

Brockham Choral Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, September 7th 2021

Chairperson: Estelle Earnshaw

Present: 30

- 1. Apologies for absence.** Apologies had been received from: Victoria Harding-Rolls, Gerri Wild, Alison Jesson, Ray & Mary White, Jenni Lee-Potter, Maureen Edwards, Mary Knight, Angela Sharwood, Jackie Rance, Carol Belk, Val harden, Jean Scott, Pam Pettman, Helen Campbell-Hart, Michael & Bridget Doughty, Sue Saxby-Smith, Jackie Gael, Nick Hands-Clarke, Sandy Luff.
- 2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on September 1st 2020**
The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed with no objections or abstentions. Their acceptance was **proposed by Sue Tanton and seconded by Moira Sinden**. The minutes were signed.
- 3. Matters Arising.** There were none
- 4. Chairperson's Report and Review of the Year.** The report had been sent out prior to the meeting. She made some additional remarks. She thanked the committee for its continued hard work and support and also acknowledged the support of other members, hoping that we can make the choir as inclusive possible and maintain a sense of fun and sociability, while continuing to produce high standard of singing. We are fortunate to have **Cole and Marion** and wish to maintain our reputation. The choir was at a very important stage of its life and it was important to rebuild confidence and to maintain what works for us. As a result of **Anne's and others' publicity measures** we have a possible 8 new members joining us. The committee will explore possible performance venues, informal singing in public places and a weekend workshop (Summer 22) and a possible tour in 2023. A new banner is to be sponsored by **Angela Haeems'** company for which we are very grateful. **Tony Earnshaw** has set up a Twitter Page and will liaise with Ed Criswick, who runs the Facebook page. **Ed was thanked for all his work on this and the website** and **Jane** for her work on social events. The question of a possible change of name for the choir was mentioned. This is just an idea at the moment and nothing will be done without the involvement of and consultation with choir members. **Romey Criswick** was then invited to go through some of the thinking behind a possible name change, including the fact that we no longer rehearse or perform in Brockham and the need to attract more members, who may not search under 'Brockham'. **Jenny Bartholomew** had some concerns and felt that the reputation of Brockham Choral was intrinsically linked to the name. It was suggested that there should be a special open meeting to discuss the whole issue - Estelle accepted this and invited members to suggest alternative names. Estelle reiterated the importance of small group and sectional rehearsals and **thanked all Part Reps** for their work on this. Finally she proposed a **round of applause for Ed and Mick** in acknowledgement of all their hard work this year.

5a) Annual Financial Report and Accounts Reuben explained that, although he was nominally the treasurer for the choir, he had not done any of the work and all thanks must go to **Mick Rance**, who would now present the accounts. Mick acknowledged the work done by his predecessor **John Dimmer** in setting up the spreadsheets etc. (and Ed before him) and also thanked John for his help during the year. **Mick also thanked David Sinden for his independent review and signing off of the accounts.** Mick took us through the finances. During the year subscriptions were halved and so there was much less income from these and from the Gift Aid they earn. Cole's fees remained much the same in acknowledgement of his hard work keeping the choir going with Zoom sessions. The Celebratory Rehearsal in March '21 had to be cancelled at the last minute due to Covid restrictions, but Cole's and Marion's fees for this were honoured. Obviously there were no expenses for hire of rehearsal or concert venues as there were no concerts. Monies were paid out for administration fees comprising subscriptions to Making Music and John Fletcher Rehearsal Files, for insurance and for hire of scores. There was also a yearly payment for the storage of the trailer and staging and the choir purchased supplies of facemasks and a protective screen for Cole. **Fundraising** was down, with the only income coming from the 100 Club, donations and money raised from Easy Fundraising and Amazon Smile. **There was an overall general fund deficit for the year of £176, leaving the choir with £19,880 in available funds.** Mick invited questions from members. **Sue Tanton pointed that the funds included some £6,479 from Grants** and there had been an emphasis on involving young people attached to these. She was assured that this commitment would be honoured. **Ed mentioned the Mole Valley Community Lottery** to which the choir is linked and encouraged members to buy tickets. **Anne Mitchell proposed that the accounts should be adopted and Jenni Knights seconded this. The accounts were duly adopted with no objections or abstentions.**

5b) Nomination and Election of Examiner. David Sinden has said that he is happy to be our Examiner again. **His nomination was proposed by Mick Rance and seconded by Jan John.** There were no objections or abstentions.

