



SLEAFORD CHORAL SOCIETY MINUTES OF AGM HELD ON WED 25 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7.15pm IN SLEAFORD METHODIST CHURCH.

Present: K Jarvis, D Bamford (notetaker), D Jacobs, A Harrison, A Algar.

Choral Members Present: 43

<u>Agenda Heading</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Action</u>
1 Apologies for absence	C Scourfield, P Coulson, A Jones, M Mawditt, J Seddon, L Loose, P Dunkley, L Paterson, MJ White, G Hills, Z Curtis, A Ashmore, W Kerby, G Stone, L Mulhern.	
2 Minutes of Last AGM (2023)	Approved as a true record. Signed by K Jarvis, Chair. Proposed O Davies Seconded S Lipscombe Unanimously agreed	
3 Matters Arising	None	
4 Musical Director's Report	<p>MD Report 2023/24 season</p> <p>The past year has seen the Choir continue to grow in numbers, strength and ability, continuing a trend which we have seen since the Choir re-started following lockdown; this is despite the loss of some key members due to relocation, retirement and for other reasons. It is very much to the Choir's credit that it continues to maintain an SATB line-up, at a time when so many other choirs have either stopped functioning altogether or have changed into community choirs mostly singing unison, or 2 or 3-part music, often due to a lack of Tenors or Basses. Indeed, during the last year we ourselves have experienced a sudden drop of membership in the Tenor section, with the retirement of Neville Macfarlane and John Williams, both long-term members of the choir, and both of them singers who inspired confidence in the rest of section. We were however fortunate in that, from our very strong Alto section, we were able to find some volunteers, Sue, Lorna and Anny, who sang with the Tenors for last year's Easter and Summer concerts, greatly enhancing the solidity and strength of the Tenor line. So far this season, with returning members and, indeed a new member, the tenors have been holding their own, though they may need reinforcement for the Requiem concert next year.</p> <p>Neville McFarlane is much missed in the choir. It is my intention that, as long as I am Musical Director, we will continue to perform his works whenever possible, certainly at Christmas and hopefully in the Summer concerts also.</p> <p>During the course of the year, Alwyn Kirk retired as Assistant Musical Director, a post in which he has performed with distinction for several years and is in the process of handing over Librarian duties to Lew Paterson. Alwyn now sings both Tenor and Bass in the choir, often simultaneously! I would like to thank him for all his invaluable assistance over the years. Our new Assistant Musical Director is Lynne Loose, who joined us last year as an Alto and who has already distinguished herself as both soloist and accompanist, in addition to being a composer and arranger in her own right.</p> <p>The Choir presented three excellent concerts under our own name last year, plus three additional concerts shared with other organisations; we were able to duplicate repertoire between the scheduled concerts and the extra concerts, making the extra concerts possible.</p> <p>The Christmas concert featured the Bretherton Handbell choir, directed by Judith Kirk, and Organist Rosemary Field in her second concert with us. Several choir members sang solos and acted as narrators in the mini-cantata "Christmas is Coming". I always enjoy the numbers where we sing with the handbells and look forward to future collaborations.</p> <p>Through the good offices of new member Peter Bennet, a section of the choir performed in a well-attended and convivial Christmas concert at Holy Trinity Church, Martin. I am pleased to say that we have been invited back this year, despite my apparently having broken their pipe organ during the concert. With the organ silenced, our choir members continued to provide a capella support for the congregation, with some Altos augmenting the Tenor line, leading to the realisation that Altos could successfully augment our Tenors in our next concert.</p> <p>The Easter concert featured two big choral works, Vivaldi's Gloria and Mozart's Requiem. Ed Wellman was our superb accompanist and, as ever, all of the many solo parts were covered by choir members, some of whom truly excelled themselves. The extended contrapuntal and fugal passages in the Mozart certainly benefitted from having additional support on the Tenor line, whilst the accuracy of singing in the whole concert benefitted greatly from the sectional rehearsals which were made</p>	

