

# BROCKHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

## Minutes of Annual General Meeting 3 September 2019

Chairman: Reuben Suckling

Present: 43 members.

**1. Apologies for Absence** Maria Chadwick, Maureen Edwards, Heather Ferragut, Anne Hogarth, Leonie Holgate, David and Jan John, Jenni Knights, Jenni Lee-Potter, Sandy Luff, Jackie Rance, Angela Sharwood, Anne and Phil Slack, Mary Suckling, Anne Washtell, Ray and Mary White, Julienne Williams.

**2. Minutes of the Previous AGM** (4 September 2018).

The adoption of the minutes was proposed by Christine Griffin, seconded by Moira Sinden, agreed *nem con* and signed.

**3. Annual Financial Report and Accounts** The Treasurer, John Dimmer, introduced the Annual Report and Accounts (previously circulated), thanking the committee for their help and advice during the year. The accounts had been independently reviewed by David Sinden and John expressed his thanks for this. Once approved, the Report and Accounts would be submitted to the Charity Commission. John explained that the loss of £3,400 in concert finances was less than the loss of nearly £5,000 the previous year, due to both the cost of the larger orchestra for the Sea Symphony in 2017/18 and the outstanding efforts in selling tickets this year, especially for "St Nicolas" – he thanked Alison Robins for her work as Ticket Secretary. Fundraising contributed £700 compared with £2,000 previously, partly due to the absence of an Annual Dinner. The Quiz was well supported and the 100 Club made a steady contribution – John thanked all those involved. John had also circulated a simplified accounts analysis which broke down the different activities – as mentioned, the loss on concerts was £1,500 lower than the previous year. There was little change for most routine choir activities, although the Gift Aid claim was lower due to the need to take account of the tuition element of rehearsals (assessed at £15 per member). There were also some one-off expenses this year – a donation of £500 to NewSPAL, set up to replace the Surrey County Council Performing Arts Library, essential for an organisation such as ours; essential repairs and refurbishments to the staging to make it safe, plus a new tyre and security lock for the trailer (totalling almost £1,700) for which huge thanks were due to Robin Luff; replacement lighting equipment (£271) and additional cushions for hire at concerts (£61); and a gift voucher to Patrick from members on his departure (£150). The choir received a further grant of £2,000 from the Humphrey Richardson Taylor Trust together with generous donations from other sources. Overall there was a deficit of £1,341 leaving the choir with £16,000 in available funds. Although two major concerts are planned in November and March which will require expensive orchestras, thanks to our reserves we fulfil our charitable aims of making music accessible without raising ticket prices.

Sue Tanton asked about the budget for the summer concert which allowed for drummers, although in fact there were none. John explained that the concept was changed from "African Music" to "Music from Around the World" and so drummers were no longer needed – he encouraged members to bring forward concert ideas to the committee. Fred Harrison congratulated John on his excellent presentation of the accounts. The adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts was proposed by Robin, seconded by Bridget Doughty and carried *nem con*. David Sinden was nominated as Examiner by John, proposed by Pauline Whitehead and seconded by Mick Rance; this was carried *nem con*.

**4. Subscription** John said the choir's normal expenses were comfortably covered and the committee had therefore agreed that the annual subscription could be kept at £130. It could be paid in stages by agreement with the Treasurer and Membership Secretaries.

**5. Chairman's Report** This had been previously circulated and was noted without comment. Reuben reminded members of the need to recruit younger members and more tenors and basses.

**6. Musical Director's Report** This had been previously circulated and was noted without comment.

**7. Changes to the Constitution** The Secretary, Ed Criswick, explained that although some updating changes had been agreed at last year's AGM, further changes were needed to reflect the increased role of Trustees in the management of the choir - at present the constitution made no mention of them at all. He asked Nick Hands-Clarke to explain further. Nick explained that those who run charities are in a position of trust, hence the term 'trustee', and they are the equivalent of directors of companies. They have to be fit and proper people, untainted by bankruptcy, fraud or money laundering. Trustees are responsible for ensuring the charity carries out its activities for its stated benefits, complies with its constitution (and the law), acts in the charity's best interests, manages its resources responsibly, acts with reasonable care and skill, and complies with reporting and accounting requirements. They should also work together as a team. There is some insurance protection for trustees provided they act responsibly. And we need to keep the Charity Commission updated with the details of our trustees. There is fuller guidance on the Charity Commission website. Ed explained that the existing trustees were the three officers plus Estelle Earnshaw, Nick Hands-Clarke, Jane Stride and Phil Slack. The proposed changes to the constitution require that the officers should be trustees and enable further trustees to be appointed from amongst the committee members; clarifies the position of the Musical Director in relation to the committee; and disqualifies trustees if they are disqualified under applicable Charity legislation. In response to a question Ed explained that apart from the three officers, other trustees were chosen at meetings of the management committee. If an officer stepped down they would cease to be a trustee unless the committee agreed they could continue as a trustee. Ed proposed the adoption of the amendments, this was seconded by Nick and approved *nem con*.

**8. Election of Chairman** Estelle Earnshaw had been nominated for the post, she was proposed by Maureen Jones and seconded by Alison Jesson. There being no other candidates, Estelle was elected *nem con*.

**9. Election of Committee** Reuben said 6 existing committee members were willing to stand again: Ed Criswick, John Dimmer, Nick Hands-Clarke, Anne Mitchell, Lynne Robb, Phil Slack and Jane Stride. Alison was standing down from the committee and nominations had been received for Reuben Suckling and Willo Heesom for the two vacant posts; the election of all candidates *en bloc* was proposed by Alison Jesson, seconded by Tony Earnshaw and approved *nem con*.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

a) Brockham Village Rosie Mote thought the choir could get more involved with the village to encourage more people to sing with us – she understood that rehearsal space was a problem, but suggested we could put information on the local website. Anne Mitchell explained that we already did this. Sue Tanton pointed out that we had previously taken part in Teas on the Green but recently there had been no-one to organise it. Singing carols was discussed; the church was too small but Estelle said the committee will discuss the idea of singing outside the community shop.

b) Voces8 Workshop and concert Nick gave an update on ticket sales; he had processed 120 orders, of which 85 were from the choir website via PayPal – 132 adults and 57 children for the workshop and 224 for the concert. There may be a small surplus from the event. Reuben said we didn't really need any more for the workshop, though there were still spaces for the concert. Christine Griffin asked about the repertoire for the concert; Reuben said this was up to Voces8.

c) NewSPAL Nick said that volunteers were loading 6,000 titles and 200,000 items onto the new system and anyone offering to help would be welcome. The date of the move to Woking was unclear at present. So far £80,000 had been raised out of the £125,000 needed in start-up costs.

d) Hiring out Staging Michael Doughty asked if the staging was still being hired out; Reuben explained that we were reluctant to do this as it involved a lot of work in setting up, and the staging was often not returned in good condition.

e) Fundraising Victoria Harding-Rolls mentioned using Amazon Smile to help fund raise, especially in the run up to Christmas – a percentage of money spent goes to a nominated charity. Ed mentioned the existing Easy Fundraising scheme, explained on our website, which worked in a similar way.

f) Chris Griffin thanked the committee on behalf of the membership for all their hard work.

**11. Next AGM** Tuesday 1 September 2020.