

The Llysfaen Singers

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday, 13th July 2022

Attendees: Joanna Burdett (JB), Cath Lynn, Val McBroom, Martin Bye, Tom Lazell (TL), Gloria Lindsay, Helen Husband, Philip Husband, Kathryn Armitage, Simon Armitage, Angela Archer, Bruce Cross, Deelana Cottam, Ann Carroll, Maria Myint, Harriet Jenkins, Jan Jones, Bronwen Andrews.

Apologies: Ruth Marshall, Carol Barrett, Jane Williams, Carolyn Tranfield, Kath Evans, Alison Dickinson, Karen Mingay.

1. Opening Remarks

JB welcomed Choir members, thanking those present for attending. Members were referred to the AGM minutes of 22nd July 2021, which were approved.

2. Actions Arising from the AGM Minutes of 2021

- 2.1 Item 2.3. Tenor and Bass spotlights in forthcoming concerts. TL commented that the Choir has already made a start with major contributions from Bass/Tenors at the Christmas Concert ("God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen") and the Summer Concert performing with the Sea Shanties. Further spotlights will no doubt arise at future concerts.

Action: TL to note

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 2022 were circulated in advance of the meeting and are attached as Appendices 3 and 4.

6. Election of Officers and Committee

Kath Evans had previously indicated that she is not seeking re-election to the Committee and is therefore standing down as Social Secretary. As a consequence, Maria Myint has agreed to be nominated as the incoming Social Secretary. 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. Nomination for re-election of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer was proposed (Bruce Cross) and seconded (Cath Lynn). Nomination for all other Committee positions was proposed (Gloria Lindsey) and seconded (Harriet Jenkins).

The motion was carried unanimously.

7. Appointment of Auditor

It was pointed out that Bruce Cross had kindly stepped in to audit the accounts for the year ending 2022. The matter of appointing an Auditor for future accounts was deferred.

8. Questions/AOB

There were no questions from attendees.

Val McBroom raised a point regarding the selection of music for future concerts, suggesting that Members of the Choir should have more of a say in the choice. TL replied that this was something that has been done in the past and would continue in the future – all suggestions were welcome. He commented that a lot of time

was spent designing a set list. In future he will select more pieces than would normally be required so that a balanced set could be aimed at and taking into consideration of the Choir's views.

It was also pointed out that we have a large back catalogue which can be reviewed. JB will also trawl comments from the recent survey and extract any suggestions for possible inclusion.

Action: TL/JB

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Martin Bye

14th July 2022

Appendix 1

Chair's Report 2021/2022

This is my pleasurable responsibility for the second year to thank many individual people in our choir for undertaking specific roles and responsibilities which I will do later. However, I want to begin this time by thanking all of you, the core membership of the choir, because it is you who make this choir such a good thing to be a part of. Thanks for coming week by week, for grappling with what is sometimes quite a daunting set of music, persevering with it and pulling off wonderful performances. Similarly, thank you being so lovely, friendly and encouraging towards one another in the true spirit of a non-audition choir. In addition, thank you that so many of you get involved and contribute in lots of other ways as well. You are a great crowd.

Llysfaen Singers is all about singing a fantastic repertoire with an eclectic mix to our local community, led by our two highly proficient musicians, Tom and Jay, and making that experience accessible to as wide a range of people as possible. Pursuing that mission over the last 12 months, in the face of Covid 19 has been challenging. We started the Autumn term full of enthusiasm for the forthcoming Christmas concert and were looking forward to some sense of 'normality'. We had so many mitigations still in place to protect everyone, not just those who were vulnerable, such as one-way systems and restricted access around the hall; face masks - very difficult to wear whilst you're singing; hand sanitiser on entrance and exit; registration of attendance; 2 meters distancing at all times. I think, in the end, we had gone through at least six different risk assessments; we had to grapple with different levels of what we were allowed to do and with the many rules introduced and then removed by Welsh Government...It was difficult to keep up with it all! Despite all those hurdles to actually singing as a collective body, I personally think that we now sound the best we have been for a long time, and what a treat it has been to be all together making music.

