

The Llysfaen Singers

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 7th July 2021

Attendees: Carol Barrett, Joanna Burdett (JB), Chris Burdett, Cath Lynn, Val McBroom, Martin Bye (MRB), Alison Dickinson, Kath Evans, Tom Lazell (TL), Gloria Lindsay, Helen Husband, Anne McGuffin, Peter McGuffin, Eirlys McNeil-Watson, Lorraine White, Carolyn Tranfield (CT), Philip Husband, Bryn Ennis, Ann Lewis, Kathryn Armitage, Simon Armitage.

Apologies: Angela Archer, Cath Evans, Keith Ingram, Karen Mingay, Jan Jones, Diane Roden, Iona Picton, Linda Halloran, Jane Williams.

1. Opening Remarks

JB welcomed Choir members, thanking those present for attending. Members were referred to the AGM minutes of 22nd July 2020, which were approved.

2. Actions Arising from the AGM Minutes of 2020

2.1 {Item 4, (viii) (a)} Starting a school choir. This item will be revisited when Llysfaen Primary School is back to normal. No further action needed at the present time.

CT to note

2.2 {Item 4, (viii) (b)} Accessing recordings. It appears from discussions with Ian Shopland that SoundCloud is running out of space. An alternative (Google Drive) has been investigated by Tom and should be available by the start of next term.

2.3 Tenor and Bass spotlights in forthcoming concerts will be actioned when normal rehearsals resume.

TL to note

2.4 Community event to celebrate the life of Alan Prosper. This was cancelled in 2021, but will be revisited once a new date is confirmed.

2.5 Regular entry in the Lisvane Link calendar. Action completed.

2.6 Organised social events. These are now being held on a regular basis.

3. Chair's Report

The Report was read out to Members and is also attached as Appendix 1.

4. Music Director's Report

The Music Director's Report was circulated in advance of the meeting and is attached as Appendix 2.

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report and accounts for the year ending 2021 were circulated in advance of the meeting and are attached as Appendices 3 and 4.

6. Review of the Constitution

An amendment to Paragraph 9.1 of the Constitution, is proposed as follows:

Current wording: "The financial year shall end on 31st March."

Amended wording: "The financial year shall end on 5th April."

In advance of the meeting, all members were notified of the proposed change, namely that our accounting year historically has ended on 5th April. We therefore wish to bring our practice into conformity with the Choir's Governing Document. The proposed change has been discussed with the Charity Commission and it is considered an acceptable administrative change to our Constitution.

A resolution to make the change was put forward: Proposed by Cath Lynn; Seconded by Helen Husband. The motion to amend Paragraph 9.1 as noted above was carried unanimously.

7. Election of Officers and Committee

Karen Mingay has indicated that she is not seeking re-election to the Committee and is therefore standing down as Alto Representative. Karen's contribution to the running of the Choir was recognized.

As a consequence, Angela Archer has agreed to be nominated as the incoming Alto Rep (Proposed by Lorraine White; Seconded by Ann Lewis. No other nominations for Committee positions have been forthcoming.

The Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and all remaining Committee members had indicated their willingness to stand for a further year. (Re)election of the Committee (including the change to the Alto Rep position noted above) was proposed *en bloc* (Helen Husband) and seconded (Carol Barrett). The motion was carried unanimously.

8. Appointment of Auditor

Craig Lewis has kindly agreed to audit the accounts for year ending 2022.

9. Questions/Any Other Business

None

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.

Martin Bye

8th July 2021

Appendix 1

Chair's Report 2020/2021

Historically, the Chair's report would include a summary of achievements, an outline of the items sung in two concerts, announce which charities we would be supporting and thanking the contributions of many people.

Clearly, I cannot report on very much of that! Covid-19 has given us a tough and very challenging year. The Memorial Hall was closed in March 2020 and we were kept in lockdown away from each other for 15 months until just a few weeks ago in June 2021. Choir singing as a face-to-face activity has, like many social gatherings, been severely curtailed by social distancing laws. Thankfully, we have now returned to rehearsing in-person, albeit with a list of mitigations in place as long as your arm.

Not knowing when we would be back to rehearsing in-person, we decided in November that the only option open to us was to meet as a choir on Zoom: not a great option for singing together when you consider that this technology allows only one voice to be heard at a time (the antithesis of group singing). Nonetheless, Tom selected a brilliant morale-boosting repertoire that reflected the stoic mood of 'keeping together'. We could see the humorous side when Harriet's and Angela's cats joined in; when Karen's sons were told that at least one of them had to switch off the oven otherwise they'd have burnt pizza for tea; when we celebrated a couple of birthdays for Bronwen and Phil and all tried to sing without muting – all singing at different times and speeds with time lags galore. Not a symphony rather a cacophony! However, the introduction of backing tracks during rehearsals did go some way to add to the feeling of unity that you get when singing. It gave us some support, encouraging us to open our mouths and let out the scary sound that is our voice. My favourite quote from Tom is, 'I'm sure you all sounded lovely!'

