



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE MEMORIAL HALL, DENT, WEDNESDAY 15TH JUNE 2022

Present: Jenny Robinson, Helen Reynolds, Thelma Belfield, Jackie Fisher, Antony Fisher, Judy Lake, Bill Lake, Anthea Boulton, David Boulton, Tara Guthrie, Mike Steele, George Leathard, Anna Wetherell, Chris Taylor, Jenny Pilgrim, Graham Dalzell and John Feltham

1. **Apologies:** Wendy Cooke, Martin Dodds, Pip Hall, Sandra Bann, Laura Claire, John Peel, John Bucknall and Richard Bruce.
2. **Review of 2021 AGM minutes:** John Bucknall's absence meant that the matter of chairs possibly to be purchased by the church could not be pursued. John Feltham noted that last year's AGM provided for Thelma's appointment as Treasurer this coming year and so her election by the members was not necessary at this year's AGM. The minutes were proposed by Anthea as accurately reflecting the 2021 AGM. This was seconded by Judy.
3. **Chair's report:** see attached Appendix 1.
4. **Musical Director's report:** In Richard's absence, John F read out the MD's report which reflected a very successful season and spring concert as well as Richard's enjoyment of his time with the choir - see attached Appendix 2. John proposed a vote of thanks on behalf of the choir for Richard's six years with us. This was seconded by everybody present.
5. **Treasurer's report:** see attached Appendix 3. Graham proposed that the accounts should be accepted and this was seconded by John F, who also proposed a formal vote of thanks to Helen for her time as Treasurer, noting all the hard work that goes with the role. Everybody seconded this!
6. **Librarian's report:** Wendy has advised John that she is content that the library can remain in her studio for the short to medium term but would prefer it if a more long-term solution can be found. The meeting discussed that this search would be more logical when the library sifting has been finalised to reduce its volume and a new musical director had been appointed (**Action Jenny R and new MD**). We'd then be certain of how much storage space was needed. It was thought that one or two of the box pews towards the north-east corner of the church might be a possibility. Anthea is happy to continue in the role of handling music in the current repertoire using the very useful storage cabinet (donated by the Boultons) located in the Sedgwick Room.
7. **Publicity:** Jenny Robinson noted the success of the usual process in promoting our spring concert. Better use of online marketing was discussed. In this connection, John F will liaise as necessary to ensure that we have content placed on the Sedbergh.org website (**Action John F**). Tara offered to help with publicity matters when she is available.
8. **Election of committee, etc:** there were no new nominations from the wider choir. Jenny Robinson (Chair), John F (Secretary) and Thelma (now Treasurer) are happy to continue in their roles. It was therefore proposed by Jackie that they should re-elected en bloc. This was seconded by Helen. Helen will remain on the committee and Jackie is standing down. John F and Anthony proposed a vote of thanks to Jackie for her valuable work on the committee and this was seconded by everybody. The committee should ideally have one or two more members serving on it to ensure decisions on behalf of the choir are made by a more representative body than would be the case if only the three formal committee roles, plus Helen, are involved. Tara and Anthea volunteered to fill these vacancies which are without portfolio. With regard to the role of organising events, hitherto done by Thelma, it had been hoped that Sandra might be happy to take on this activity but as she wasn't present this could not be established. Thelma will speak to her (**Action Thelma**). Helen suggested that Thelma should list the actions needed for, say, the spring concert, along with contact details for helpers, so that those actions could be shared among the choir. An overseeing role would still be advisable. (**Action Thelma**)

9. **Appointment of auditor:** Anthea proposed that the current auditor be reappointed and this was seconded by Jenny P.
10. **MD recruitment update:** Jenny R discussed the four candidates who have applied so far. One, based in Ilkley, was very interested and came to choir practice, but found the return drive in the dark too difficult and so reluctantly withdrew. Another candidate, based in Lancaster, is a former professional tenor and old friend of Peter Wilson, aka Peter Van Hulle. He teaches voice at a number of local schools, and initially seemed very interested but withdrew only a few days before his formal interview and conducting audition with the choir. He felt that he did not have the necessary skillsets or time to fill the role in the way that he'd expect of himself or that the choir had a right to expect. Another candidate is reported to be a rather difficult character to work with and is also known to a few choir members who would not relish the prospect of singing with him again. The committee will be rejecting his application in due course. A fourth and quite recent candidate was recommended by Fredrik Holm. He had initially been approached by John F for the MD role, having been recommended by John P's piano teacher. Time constraints mean that he is unable to take up the opportunity but recommended very highly a young lady in his local orchestra. Although she is only 18 years old, she seems to be very highly qualified and to have a great deal of potential. Jenny R alluded to Richard's comment about encouraging young choral directors. The committee will be meeting with this candidate in the first weekend of July, having been impressed by the maturity of her e-mail correspondence and mature manner and obvious skills and talent demonstrated to Jenny R during a telephone conversation.
11. **Membership fee;** this has remained at £25 per term for some considerable time. The meeting discussed the likelihood of it increasing for the coming season. However, until the committee has established the likely costs of any recruited MD, it was agreed that the matter of the extent of any increase could be deferred to an EGM which will be held when the occasion merits it. As usual, any member who wished to make a confidential donation on top of the fee could do so. It was also noted that the choir would not exclude anybody for whom the financial outlay was problematical. Anyone in this position could liaise with the Treasurer on a wholly confidential basis. There was some discussion about ensuring that there was a proper balance between the choir's funds, establishing the level of membership fees and the making of any applications for grant funding. Jenny R expressed that a healthy balance should be maintained due to some concerts requiring an outlay of c £2,000, with no guarantee of ticket sales replenishing the balance and that Richard had advised that the choir would need to build up a balance to pay more normal fees to MDs, when necessary, allowing time to then establish a new funding regime to maintain higher levels of outlay on MD costs.
12. **Website and Facebook page maintenance:** hitherto, Richard has maintained our online presence through the choir's website and Facebook page. Helen and Anna kindly volunteered to take on this responsibility. Helen will liaise with Richard to gain an understanding of what is required (**Action Helen**).
13. **Health and safety:** Jenny P alluded to her awkward fall over the conductor's podium during the spring concert's interval. The podium is painted black. Jenny is aware of two other people who have also had a similar fall. The meeting discussed various aspects of mitigating this risk, including the addition of hazard warning tape around the edge of the box to improve its visibility (to be included on Thelma's list noted at 8 above). The meeting also recognised the possibility that a member of the public or, indeed, a choir member, could take legal action against either the choir or the church for any injury arising from a similar incident. John F will check if the choir's insurance covers this through our membership of Making Music (**Action John F**). Graham noted that it is everybody's responsibility to note and take action should a risk to anyone's health and safety be noticed during choir activities.
14. **Any other business:** (i) on behalf of the choir, Jenny R thanked Graham for the quality of his video recording of the spring concert which he also edited and circulated to the choir; (ii) there was some discussion about the ladies' choir scarves which still do not seem to be satisfactory. Anthea will ask Wendy to investigate the purchase of a suitable colour and size of scarf which will better meet the choir's needs (**Action Anthea**) - Jenny noted that costs for these need to be reasonable - and (iii) Graham proposed a vote of thanks from the whole choir to the committee to reflect the hard work that has been done over the last year or so during Covid restrictions, the return to face to face rehearsals, many of which Jenny R conducted, and the related safety protocols which had to be devised by the committee. All present seconded this.

