

Music Director
Richard Laing

President
Joanne Lunn

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT ST JAMES THE GREATER CHURCH, LEICESTER
ON WEDNESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2014**

1 **Apologies** were received from Maggie Ridgewell, Graham Wright, Lynn Richards, Gill Carter, Geoffrey Carter, Angela Finch, Sam Wood, Emma Cook, Vivienne Ward and Kate Windridge.

2 **Minutes** of the Annual General Meeting held on the 3 September 2014 were received and approved as a correct record. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Jacquie Burden and seconded by Jane Friendship.

3 **Matters arising.** There were none.

4 **Chair's report** The Chair said that this had been another busy year in which the choir had performed in three very memorable concerts to include a performance of Bach's Christmas Oratorio in December 2013, a concert of English music with the Bach Camerata Brass Ensemble in April 2014, culminating in a summer concert with our President, soprano Joanne Lunn. Thanks were given to Joanne for her generous and lovely contribution to our summer concert, Richard Laing our Music Director, Ivan Linford, pianist, the Leicester Bach Choir committee, the whole choir and to all those who had helped the choir throughout the year.

In January 2014, the choir had hosted another successful Come and Sing day in which over 200 singers had attended to sing Brahms German Requiem. However in spite of our musical success and the financial support given by John Sharp, the choir had lost rather than gained money this season and as costs continue to rise with the planned closure of the library loan system, it is important that we do as much as possible to maximize our profits. Ticket sales are essential and the whole choir can help in this respect by promoting our concerts as far as possible to increase the size of our audience.

The Chair reminded the choir that the committee were looking to recruit a secretary to represent the Friends/Patrons and urged the choir to consider this position.

The Chair concluded by saying that he was looking forward to the 2014/2015 season. The Messiah concert in November with the Bach Camerata should be exhilarating and the Chair is currently in negotiation with the Cathedral to include our Easter Concert within the official celebrations surrounding the reinterment of King Richard III. The Come and Sing day in January and the summer concert contain exciting modern works from across the Atlantic to include Bernstein's Chichester Psalms and Morten Lauridsen's O Nata Lux and a summer concert of Russian and twentieth century music (to include Lauridsen's Lux Aeterna and Whitacre's Lux Aurumque), all of which deserved an audience so the Chair concluded by urging the choir to "spread the word".

5 Music Director's Report. The Music Director said that he was so pleased to be working with the choir for a 12th consecutive season. It had been so nice to work with us in the 2013/2014 season performing Bach's Christmas Oratorio in German with brass (which was possible due to the financial assistance provided by John Sharp) and he had been thrilled to be involved in the spring concert (performing Purcell, Walton and Ireland again with brass) and in the lovely memorable summer concert with our President, the soprano Joanna Lunn. Last year the Music Director reported that he had been concerned by the lack of sopranos but this year numbers had increased and he was now turning his attention to the basses whose numbers had dwindled. Existing members were urged to introduce new basses to the choir.

In the 2014/2015 season, the Music Director said that he was looking forward to performing Handel's Messiah with the Bach Camerata which he felt should be very popular at Christmas. The solo harpist had been booked for January's Come and Sing Bernstein Chichester Psalms and Morten Lauridsen's O Nata Lux and negotiations were underway to book Tim Morgan for the counter tenor solo. It was hoped that the Easter concert (to include Herbert Howells English Mass and Vaughan Williams Flos Campi), could form part of the musical celebrations surrounding the reinterment of King Richard III. The summer concert would be no less exacting with Russian pieces and works from other 20th century composers to include Morton Lauridsen and Eric Whitacre. The Music Director concluded by thanking Ivan Linford, the choir, the committee and all other helpers for their ongoing work and commitment to the choir.

6 Treasurer's Report: Members received the choir's annual accounts and the Independent Examiner's report for 2013–2014 was read out by the Treasurer Jane Hoskyns. She reported that at the end of the financial year the choir's assets had reduced from £13,283 (for the 2012/2013 season) down to £12,386 this year. Whilst the income from singer's subscriptions and concerts had remained the same this season, the income from friends subscriptions had decreased as there had been fewer friends. The deficit for concerts this season had increased to £4,000 from the sum of £1,200 for the previous season 2012/2013 however the increase could be explained by the additional expense incurred for last season's concerts.

The Treasurer thanked St James's Enterprises for their financial assistance which enabled the choir to stage an annual concert with an orchestra.