In early December, we sang to a very appreciative audience from their small over 50's group called 'Meeting Point', at Thornhill Church Centre. We added to their Christmas celebrations by singing a range of Christmas songs from our repertoire and they joined in singing a variety of well-known Christmas carols. Considering it was a new venue, new conductor and we had never sung to recorded music before, every choir member overcame all those obstacles and gave a truly magnificent performance. The audience clearly enjoyed themselves; you could tell they appreciated the songs by the amount of clapping and quality of their participation. Their comments afterwards were so positive; it was indeed a pleasure and a privilege to listen to all their compliments on your behalf.

We were also invited to sing at the very memorable Treetops Christmas lights switch-on event. It was an extremely cold evening so we were all wrapped up in lots of layers which really doesn't help your singing; we had no accompanist, so all songs were acapella; we had 2 different versions of the 12 days of Christmas; and

our feet were absolutely freezing having stood in someone's garden for ages. However, despite all the setbacks, the Treetops committee was very appreciative of our efforts.

Our first big concert since 2019 was eagerly awaited at the Ty Mawr. Rebecca and Matthew were an absolute pleasure to work with and couldn't have done any more to ensure that our first concert there was a resounding success. They gave us use of the barn for free; ensured that we had enough ventilation yet were warm enough; they took all the bookings for the audience and assured us that there was a full house, with only standing room left... And then news about Omicron came out literally the day before the gig. No-one knew at the time that Omicron was way less severe than its predecessor, Delta. Our audience was severely depleted and a few choir members stayed away too.

But despite all this going against us, oh my goodness, did we smash it! We were all on an absolute high afterwards! Once again, Tom devised a mix of new songs and old favourites which included 'Deck the Hall' (only one of them!); the personalised 'It's Beginning to Look a lot Like Christmas' (which our hosts, Rebecca and Matthew loved); 'Stille Nacht' sung in 3 languages was amazing for its air of stillness and reflection. 'All I want for Christmas' – which I must admit is my absolute all-time Christmas favourite – was very ably introduced by our loyal singing friend, Heledd Eliri; and finally, the 'Christmas Singalong'. Our audience enjoyed joining in with a variety of traditional carols and who can forget the quality of audience participation in the 12 days of Christmas (with the right words this time!)? Rebecca and Matthew were brilliant as hosts, they wined and dined us and I think we should try and replicate the venue for this Christmas. We raised over £300 as an (ice!) bucket collection which we were pleased to donate to Lisvane Men's Shed and LATCH during one of our rehearsals in the Spring term.

We are still in the grip of our summer concert 'Blue Skies' held last week, which was equally full of delightful music making. The programme was eclectic, as is our want and ranged from a sensitive and poignant rendition of 'Anthem' from the film 'Chess' to a rousing performance of ELO's Mr Blue Sky. We hope to add to our Sea Shanty repertoire by singing all 3 of Tom's arrangements in our next Christmas concert. The two soloists from John Frost School in Newport (Tom's pupils) were mesmerising: they both sang absolutely from the heart. It was also good to have a large audience who really appreciated all the music that we offered.

Membership has taken a real hit since Covid knocked on our doors in 2019. We have lost members, some of who assure us that they are coming back, but only time will tell. However, we have welcomed several new members within the last year and already they are making great contributions to our choir. Sadly, we had to say goodbye and a huge thanks to Gwen our accompanist at Christmas and we really didn't think, after several no-shows from various applicants, that we were ever going to fill her shoes. And then came Jay! I'm sure you'll agree that he has brought a great dynamic to our rehearsals. So, my very special thanks must of course go to two very special musicians – our amazing pianist, the aforementioned Jay Venables, who never seems to be daunted no matter what music is put in front of him. His talent, reliability and superb musicality make such a difference to our rehearsals and performances. Jay is simply invaluable. And Tom – what can I say? The success and the enjoyment we gain from our programmes, our rehearsals and our performances in the end come down to your inspiration and ability to galvanise us into performances beyond our natural talent – you teach us and mould us into something that sounds really great – singing with heart and soul and wherever possible the right notes in the right order. Thank you for your energy and commitment to us. Keep treading that fine line between patience and exasperation, encouragement and correction mixed in with humour and a ridiculous range of Year 7 stories. We are indeed all very grateful to you both.