Still, holding the choir on Zoom played a significant role in our social lives giving us the opportunity to see that, actually, there was still a real world out there. For me, opening up on Zoom and gradually seeing you all pop up on the screen, seeing you smiling and chatting like teeny tiny Honey-I-Shrunk-the-Kids made us all look forwards to Wednesday evenings once again and feel less isolated. I think it's true that we all got to know each other so much better through those pre-rehearsal chats. Gloria's guided tour of her new house was better than anything the National Trust can offer!

Socially, the choir has really taken off this year. I'm sure you will agree that taking part in extra activities, albeit mainly through Zoom, helped us to keep our sanity during that long period of lockdown. We were treated to a musical bingo evening, Christmas and Easter Quizzes, an absolutely hilarious scavenger hunt, and as soon as lockdown restrictions started to ease, a lovely evening's stroll through the village ending up at the Ty Mawr. The gradual opening up of the outside world is a huge relief to us all, but if there's one thing that we can take from the experience of lockdown is that the social side of choir, to many members, has been as important as the singing. The organising of such activities has been invaluable and has greatly improved our connections with each other. I really hope that such activities will continue in the future and that you will support them. Thanks go to Kath and her great organisational skills for all those very enjoyable occasions.

Despite Covid lockdown, your committee has been working hard holding virtual meetings, exchanging many emails and, latterly, going completely above and beyond their call of duty by cleaning the Memorial Hall before and after rehearsals. Balancing the books has been particularly challenging and finance has been discussed at every meeting. There will be no charitable donations this year as we have not had the opportunity to make any worthwhile profit from concerts. So, a big thank you goes to the members of the committee – Martin Bye (Secretary), Carolyn Tranfield (Treasurer), Alison Dickinson (Soprano rep), Karen Mingay (Alto rep), Peter McGuffin (Tenor and Bass rep), Cath Lynn (Librarian) and Kath Evans (Social Secretary). I thank them all very much for their time, their hard work and enthusiasm, their sense of humour and their perspective through a very tricky year. I am personally immensely grateful to Martin and Carolyn for guiding me through my first year as Chair and always being on hand to discuss a variety of ideas and to Carolyn for her stoic efforts in enabling us to keep our financial heads above water this year. To Tom and Gwen, our brilliant Musical Director and Accompanist, I also say a huge thank you, not only for taking the hit on your income, but for your passion, zest and great commitment to the choir when the going was tough and uncertain.

Looking forwards, boosting numbers will be our main focus for improvement next year. A good start has been made on this already by ensuring the wider community is aware of the great things that we do through regular articles in the Link, newsletters and frequent updates to our website. Thanks once again to Ian Shopland for his attentiveness in maintaining the Llysfaen Singers' website.

I save my final thank you, which goes to every member of the choir, for your magnificent achievements and support throughout the year. You have paid your fees even when we could only offer Zoom. Some of you even paid your fees despite knowing that your technology wasn't up to the job and couldn't join in. You've used reams of paper to print out music or uploaded to iPads that aren't easy to follow. You have completed survey after survey to decide what the best way forward was. You have joined in superbly with the social side and put up with my naff prizes. You have stuck with the choir even though we're wearing facemasks and sitting 2m apart. We're still here, thanks to you all, and are now raring to go forwards into an even better era post-Covid.

Thank you for your support during my first year as Chair. I am truly grateful for your many words of motivation, encouragement and thanks that I received throughout the year: it has meant a great deal to me. I just hope next year's going to be a bit easier!

Thank you everyone.

Appendix 2

Music Director's Report 2020/2021

Well, what a year! It certainly has been full of peaks and troughs, and I suppose it has been a quiet one on the choral scene. As you probably expect, this year's Musical Director's report is going to be short and sweet.

We started the year off still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this has meant we were unable to meet in person and make music together until June of this year. Nonetheless, this did not stop us! We were able to utilise the Zoom software to our advantage, and whilst we had to all be on mute, it was still lovely to see each other again and to be able to make music together to some degree. We were able to utilise the backing tracks on YouTube that I think also helped us out with singing along with the music we were performing.

