try and put to together a virtual choir performance. I'm sure you've seen the many different projects going around, and they are good fun and often well received. If you as a choir are willing to do it, then please do say, and we can see what we can do!

I now just want to say a few words about our president, Alan Prosper, who passed away recently. Alan was a fantastic character to have in the choir. He was always singing really well and trying his best, and always knew how to make people laugh and smile. From my point of view, he was someone who was very supportive and kind during the early part of my conducting career, and this support was greatly received, as it's always scary starting a new job and we were all still getting to know each other. I'm sure that you all agree with me, Alan will be missed dearly by all of us, and this was clear to see, from the amount of people who lined the streets on the day of his funeral to bid him farewell and give him one last round of applause. He wasn't just our fellow chorister, he was our friend, and we will miss him dearly.

Before I finish, I just want to say a huge thank you to the committee for your fantastic and continuous support, to all of you for singing so well and working so hard in and out of rehearsals. Your hard work doesn't go un-noticed. And of course, a huge thank you to my right hand woman Gwen. She is a fabulous accompanist and will take on any challenge thrown at her, and I feel so lucky to be able to say that I work with one of my best friends.

So, as I end every conductors report in the AGM in the words of Looney Tunes: That's all folks! Have a great summer and I'll see you soon!

Appendix 3

Treasurer's Report

The Choir's financial year finishes on 5th April. The most recent set of accounts therefore cover the period up to our last rehearsal before lockdown. Many thanks to Craig Lewis, Ann's husband, who checked these accounts to make sure that they are true reflection of the choir's finances.

The profit for the year was £360 compared to £1062 for the previous year. The main reason for the fall in profits is that just before the financial year-end we paid retainers to both Tom and Gwen to cover the period of lockdown up to the summer holidays.

We had two very successful concerts during the year. The summer concert made a profit of £979 out of which we made donations of £200 each to Cardiff Foodbank and Llamau. The Christmas concert made £949. We have always been reliant on these concerts to keep us afloat. Our income from choir members' termly subs does not cover the costs of paying Tom and Gwen and hiring the Memorial Hall. During the year to 5 April 2020 there was a shortfall of £172.

Looking ahead, there are many uncertainties. We don't know when we will be able to re-start rehearsals (and therefore start to earn some income again) and, when we do, whether our membership numbers will be affected. Similarly, we do not know what our outgoings will be in the period before we re-start. As Anne mentioned in her report we have been paying retainers to Tom and Gwen and, at the time of writing we don't know if we will have to pay anything to keep our Wednesday evening slot in the Memorial Hall. We have a healthy balance in the bank at the moment but this will very quickly diminish if we can't start rehearsing and holding concerts in 2021.

Finally, I'd like to personally thank Anne for all her hard work as chair of the committee over the last 6 years. I wish her well in her "retirement"!

Appendix 4

**LLYSCFAEN SINGERS
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	YEAR ENDED 05/04/20 £	YEAR ENDED 05/04/19 £
INCOME		
SUBSCRIPTIONS	5120	5061
CONCERT TICKET SALES:		
SUMMER	738	728
CHRISTMAS	776	915
RAFFLE TICKET SALES:		
SUMMER	220	213
CHRISTMAS	188	258
BAR TAKINGS:		
SUMMER	151	141
CHRISTMAS	153	162
OTHER INCOME:		
A.G.M	50	51
SALE OF FOLDERS	7	28
	<u>7403</u>	<u>7557</u>
EXPENDITURE		
HALL HIRE	1182	1369
MUSIC PURCHASES/HIRE	754	721
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	2178	1820
PIANIST	1932	1430
RELIEF PIANIST	0	70
CONCERT COSTS:		
SUMMER	130	224
CHRISTMAS	168	232
DONATIONS	400	200
OTHER COSTS:		
PURCHASE OF FOLDERS	0	198
AGM	29	19
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AFFILIATION	10	10
MAKING MUSIC AFFILIATION, PRS & INSURANCE	260	202
OTHER		
	<u>7043</u>	<u>6495</u>
	£	£
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	360	1062
Surplus brought forward at 06/04/2019	2871	1809
Surplus carried forward at 05/04/2020	<u>£3,231</u>	<u>£2,871</u>
Represented by		
Balance at bank at 05/04/2020	3231	
less unrepresented cheques	0	
	<u>£3,231</u>	

I certify that the above is a true and fair reflection of the books and records and bank statements of the Llyscfaen Singers.

Craig Lewis
14 June 2020