No Choir can work effectively without a keen committee, and my huge thanks go to all committee members, each with an important area of responsibility, and each with a keen commitment to the Choir. There is unfailing support from all the committee - reliable, regular and understated – who are the "gold dust" of Llysfaen Singers. Your committee members are also the "roadies" at every rehearsal and concert performance and they undertook masses of cleaning duties during Covid. The importance of membership support which the Voice Reps give (Alison – sopranos; Angela – altos; Peter – tenor and bass) must never be under-estimated; in fact, without it, Choir could easily grind to a halt. Thank you to Maria for getting everyone organised into different roles at the concert, no mean feat when you've not done a concert before. Also thank you to Cath, our librarian, for ensuring we've all got copies of our songs. Thanks especially to Martin, who works tirelessly behind the scenes, who is a fountain of knowledge about all things choir related

and continues to support us all in a very diligent way. Thank you also to Carolyn, our treasurer, whose knowledge of all things monetary has kept us afloat and who assiduously makes sure our finances are always in good shape. It is thanks to her ingenuity and persistence that we were awarded a variety of grants which have kept us afloat during the financial year. A big thank you to Ian Shopland. Ian is not a committee member, but who gives his time freely to update our website and to keep it looking great.

So, for the future. Our recent survey showed that the vast majority of members delight very much in each other's company and enjoy the challenges and rewards of singing in a group. There have been a number of excellent suggestions for the way forward from you all, so thank you very much for those. The committee and Tom will consider all viewpoints and get back to you all with a plan for improvement.

So, all I have left to say is have a lovely summer break. Fingers crossed for lots of 'Blue Skies' and see you in September!

Appendix 2

Music Director's Report 2022

Wow. What a year it's been! It's hard to believe that we began this academic year still with many restrictions in place, sat 3 metres apart with masks and visors, yet with all of those obstacles, we managed to overcome them and still make beautiful music together, which ultimately, is what this choir is all about.

The autumn term started with a bang, working towards our Christmas concert in the Tŷ Mawr pub. A new venue for us, which was certainly a great experience! I would probably go as far to say that this was my favourite gig I've done with you all (and no, it's not just because of the pre, mid and post show pint!), and I really hope we can use our new found relationship with the Tŷ Mawr to perform there again next year. You all sang with such joy and you just all seemed to be having the best time, which for me, to see you all loving life and enjoying yourselves is worth its weight in gold.

This was also a rather poignant concert because this was the day we said farewell to our former accompanist Gwen, after 4 years of working with us. I can report she's doing really well and her piano teaching business/school is absolutely booming! She's inundated with new pupils wanting to learn the piano.

So into the new year, with so many new promises of more freedoms for us, and a new face for us to work with - our new fabulous accompanist, Jay! I'm sure you will all agree, it is such hard work taking on a new choir and learning how to work with a new conductor as well, but we have to say that he has been outstanding for us this term, and a great addition to our ensemble. He has worked so hard on the music and has been an absolute delight to work with, and long may this continue.

Our summer concert was fantastic. You all performed brilliantly and I'm so proud of every single one of you. The audience seemed to thoroughly enjoy it and it was wonderful to have two of my sixth form students perform with us as well. A very proud moment for me indeed.

I look forward to all of our future concerts and experiences. I have said in the past that I would love to try and organise a tour for us at some point in the future, and this is definitely still on my mind. I think this would be a great experience for us all post covid, and a chance for us all to socialise more as a choir and spread the joy we make with music to others around the country.

