**Minutes of St Georges Singers 66th Annual General Meeting.**

**St Georges Church Hall**

**25th October 2022**

**Meeting started: 7:00pm**

1. **Apologies**: Vicky Perry, Phillipa Greaves, Shirley Berry, Sue Reason, Phil Hilton, Brian Westhead, Sarah Wilkes, Penny Anson, Rhiannan Becque
2. **Previous minutes**: Approved.
3. **Matters arising**: None.
4. **Chairs report.**

AGM Chair’s Report 2022

Well that was an eventful year, rather different from our usual seasons, with difficult post-lockdown restrictions to begin with, moving to almost feeling like post-Covid freedom by the end. The season’s musical programme gave a strong message with the wonderful and demanding Bach and Walton concerts – we are back! It was really impressive to see the excellent way in which everyone in the choir worked together to overcome the obstacles in our way both throughout lockdown and on our return, from divided and socially distanced rehearsals at the beginning of the season, to the demands of a double-venue concert at the end.

Our two professionals have been amazing, and they work together so well: Pete started the season rehearsing half the choir when we had divided rehearsals, then moved smoothly and with great virtuosity on to the very different demands of accompanying first the Bach and then the Walton. Neil takes everything in his stride: there cannot have been a more varied season for a conductor, with our November concert comprising a wide range of short pieces, our March concert requiring his expertise to interpret and lead a baroque orchestra, soloists and the choir through a monumental piece of Bach. Then, for our June concerts, he had to switch to conducting a very large amateur orchestra in a strange venue for a hugely complex 20th century piece. Neil gives us the confidence to sing these demanding works because no matter what forces are in front of him demanding his time and attention, we know he has prepared us properly and he will not miss a thing! Thank you, Neil and Pete, we are very fortunate to have you!

Not everything went as planned of course. The 2021 tour, already postponed from 2019 had to be cancelled yet again when the Queen’s Platinum celebrations moved the May bank holiday around. Thankfully (fingers crossed) the tour will at last go-ahead next May. We have 61 people taking part so far, with 46 singers well distributed across the parts (although more tenors would be very welcome). The only issue we have is that the coach is a little under-utilised as yet, but everything else is going to plan, and it should be an amazing weekend, singing in three such different cathedrals.

Our president, Marcus Farnsworth, in addition to his busy life as a soloist and a music festival director, is now Head of the Vocal and Choral Department at Cheetham’s. Next year, on Friday 7th July, Cheetham’s are producing their end of term concert in the Bridgewater Hall – and it’s Walton’s Belshazzar’s Feast. Marcus has asked us to join the Cheetham’s choir for what should be a spectacular concert. We know the piece well, having sung it in two concerts, and there are three Tuesday rehearsal days available between our June 17th concert and the Cheetham’s Bridgewater Hall concert to get us back to snuff. I hope you will all jump at the chance to sing the Walton again, and to support our president in his new role. I’ll give more details, and asking you to sign up for the concert, shortly, so that I can confirm to Marcus that we are joining him on Friday 7th July 2023

As you all know – I’ve been mentioning it frequently at rehearsals - Jean our Publicity Manager, and Anne our Stage Director, are retiring from the committee tonight. You will all have seen the job descriptions for the two roles, and will know how much they have both done for us all for so long. As your committee Chair, I should also say that we will miss their wisdom and support in our meetings. From all of us, Anne and Jean, our very grateful thanks for all that you have done.

Anne and Jean were presented with flowers from the Choir and the Choir thanked them for their contributions

Many of your committee have industriously and creatively served the choir in their roles for many, many years, but the committee all feel that we should particularly acknowledge the remarkable work that Anne has done over such a very long time. She has taken on many roles – including both Chair and Stage Manager and many special projects. A lot of our success is down to Anne’s influence and hard work. The committee would like to commend to the choir that Anne be made a LIFE FRIEND of the choir in recognition of her many years of service. The Choir heartily agreed.

1. **Musical Directors report**

September 2021 seems a long time ago, but it will be long remembered as the moment when we could once again come together, physically, as a choir for the first time since March 2020. I will long treasure that first Tuesday – so many familiar faces, smiling (both visibly and under their masks), and obviously so happy to be together again. Initially, we took the decision to to have the choir divided into two groups – a slightly smaller group, socially distanced, in the hall, and a larger group, again socially distanced, in the church. The start times of each group were staggered to avoid the whole choir arriving and leaving at the same time, and Pete and I alternated between rehearsal groups weekly. After about six weeks, the whole choir moved into the church, still distanced.

Our autumn concert comprised some of the repertoire from the postponed March 2020 concert – the Britten Choral Dances from Gloriana, the Copland American Songs, and the Tormis Estonian Lullabies. To this selection we added music we had learned individually on Zoom during the period of lockdown: works by Elgar, Brahms, Purcell, Byrd, Blow, Stanford, Purcell and Haydn. The concert itself was really well performed and very well received, with tremendous concentration and focus – not easy after an 18-month break!

Then it was time for Christmas – no brass and children’s choir this year, as we wanted people to feel as comfortable as possible whilst they were performing. It did, however, afford the opportunities for the choir to sing more music, and for Pete and I to include a few piano duets. Another excellent concert and once more very well-received by an enthusiastic audience.

The New Year usually means the Singing Day, and it was great to be back in person for the first time since January 2020. A challenging but satisfying choice was the Stravinsky Symphony of Psalms alongside the large-scale motet, Vix Dicentis by Edward Naylor. A group slightly smaller that usual came together and worked hard to produce a musically rewarding and enjoyable performance to end the day.