After the Whitsun half term, the glorious moment came when we could all finally make music together in person, for the first time in 15 months. In all honesty, that first rehearsal made me feel quite emotional, and also quite proud of us for how far we've come in a period of time that has seemed like an eternity. Long may these rehearsals continue, and I really hope we can put on a performance of some form before 2021 is out. Obviously this would all be dependent on the current situation with COVID-19, but I remain hopeful that this will come to fruition.

I would like to finish by saying, thank you so much to my incredible accompanist Gwen, who has worked so hard and has been our rock within the choir throughout this time, and without whom many of the rehearsals (particularly online!) wouldn't have been possible. Also, thank you so much to the Committee. The Committee has been working tirelessly behind the scenes, putting together risk assessments, learning new technology, sorting out and organising all of the things we needed to be able to rehearse again in person. We are really lucky to have such a dedicated and brilliant Committee. Thank you also, for continuing to have faith in Gwen and me throughout this tough time, and for continuing to retain our services. It is much appreciated, particularly at a time where most artists have been forgotten.

And finally, thank you to all of you! Without your support, hard work and dedication to learning new technology (and battling with Wi-Fi!), we wouldn't have had any choir activity this year at all. I'm looking forward to the future, and I really hope we can keep making music together, in person, in September.

I wish you a wonderful and safe summer, and I can't wait to see you all again in September.

Appendix 3

Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 5 April 2021

This report covers the Choir's financial year, which runs from 6 April 2020 to 5 April 2021. Throughout that period we were not able to meet in person.

During the summer term of 2020 we paid Tom and Gwen a retainer of half their usual fees and did not ask choir members for any subscriptions as, at the time, we thought that things would be back to normal by September 2020. However, once it became obvious that the pandemic was here to stay, we started to arrange rehearsals and social events on Zoom and therefore felt justified in asking members for voluntary subscriptions whilst still paying Tom and Gwen for their time. Many thanks to all those members who paid these subscriptions and supported us through a difficult time.

As the accounts show our income for the year dropped to £1855 compared to £7403 for the previous year though there was also a comparable drop in expenditure. We even made a small profit although this is entirely due to reclaiming gift aid from HMRC; without this we would have made a loss of £411. Many thanks to Craig Lewis for checking over these accounts.

Going forward, once we start rehearsing in person on a regular basis our costs will rise to near their “old” levels but we expect our income from subscriptions to be lower than usual as some of our members may not feel able to return straight away and our numbers may well also be restricted by social distancing measures. We will also miss out on another Christmas concert, which would usually bring in a profit of about £1000. As a result I have applied for grant funding from several places and am delighted to say that, to date, we have obtained approximately £500 to buy PPE and “Rescue” funding of £2000 from Ty Cerdd.

In subsequent questions, PMcG enquired about the cash-back schemes (Easyfundraising and Amazon Smile) that the Choir had entered into during the year. In answer, CT commented that we have received nothing yet from Easyfundraising (subsequently checked and they only pay when you’ve raised more than £15). Amazon Smile paid us £5 recently.

Appendix 4

LLYSSAEN SINGERS INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	YEAR ENDED 05/04/21 £	YEAR ENDED 05/04/20 £
INCOME		
SUBSCRIPTIONS	1150	4560
GIFT AID	705	560
CONCERT TICKET SALES:		
SUMMER	0	738
CHRISTMAS	0	776
RAFFLE TICKET SALES:		
SUMMER	0	220
CHRISTMAS	0	188
BAR TAKINGS:		
SUMMER	0	151
CHRISTMAS	0	153
OTHER INCOME:		
A.G.M	0	50
SALE OF FOLDERS	0	7
	<u>1855</u>	<u>7403</u>
EXPENDITURE		
HALL HIRE	68	1182
MUSIC PURCHASES/HIRE	0	754
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	624	2178
PIANIST	469	1932
CONCERT COSTS:		
SUMMER	0	130
CHRISTMAS	0	168
DONATIONS	25	400
OTHER COSTS:		
WEBSITE COSTS	36	0
AGM	0	29
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AFFILIATION	10	10
MAKING MUSIC AFFILIATION, PRS & INSURANCE	220	260
ZOOM FEES	58	0
THANK YOU AND CONDOLENCE FLOWERS	52	0
	<u>1561</u>	<u>7043</u>
	£	£
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	294	360
Surplus brought forward at 06/04/2020	3231	2871
Surplus carried forward at 05/04/2021	<u>3525</u>	<u>3231</u>
Represented by		
Balance at bank at 05/04/2021	3525	3231
less unrepresented cheques	0	0
	<u>3525</u>	<u>3231</u>

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

Craig Lewis