The Treasurer referred to the ongoing consultations with the Leicestershire Library Service which she explained would mean that the cost of hiring music would inevitably increase. As a result, singers subscriptions had risen this season by a further £10 to £160 per annum to reflect this additional expense. Jane Friendship felt that the £10 increase in subscriptions was not unreasonable given that it included the increased cost of music hire which was likely to increase further in the near future. Eleanor Montgomery said that whilst she accepted the reasons for the increase, she nevertheless felt that the choir should have been given an opportunity to discuss this prior to the summer break. The idea of giving choir helpers a reduction in their subscription was mooted but not adopted as it would be too expensive to implement. However the Treasurer confirmed that it was open to any choir member to discuss their subscription with her if they could not afford it. She also stressed that it was open to all choir members to join the committee.

Owen Bentley asked the Treasurer whether the choir received any financial help from Trusts. The Treasurer confirmed that we did not and the Chair, Charles Paterson explained that it was no longer possible to obtain continuing sponsorship but confirmed that he would be applying for Trusts for our spring concert in March 2015.

Jacquie Burden queried whether the choir were going to have any focused fundraising as she felt that we were on the brink of a difficult financial situation. The Treasurer, Jane Hoskyns confirmed that the choir were setting up a fund raising committee to consider this in further detail. The Chair, Charles Paterson said that if anyone had any ideas for fundraising it would be helpful if they could mention them as this would benefit the whole choir.

The Treasurer, Jane Hoskyns advised the choir that the Friends of the Leicester Bach Choir were dwindling and although the system for friends subscriptions had now changed, the number of friends had been steadily diminishing before then. Mary Whittaker felt that as there were now only two concerts in which friends could obtain discounted tickets, people were less likely to form a support group. Charles Paterson the Chair said that the system was under review but explained that if the choir didn't stage a concert funded by St James's Enterprises, they would lose far more than they might gain from an increase in friends memberships.

Val Simpson mentioned that the interval drinks which had been priced at 50 p since 2003 had now increased to 80 p.

Mary Campbell questioned whether as an exercise we undertook a calculation of the number of seats sold in relation to the size of the audience. Jane Hoskyns advised Mary that although John Sharp does this, he sells seats at 3 or 4 different price ranges. As far as the Leicester Bach Choir were concerned, the Chair, Charles Paterson explained that this would involve a lot of extra work for little or no extra income. Richard Laing felt that it may help to give our "best guesstimate" for each concert and Jane Hoskyns agreed to "give it a go".

Angela Zemlak urged everyone who hadn't signed a gift aid form to do so and the Treasurer, Jane Hoskyns reminded choir members who had registered for gift aid but who were no longer tax payers to let her know.

Gordon Campbell questioned whether the tickets for the November concert had been paid however Charles Paterson advised him that the choir were only responsible for pricing the tickets for our Easter and Summer concert. The funding and organization for our November concert would be dealt with solely by St James's Enterprises.

Eleanor Montgomery questioned whether the choir's accounts were audited. The Treasurer Jane Hoskyns confirmed that they were examined annually in accordance with our charitable status.

Acceptance of the accounts as presented was proposed by Jane Friendship and seconded by Nicki Little. and supported unanimously.

A copy of the accounts and the Treasurer's written report is available from the Secretary on Request).

7 Elections Officers:

The Chair advised that vacancies existed for the following posts:-

- (i) Singing members.
- (ii) Non singing members.
- (iii) Front of House Manager.
- (iv) The Friends secretary to deal with the interests of the friends to ensure that the scheme was run was efficiently as possible.

Chair	Charles Paterson	Vice Chair	Nicki Little
Secretary	Rosie Craig	Treasurer	Jane Hoskyns
Concert Manager	Anna Meshach		
Non singing representatives	Vacancy		
Singing representatives :	Pam Laurenti-Duncombe	(Alto)	Vacancy (Soprano or Bass)
	Ian Bloor	(Tenor)	Barbara Rieck (Alto)
Co-opted members :-	Richard Laing,	(Music Director)	
	Alison Deacon,	(Alto)	
	Susan Heggie,	(Librarian)	
	Vacancy	(Front of House)	
	Eleanor Montgomery,	(Staging/Seating)	
	Vacancy	(Friends/Newsletter)	
	Jacquie Burden,	(Tickets)	
	Ivan Linford,	(Pianist)	

Angela Zemlak asked the Chair how often the committee met. The Chair, Charles Paterson advised that the committee met approximately 4 to 5 times a year on fixed dates for a meeting on either a Monday or a Tuesday.

Elections for the existing Leicester Bach Choir committee were proposed by Owen Bentley and seconded by John Comyn. All were unanimous.

Music Director's appointment It was confirmed that the Trustees had appointed Richard Laing as Music Director for a further year. **Pianist's appointment.** It was also confirmed that the Trustees had appointed Ivan Linford as pianist for a further year.

9 Any other business. Mary Whittaker who for many years had dealt with the County Music Diary on behalf of the choir expressed her thanks to Alison Deacon for all her hard work in taking this job on.

10 Date of Next AGM: Wednesday 7 September 2016, 7.15 pm

The meeting closed at 8 pm.