	<p>possible due to the presence of our new Assistant Musical Director, Lynne Loose, and which I hope will become a fixture when we are performing large-scale works.</p> <p>Rehearsals for our summer concert were well under way when we were approached to participate in a variety concert in aid of the Methodist Church, and also in a joint concert with the Sleaford Concert Band, both in advance of our Summer Concert. In the variety concert, a small group was able to perform mostly unaccompanied items from the Summer Concert repertoire, whilst for the concert with the Band I was able to arrange some of our accompaniments for the band, with Sue Quarmby accompanying us on the piano for a couple of items. Both concerts went well. The concert with the Band in particular went so well, and without any of the anticipated balance problems, that the Band asked us if we would like to perform larger-scale works with them, leading to next year's Easter concert when they will join us in a performance of my Requiem. The Summer Concert proper was so well rehearsed by this time that it went very well indeed, with many excellent solos both vocal and instrumental. This year, we were able to give a very creditable performance of Lynne Loose's "Old Wives' Tales", in which I enjoyed being given the chance to sing, rather than conduct. There is not room here to mention everyone, but among the highlights were Neville McFarlane's setting of "Amazing Grace", beautifully sung by Kathy Kinnard, and Lynne Loose's setting of "My Love is Like a Red Red Rose", with a violin obligato beautifully played by her husband Roger. Credit also must go to Lew Paterson for having organised the barbershop quartet pieces and the Gilbert and Sullivan Octet, and to Ed Wellman for his organ solo, the Menuet from Boellmann's "Suite Gothique". For me, a major highlight was the performance of Donald Swann's setting of Tolkein's "Bilbo's Last Song", which I had arranged for the choir as a tribute to the late Jeff Blewett, who had planned to sing it with us at our Summer Concert in 2023, but whose illness prevented him.</p> <p>I personally feel very honoured that the Choir has elected to perform my Requiem next April. I am very much looking forward to rehearsals, and to working again with the Sleaford Concert Band and with pianist Ed Wellman, harpist Rowena Bass, and soloists Julia Riley and Mark Wilde. As the Conductor of this choir, I feel very supported by our Chair Karen, Secretary Doreen and the rest of the Committee, to all of whom I extend my heartfelt thanks.</p> <p>Rowland Lee, MD</p>	
<p>5 Membership Officer's Report</p>	<p><u>Membership Services Officer's Report - 2023/24 Season</u></p> <p>At the start of the 2023/2024 season we had 63 members, and during the course of the year 10 people joined the choir. Inevitably there were some resignations (5 in total), the most significant of which was that of Neville McFarlane. To honour his retirement and his significance to the Choral Society - he was Music Director for over 25yrs before stepping down and joining the tenors for the last 20 years of his time with the choir - he was invited to return one evening and a special presentation was made to him.</p> <p>Despite having had a healthy number of people join the choir, the tenors are the voice with the smallest number of people, so much so that they temporarily 'borrowed' some 2nd altos for the summer concert. Here's hoping that some new tenors will join during the forthcoming season.</p> <p>Without help from the Section Representatives, Kathy, Judith, Peter and Derek, I would have struggled this last year as Membership Services Officer. They have all been so helpful to me as I have not been very mobile, so have relied upon them more than they possibly realised. A heartfelt 'thank you' to all of them.</p> <p>Anne Algar Membership Services Officer</p>	
<p>6 Treasurer's Report and Checked accounts for 2022/23</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SLEAFORD CHORAL SOCIETY FINANCIAL REPORT</u> <u>YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024</u></p> <p>The accounts for the year ended 31 August 2024 show a surplus of income over expenditure of £1882 , an increase over the previous year of £1426. At the year end our cash balances had increased to £5612</p> <p>The increase is mainly attributable to the increase in membership (£435) and donations (£759). We were in receipt of 2 large donations from Jeff Blewitt's family, £300, and from the charity walk made by Peter Bennett, £562. Concert receipts remained fairly static as did the expenses, but in the current year we are facing an increase of 10% in hire fees from the Methodist Church. We will also be performing Rowland's Requiem but are hopeful of obtaining grants to help with the cost.</p> <p>The committee were able to keep the subscription last year at £90, but for this year have decided to increase it by £5 to £95.</p> <p>A Harrison, Treasurer</p>	