The choir itself had already started working on its first large scale concert of the season: the Bach St John Passion at the RNCM in March. The chorus parts are so engaging and dramatic – there is a wealth of emotion to convey, and I thought you all gave your all, all day. A tremendous performance with top-notch soloists and the first-class Baroque in the North. A night to remember (but we’ll not mention the car parking!).

Onwards and upwards to the summer and two performances with the Slaithwaite Philharmonic Orchestra – one in Huddersfield Town Hall, the second in Gorton Monastery. As with the Bach, there is some challenging but fantastically rewarding choral writing, and so much exuberance, particularly when the huge orchestra is added. It was a privilege for me to have plenty of rehearsal time with the orchestra, whom I think are excellent. The performances were lively and well executed – the Walton is a demanding a sing as you are likely to encounter! We had a splendid baritone soloist, Tim Nelson, and so added the Vaughan Williams Five Mystical Songs into the programme, alongside orchestral works by Grace Williams and Charles Ives. Two very good concerts (and attendant rehearsals) in the space of just over a week. A terrific achievement and a worthy end to the season.

Plenty to look forward to in the forthcoming season. Happy Singing!

1. **Treasurer’s report**

Laura opened by pointing people to the copies of the Finances which were distributed as hand outs on seats.

Handouts comprise financial statements in Charity commission format. Made up of P&L (financial activity), second balance sheet, third supporting schedules.

**P&L** – sets out income and expenditure of the choir and reflects a deficit of just over £5k. This was inline with our budget and decision to celebrate our return to music with big concerts this last season. We were able to do this comfortably as had strong reserves in place. In addition made surplus previous year and are expected to this year and this was planned.

Laura noted that charitable activity shows an upward trend against last season as did no concerts in previous years

Shows fundraising, raffles – again much lower in prior year due to lockdown.

Final line – funds carried forwards reflects the deficit due to impact of more expensive concerts

**Balance sheet**

Shows a small amount debtors/creditors but is mainly cash

Debtors – paid out for this current season in last year

Creditors mainly costs accrued awaiting invoice e.g Slaithwaite

Balance sheet evidences still in a strong reserves position

**Page 3 - Summary**

Shows impact of each concert revenue versus costs – so see impact of instrumentalists, venue. Soloists etc.

As many will realise need to maintain that balance of larger concerts and those which may surplus. This is part of the planning the Committee undertakes in planning the future seasons concerts

Laura thanked Ali, Barbara, Gwyneth for all their contributions to funds as well as Peter for refreshments &CDS, and those coordinating raffles. Laura finished by thanking all for their ongoing support of the choir.

100 Club winners were drawn and the 3 winners were **– Peter Farrington, Dave Francis, Caroline Elves**

Statement of Finance Activities (page 6 – appendix attached)

Balance Sheet (page 7 – appendix attached)

Statutory accounts – supporting Schedules (page 8 – appendix attached)

1. **Committee appointment**

Chair – John Smith – Proposed and Seconded – Paul Burfitt, John Pears

Vice Chair – Jo Bluck – Proposed and Seconded – Jackie Harmer, Dave Francis

Secretary – Jacqui Smith – Proposed and seconded - Jean Egerton, Jo Bluck

Treasurer – Laura Mummery – proposed and seconded – Jean Egerton, Dave Francis

Ticket Secretary – Dave Francis – proposed and seconded – Jo Bluck, Jean Egerton

Concert Secretary – Paul Goss– approved and seconded – Jo Bluck, Dave Francis

Publicity Officer – Sue/Mel Rimmer – social media, - approved and seconded – Dawn Garfitt (Display), Posters, Advertising (Awaiting role)

Librarian – Gwyneth Pailin –– approved and seconded – Tim Lambert, Lorraine Lighton

Stage Manager – Tim Lambert – approved and seconded – John Smith, Jo Bluck

Alto Rep – Sue Mason – proposed and seconded – Laura Mummery, Lorraine Lighton

Tenor Rep – Mark Warrington – proposed and seconded – Paul Mummery, John Pears

Soprano Rep - Gillian Banks – proposed and seconded – Jackie Burfitt, Andrea Millington

Bass Rep – Paul Burfitt – proposed and seconded – Reynold Higginbottom, Dave Francis

Susan Hodgson to stay on with special projects and support, programmes, seasons brochure etc – co-opted.

Proposed that Steve Bluck continues to act as independent examiner. This was approved by the Choir

Laura thanked Steve for his work behind the scenes, brilliant at it and puts in a lot of hard work

Committee members proposed and seconded

1. **Open Ideas Forum**

**Jean** – Will doing the Belshazzer require rehearsals at the Church Hall – yes 3 Tuesdays before the 7th July. We will need to rehearse with Cheethams too – may do a Tuesday and Thursday. Ask for those who can, to rehearse with Chets in the run up to support as we have sung it before.

1. **AOB**

Peter – Thanks to everyone who has put name down on tea rota. Special thanks to Dawn and Susan for washing up each week

Decaf coffee and Tea now available

Peter reflected that 22 years ago he took on the refreshments role and since that day the drinks always been 20p. With current prices increases it was agreed to increase prices of refreshments to 50p. Please bring correct change if possible.

Thanks to Peter for continuing to run this for the Choir.

The meeting closed at 19:52.

**Treasurer’s report appendices**

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