My priority at the moment however is recruitment. We are very lucky to have a strong and balanced choir still, as the story is very different with the majority of other choirs in the UK, but it's no secret our numbers have depleted, and whilst you are all amazing and make a wonderful sound already, it'd be lovely to get our membership back up, and so I was hoping you could all do me a favour. I'm sure you all have that one friend or family member who'd "love to do some singing" or "love to join a choir" or "used to sing but hasn't for a while". Try and see if you can bring one person each along with you in September. This is a little bit of Summer Holidays homework for you. (Trust me, you got off lightly! I'm making my year 10s work through their grammar books ready for year 11!)

But I have to say again, this choir is, and always has been the highlight of my week. I love seeing you all and making music with you all, and long may it continue. Conducting this choir is like driving a Rolls Royce, and I mean that. Your joy and happiness when making music just makes my job 10 times easier, so thank you.

I also want to add a huge thank you to the committee for your tireless work this year, from cleaning the facilities to making around 8 versions of the covid risk assessment to match government guidance and law, and just being such a supportive group who I know always have my back.

So, here's to academic year 2022/23! I look forward to seeing you in September with our Christmas concert rep! Have a safe and wonderful summer.

Appendix 3

Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 5 April 2021

This report covers the most recent financial year which ended on 5 April 2022. A copy of the Income and Expenditure Account for this period is attached. Many thanks to Bruce Cross for checking these figures.

For the first part of this year we met on Zoom (and asked for subs of half the normal rate) and returned to rehearsals in the Memorial Hall in June 2021.

We were fortunate enough to receive grant funding during the year from Ty Cerdd (£2507), The National Lotteries Community Fund (£1600) and The Admiral Support Fund (£500). We are very grateful to Jan Jones and her son, Chris for their help with the Admiral grant. All of these payments were made in order to enable community organisations such as ours to keep operating during and after lock down. This meant that we made a profit of £4541 for the year. Without this money we would have made a small loss.

We have also received small amounts from Amazon Smile (£11) and Easy fundraising (£25). Thank you to those members who have nominated us as their chosen charity for both these schemes.

We now have a very healthy bank balance and are in a strong financial position. This means that, despite a fall in membership and the fact that we are running at a small operating loss, we are able to continue to rehearse and will look to buy new music for the next academic year.

Appendix 4

**LLYSFAEN SINGERS
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	YEAR ENDED 05/04/2022	YEAR ENDED 05/04/2021
	£	£
INCOME		
SUBSCRIPTIONS	3100	1150
GIFT AID	0	705
CONCERT TICKET SALES	0	0
RAFFLE TICKET SALES	0	0
BAR TAKINGS	0	0
OTHER INCOME:		
SALE OF FOLDERS	16	0
EASY FUNDRAISING	25	0
AMAZON SMILE	11	0
GRANTS RECEIVED:		
TY CERDD	2507	0
NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND	1600	0
ADMIRAL SUPPORT FUND	500	0
	<u>7760</u>	<u>1855</u>
EXPENDITURE		
HALL HIRE	553	68
MUSIC PURCHASES/HIRE	0	0
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	1134	624
PIANIST	914	469
CONCERT COSTS	0	0
DONATIONS	0	25
OTHER COSTS:		
PURCHASE OF PPE	150	0
WEBSITE COSTS	22	36
AGM	0	0
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AFFILIATION	10	10
MAKING MUSIC AFFILIATION, PRS & INSURANCE	175	220
ZOOM FEES	101	58
THANK YOU GIFTS AND FLOWERS	127	52
MISCELLANEOUS	32	0
	<u>3219</u>	<u>1561</u>
	£	£
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	4541	294
Surplus brought forward at 06/04/2021	<u>3525</u>	<u>3231</u>
Surplus carried forward at 05/04/2022	<u>8066</u>	<u>3525</u>
Represented by		
Balance at bank at 05/04/2022	8066	3525
less unrepresented cheques	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>8066</u>	<u>3525</u>

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