<p>6a Approval of Treasurer's Statement & Accounts</p> <p>6b Membership Subscriptions for Season 22/2</p>	<p>AH showed the SumUp machine he had purchased to enable us to receive electronic payments at concerts. Thank you to AH for his excellent work as Treasurer this year.</p> <p>Proposed: J Henwood Seconded: S Quarmby</p> <p>Unanimously agreed</p> <p>Council decision to increase fees to £95. Members had previously received a letter giving the reasons for this decision.</p> <p>This was positively received by the members present, with one comment being that it was still very good value. Another comment that it's better to put up the fees in small jumps more regularly than having one huge jump in price only occasionally.</p> <p>RL offered to freeze his honorarium payment this year rather than accept an increase so that he could contribute to the costs, particularly of staging his Requiem concert. This is a very generous donation from Rowland and it was accepted with thanks.</p> <p>Membership fees are now due and can be paid by cash, cheque or bank transfer. Members can pay 'half and half' – half (£47.50) now, and the other half at the beginning of January.</p>	
<p>7 Chair's Report</p>	<p>Chair's Report - 2023/24 Season</p> <p>I'd like to begin by thanking all of you for your commitment to Sleaford Choral. It is this commitment that keeps the Society alive and active, whilst so many others have failed since Covid.</p> <p>We are an important part of the Sleaford and district community, and in this, the 60th year since the Society's reformation, we need to be shouting from the rooftops about ourselves and the benefits of belonging to a choir, something we are beginning to do more of. That is why it is lovely to be able to say that in the 2023/24 season, we successfully contributed to 4 community events, in addition to our own concert repertoire.</p> <p>The Christmas Carol Concert at Martin Church was an enjoyable event, for all sorts of reasons, and is something that we will be repeating this year. At Christmas we also sang in the Council Chamber at NKDC. We were invited to participate in the Methodist Church Musical evening alongside other local musical groups and individuals, which saw the choir perform to a large audience, most of whom were unlikely to have heard us sing before. We also sang as guests of the Sleaford Concert Band at their summer concert and I believe this to be an important collaboration for us moving forward, beginning with them performing as our guests at Rowland's Requiem Concert next Spring.</p> <p>Our own concerts during the season allowed us to perform a variety of wonderful music to good audiences and it was encouraging that, financially, we didn't lose money at any of them. The presence of the handbell ringers at the Christmas Concert was well-received and enhanced the enjoyment of the evening. The Spring Concert saw us perform the Mozart Requiem and the Vivaldi Gloria, a challenging sing, but enjoyable and rewarding. The Summer Concert with an eclectic mix of light choral music plus individual members of the choir performing pieces of their own choice, was such a joyous occasion and showcased the huge talent we have within the ranks of the choir.</p> <p>Our overall choral experience and the success of our performances is, of course, steered by our Musical Director (MD), Rowland, whose enthusiasm, hard work and musical wizardry gets us to where we need to be. Thank you, Rowland. Which is why, when Rowland was unwell for a protracted period of time at the beginning of the season, we were more than a little concerned, for him, obviously, but also for the choir. However, we needn't have worried, as we are fortunate to have Lynne Loose as our Deputy MD and she stepped in and ably guided us through Rowland's absence. Thank you, Lynne.</p> <p>Sleaford Choral is in a healthier position financially than it was post-covid, as you have just heard. This has been helped by the large donation made by tenor Peter Bennett when he walked the Spires and Steeples challenge route for us. Thank you Peter. Also, in addition to the contribution we received from Jeff Blewett's funeral collection, his family very generously followed this up by a further donation, for which we were very grateful.</p> <p>Having a stable, healthy membership base, also supports our financial position and the fact we are regularly attracting new members is a massive positive. Although our membership number isn't what it was a few years ago, I believe we are on an upward trajectory and raising our profile more in the community can only help.</p>	

