

Ripon Choral Society



Minutes of the AGM held at St Johns Church, Sharow 28 September 2016.

1. Welcome and introduction.

The President welcomed old and new members. He enquired if there were any Patron members present other than Singing members. There were none.

2. Apologies were received from:

Brian and Scilla Kealy, Derek and Jean Hazlehurst. Maureen Carr, Ginny Mackay, Margaret C Smith and Mary Younger.

3. The Minutes of the last AGM were accepted as a true record.

Proposer : John Kiberd. Seconder: Jean Dalglish

4. There were no matters arising.

5. Financial Report – Irene Hall.

IH indicated that most people would have realised that the previous year was not a good year in financial terms. At its conclusion, the books showed that the Society was 8K down from where it was expected to be. The costs of the year had been as planned. The deficit was down fundamentally to the lack of ticket sales, resulting in an absolutely disastrous lack of income. Although, the Society had also been paying a lot more for the hire and carriage of music copies, this had been further exacerbated by the membership fluctuation so that quite often more was ordered than had been required.

Irene expressed her thanks to Gill Steer and her team who organised the coffee every week and also to Patrick Earle for the Produce Stall and finally but not least to the organiser and supporters of the raffle.

6. Chairman's Report – Andrew Hill.

AH confirmed that this had been more of a bumpy year than anticipated as reflected in the accounts. He indicated the positives of the year in particular the transfer to our new rehearsal venue which now gave us a secure place to rehearse and where the Society had been given a very warm welcome. The Messiah and the summer concerts were also successful.

AH then reflected on the financial issues raised by the Treasurer. There had only been a very small loss in members with the move to Sharow. More significant was the difficult autumn term with people who found the Pekhonen difficult or not to their taste ducking out so the choir was significantly smaller. This resulted in significant discrepancies between forecast and actual ticket sales. This had a knock-on effect on the lack of actual revenue compared to that projected for each of these two concerts each one being dropping from £6.5K-£6.75K to around £4.1. The projections were for much smaller losses to be recorded.

Ripon Choral Society



The President, RH interjected at this point and indicated that these losses cannot be sustained and if they were, then the Society would be bankrupt within about five years.

AH continued that the Society would need to cut its cloth according to its means. The big issue to be addressed as already indicated is the sale of tickets which is linked to the size of the choir.

It had been decided to put on The Last Night of the Proms as an additional concert to raise funds for the War Requiem as it was thought that the two audiences would be quite different but maybe that had not been the case.

He indicated that the Committee and the Society would need to think carefully about the programme for future years. He mentioned that Helen Hill as stated last year had indicated that ticket sales are very much influenced by the programme. He thought the Goodall would be very accessible and in 2017-18 very popular items were planned to be included in the concert programme such as the Faure Requiem and Jenkins' Armed Man. Ticket sales would continue to be online and sold through the Cathedral shop.

There would also be substantial fund-raising for the War Requiem.

The Chairman expressed thanks to a number of people. To Irene Hall who has acted as Treasurer for three years, to Helen Hill and Jane Drake who have been on the Committee for eight years and have acted as Ticket Secretaries for some time, to the Committee in general and also to all the other people who make the choir run smoothly such as those who provide refreshments both here and in the Cathedral at concerts and the Front of House team. Last but certainly not least to John D who provides inspirational leadership and also to Greg S for his superb accompaniment.

Andrew H then indicated that he will keep going as Chair for another year but that this would not be for ever and talking about his successor was certainly not a taboo subject.

7. **Musical Director's Report** - John Dunford.

JD started his report by confirming that with the benefit of hindsight RCS should not have agreed to the Last Night of the Proms because of the preparation required for the concerts already agreed. However, he was happy to have helped the Cathedral raise £20K from our two concerts and felt that the LNOP had gone well.

He reflected that the Pekhonen was a real challenge and that in the last two weeks even was even close to handing in his resignation! The night before the performance he shared his thoughts with the choir that we were "All in this together". Many members came up to him to say they were with him and he thanked everyone for their encouragement.

The Messiah went well. The Elgar and Finzi, two of JD's favourite performances were wonderful and deserved a full cathedral which sadly didn't happen.

Ripon Choral Society



The Summer concert was a glorious one and one of the musical highlights was the Bach Cantata with Samantha Hay giving a stunning performance as did Kristina James.

John continued by saying there were a lot of things he was proud of. The tenor section had grown and presently there were 29 on the books. He was so pleased about this and many choirs would die for this number! RCS was now getting back to being a balanced choir.

He gave a huge thank you to those who allowed us to use St John's as he loved being here even if the acoustics were a bit strange initially. This vote of thanks was greeted with a huge round of applause.

The fact that RCS was a Community Choir was another thing to be proud of and a letter from the widow of a former member indicated what the choir means to people. As a Community choir we now need to pull together to raise ticket sales in order to keep subscriptions at a reasonable level. He made reference to Harrogate Choral Society subscriptions which were currently £150 per annum for a single person and £240 for a double one.

Above all, JD indicated that he believes in this choir. He thanked everyone for a good year and exhorted the choir to have an even better one in the coming year.

The President stated then that what JD didn't mention was the opportunity he has given to young soloists such as Ian Bostrick, Samantha Hay and many more. Roger Higson, on behalf of the young musicians, gave John a big thank you.

8. Proposed change to the Constitution.

This had been circulated to members 14 days in advance of the meeting as required.

The proposed amendment was that in Clause 7 b (i) , "The Honorary Treasurer" should be replaced by "Up to two Honorary Treasurers".

Proposer : Mike Cotton

Seconder: Chris Tunnard.

The motion was carried unanimously with all in favour.

9. Election of Committee Members.

People had been proposed and seconded for all posts in advance of the meeting – see below. (Note voice part representatives had another year in post.)



Ripon Choral Society

Position	Name	Proposer	Seconder
Chair	Andrew Hill	Margaret C Smith	Rev Maurice Jennett
Honorary Secretary	Margaret Smith	John Kiberd	Margaret C Smith
Honorary Librarian	Rob Widdows	Tim Cundy	John Watson
Making Music Rep	Derek Hazlehurst	Peter Hannam	David Lightowler
Honorary Ticket Secretary	Christopher Williams	John Kiberd	Simon Grenfell
Honorary Treasurers	Rebecca Smith	Patsy Jacklin	Gill Steer
	Joe Cieslik	Rev Maurice Jennett	Ruth Grenfell

There were no duplicate people proposed for any post.

The President went through all positions and then proposed that the nominations be accepted. All voted in favour with none against and no abstentions.

10. Fund-raising.

AH reiterated the importance of this topic and invited members to suggest ideas.

11. Any Other Business.

- Margaret Shepherd indicated that when AH stands down as Chairman it might be good if a female stood.
- Jean Dalglish spoke about the rising costs of music hire and asked if members would mind paying a little more. This was supported by Sioban Moore who indicated that it was common in lots of other societies for a small sum to be paid for the hire of music.
AH indicated that at RCS, the society had always tried to include music hire in the subscription and that he would wish this to continue if possible.
- Ruth Grenfell spoke about loving having the choir at St John's but about the need for people to help put the chairs out for rehearsals. Currently this had been left to Simon G. She suggested a rota for putting out the chairs and Alan Nuttall volunteered to do this.
- Jane Barber stated that many members buy their own music for performances and could the choir organise a discount for members wishing to do so. JD responded that Rob Widdows the Librarian orders music several months in advance of it being required and the cost of music hire, as AH had indicated, was subsumed into the membership fees.

The President thanked everyone for being such a wonderful choir and closed the meeting.