6. Subscriptions. Subscriptions will now go back to normal, assuming there are no more restrictions. Ed feels that there is a need to raise subscriptions from £130 per year to £150 and he put forward points to justify this. There has been no change since 2017; our fees are relatively low in comparison with other choirs; we have an expensive year ahead with prestigious orchestras and soloists and, even with the increase in subscriptions, we are expecting a deficit of approximately £2,500.

It has been decided to scrap the 'free trial term' as it doesn't seem to work in attracting new members. However, there will be a 4 week period of 'grace' for new members before they need to commit to paying the fees. Rob Potter raised the issue of people who want to come and sing Messiah only, not wishing to stay for the rest of the year. It was stressed that, as a general principle, we want singers to commit for the whole year. Mary Suckling said that we need to be flexible in our attitude to members 'coming and going'. We need to respect

people's choices and we need to be really welcoming to new members. It was suggested that we charge £70 for one term, whichever one people start in or do. David John said that he understood that for some of the works we were employing smaller ensembles and therefore the orchestral costs would not necessarily be so big. Jenny Bartholomew thought that subscriptions were supposed to cover rehearsal costs and concert venues and MD's concert fees, not necessarily contribute towards costs of orchestras. It was agreed that the committee would confirm the issue of termly payments etc.. **The proposal to put the yearly fees up to £150 was put by Ed and seconded by Maria Chadwick. It was accepted with no objections and no abstentions**

7. Musical Director's Report. This has been circulated to members. Estelle revealed that Cole could not be at the AGM as he is in Scotland at the moment, celebrating his engagement. Congratulations were offered to him and his fiancée. Estelle expressed huge thanks to Cole for his hard work and for being so adaptable throughout the Covid period.

8. Election of the Chairperson. Ed took over the Chair temporarily in order to conduct the election of the Chairperson. No other nominations had been received apart from that of Estelle. **Her election was proposed by Romey and seconded by Diana Unwin. It was passed unanimously.** Ed thanked Estelle for all her great work in keeping things going throughout this past year. Applause greeted her election.

9. Election of the Committee. The current committee members have all agreed to stand for another year. They are: **Ed Criswick, Nick Hands-Clarke, Anne Mitchell, Pam Pettman, Mick Rance, Phil Slack, Jane Stride, Reuben Suckling.** Estelle pointed out that there was room for another member, but no other nominations were received. **Tony Earnshaw asked if it would be possible for the Committee to co-opt** additional members from time to time if deemed necessary. That was confirmed. **Moira Sinden proposed the election of the 8 members to the Committee and the proposal was seconded by Maureen Jones.** There were no objections or abstentions.

10. AOB.

a) Staging. **Robin Luff** talked about the work that had been done over the years in maintaining and improving the staging. He announced that, in view of his age and the long years he had been responsible for it, he was giving notice that his services would cease after the Messiah concert in December 2021. Robin was thanked for all his sterling work with the staging.

b) 70th Anniversary Dinner Estelle then asked **Jane to give details of the Dinner.** Thanks to a suggestion from David John, we have booked the function room at Betchworth Park Golf Club. The date is **Saturday, April 30th** This has changed from the one given in a list of dates of choir events.

c). Vote of Thanks. Rob Potter proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairperson and the Committee on behalf of the members; this was carried unanimously.

12. Date of the next AGM. September 6th 2022