	<p>Social media is a great way of telling the community about what Sleaford Choral is up to and our presence on various platforms is being managed well by Doreen. We are updating our marketing materials with new banners and flyers and people will even be able to pay by card at future concerts!</p> <p>Aside from our musical activities, we enjoyed the Annual Quiz, organised by Anthea and hosted by quizmaster Derek, thank you both. It really is a fun evening and raises funds for the choir. Also, the Annual Dinner, again organised by Anthea, was well attended and was an excellent way to end the 23/24 season.</p> <p>On that note, I would like to end my report by saying a massive thank you to the Sleaford Choral Council for all their hard work throughout the year and for the support they have given me in my first year as Chair. It is a pleasure being part of a team with such dedicated and willing participants. It is because of them, and all of you, that I remain very optimistic about the future of Sleaford Choral.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>K Jarvis, Chair.</p> <p>JW offered sincere thanks on behalf of the whole choir to Karen and all the Choral Council for their hard work – it is noticed!</p>	
8 Election of Officers & Council	<p>There is a vacancy on the Choral Council for Music Officer. One nomination has been received for Lew Paterson. Lew has been Acting Music Officer so far this term.</p> <p>Proposed: K Jarvis Seconded: D Bamford</p> <p>Vote: Unanimously agreed</p> <p>Thanks to Alwyn Kirk were offered for his sterling work over many years in this role (and indeed in many other roles!)</p> <p>All other members of the Council agreed to continue for the next year.</p> <p>Election of Committee 'en bloc'</p> <p>Proposed: A Kirk Seconded: S Lipscombe</p> <p>Vote: Unanimously agreed</p>	
9 Appointment of Musical Director	Rowland Lee has agreed to remain in this position. Many thanks to Rowland	
10 Appointment of Deputy Conductor	Lynne Loose has agreed to carry on the Deputy Conductor role for 2024/5 Many thanks to Lynne.	
11 Music Programme for 2024-25 Season	<p>DJ thanked members of the MSG for their work this year; numbers in the group have diminished and any new members would be welcomed. Thanks particularly to MJ White and A Kirk.</p> <p>Christmas Concert Sat 21st December 2024</p> <p>William Alvey Choir will be our guests and Rosemary Field organist. Programme of usual range of traditional carols, plus Cowboy Carol, Calypso Carol and N McFarlane's arrangement of Als I Lay on Yoolis Night, to name a few.</p> <p>Spring Concert – Saturday April 12th 2025</p> <p>A tribute to the composition and orchestration/arrangements of MD Rowland Lee, featuring his Requiem. Mezzo Soprano; Julia Riley, Tenor; Mark Wilde; Guests; Sleaford concert band, Harpist; Rowena Bass, Accompanist; Ed Wellman. Rest of programme TBD.</p> <p>Summer Concert – Saturday June 28th 2025</p> <p>Programme to be finalised. Ed Wellman booked as accompanist. This will take a similar format to last year's successful concert. DJ encouraged members to email him with suggestions of pieces and offers to perform solos.</p> <p>Christmas Concert Sat 13th December 2025 – Church booked.</p>	DJ
12. AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks to Judith Perry for offering to provide a tree for the Christmas Tree Festival from the Choral Society. • Members were reminded not to talk when other voice sections were rehearsing and when RL is giving instructions. • DJ showed new bow tie stock, £5 each. Thanks to him for his work in sorting the new design. <p>Formal AGM terminated at 19.50</p>	

