

Minutes of the 2016 AGM of the Anton Bruckner Choir

Held at 17:00 on Saturday 23 January 2016
at University College School, Frognal, London NW3 6XH

29 members were present

Apologies for absence received from Samantha Job, Graham King, Phil Pratt, Sarah Sabey, Nick Wood, Graham Wood, Jenny Garrett

Minutes taken by Gordon Banner

1. Approval of Minutes of 2015 AGM

Approval was proposed by Jane Fisher-Hunt, seconded by Kate Cotton, passed nem. con.

2. Treasurer's report - Graham King

Graham had sent his apologies - he was unable to attend due to a prior singing commitment. Instead he sent a written report to be read as explanatory notes for the 2015 accounts (which had been posted on the website, and were available at the meeting). His report was read out, and is reproduced in full here:

The choir dipped into its reserves by somewhat over £4,000 last year. This was expected, and planned for, and was the result of two policy decisions:

First, the *Matthew Passion* is an expensive work to perform. It requires such large forces that the stage at St.John's Smith Square must be extended, costing us two rows of audience seats. The loss of nearly £4,500 on that concert was expected.

Secondly, we made a policy decision to aim for break-even on the Lisbon tour. A loss would have been unfair on those members unable to take part, and in any case might have exposed us to the objection that, as a registered charity, we were spending funds on non-charitable objectives (although, in the event, those objectives were amply fulfilled in front of new and enthusiastic audiences). The large turnover in the choir accounts will create some costs for us in 2016 (increased Making Music subscription fees and increased insurance premiums); and the tour incurred £212 in Performing Rights fees, so we have set aside the apparent "profit" of £542 to cover these items. The balance of £1,729 will be offered as a rebate to the tourists (expect individual emails soon). Any unclaimed rebates will be accounted as donations in 2016.

(The tour accounts have been calculated in pounds sterling throughout. Euro disbursements have been accounted by including bank fees in the exchange rate.)

Friends and Gift Aid: thanks are due to Sian [Rees] and Will [Hale] for managing these

items.

Other donations: the slightly odd figure of ninepence is due to nine tourists having each overpaid by a penny. Objections on a postcard to...

The Making Music subscription includes our insurance premium.

The advance payment of £140 was for the use of today's rehearsal venue at UCS. (The 2014 figure was a deposit for St.John's Smith Square).

The entry of £2,503 against "creditors" consists of (i) accrued tour refunds; (ii) prompt payments for the January 2016 concert from some singers (for which the Treasurer is grateful!); and (iii) the slightly delayed payment of our subscription to Making Music, which just slipped over the year-end boundary.

Finally, our large turnover in 2015 will require us to have the accounts independently examined against criteria laid down by the Charity Commission. This examination has yet to be arranged.

There was a question about the GiftAid value of £0. Will Hale said that a claim for last year was in progress, expected to be between £300-£400. Although this would logically apply to 2015, the actual payment would show in the 2016 accounts. Will also remarked that anyone who had recently joined the choir (or moved house) would need to sign a GiftAid consent form - he would be bringing them to upcoming rehearsals.

There was some discussion about the independent examination of the accounts - this doesn't have to be done by professional auditors necessarily, but should be done by someone unconnected to anyone on the Committee. Abi King suggested that for the avoidance of doubt, the meeting should assign the arrangement of this examination to the Committee, and this was agreed without objection.

Anne Mitchell asked whether payments for the Lisbon tour (or any part of it) should count towards GiftAid. The Committee and others explained that there was too much personal benefit to participants for it to be considered a donation - by far the majority of the costs were for personal accommodation, etc.

Adoption of the financial report was proposed by Antony Warren, seconded by Rosemary Hadfield, and passed nem.con.

3. Chairman's report - Lulu Chivers

Samantha Job, the outgoing Chairman, was unable to be with us as she has already moved to the USA for her new job. In her absence, Lulu Chivers made a brief report.

2015 had been a milestone year for the Choir, with a great *St Matthew Passion* concert at St John's, Smith Square (SJSS), and our first ever tour. The Lisbon tour had been a great success - thanks to Karen Gilbert and her team.

Thanks were due to the Committee -

- Phil Pratt for arranging venues
- Gordon Banner for minutes
- Graham King for his meticulous accounts
- Karen Gilbert (again) for publicity

and also to non-Committee helpers -

- Richard Hubbard for the website
- Charlotte Nicklin for making tea at every break
- Anna Moses and Anne Mitchell for the fantastic library work
- Georgia Lowe for the publicity artwork
- Emma Anderson for the *Matthew Passion* programme
- Will Hale for GiftAid
- Sian Rees for managing the Friends scheme

and of course Chris Dawe for the music.

It was pointed out that Lulu was being too modest to mention herself!

Finally Lulu wanted to thank Samantha for all her work as Chairman over the last three years, and wish her well for the next phase of her life in the US. Her leadership would be much missed, and of course we would all miss her presence on a personal level too. It seemed like everyone agreed!

4. Music Director's report - Chris Dawe

First Chris reviewed the *St Matthew Passion* concert at SJSS in the spring. This might be the most ambitious work a choir of our type can put on, in terms of the forces required etc. He reminisced about the first time we had put on the work - there were quite a few veterans of that occasion at the meeting - which had been creditable, but had been somewhat "seat of the pants" in terms of the organisation. The staging had been built on the day by members of the choir, and the soloists were less experienced than we would use today.

By contrast, the 2015 performance had gathered a great review on the ArtsDesk website, and Chris felt that members of the Orchestra of St John's (which we used for the first time) had been taken aback by the quality of the choir.

Regarding Lisbon: a great experience. We had talked about going on a tour for many years, and we had finally done so. It had been a great blend of the musical and social experience without either aspect compromising the other - which could happen all too easily where too much rehearsal made the time miserable, or over-enthusiastic(!) socialising spoiled the artistic result.

In organising this, Karen had set up a fantastic template that could be used next time. Maybe we should consider another in two years' time?

For the future: we had the upcoming Epiphany concert to look forward to, and beyond that another "big" concert in SJSS which would consist of the Handel *Dixit Dominus* and Mozart *Mass in C Minor*.

The choir was now 20 years old, and Chris was delighted that at this stage we could now do Britten *A Boy Was Born* on so little rehearsal - we had some really advanced stuff in our repertoire like that or the Martin *Mass*. He would like to add the Poulenc *Figure Humaine* to the list soon - it was

important to keep challenging ourselves.

Chris added his thanks in particular to:

- Samantha, who had been a tremendous Chairman, overseeing so many large events like the *St Matthew Passion* for example
- Phil for his liaison with SJSS
- Anne Mitchell for arranging the music, especially arranging hire copies with the lending library such that members weren't forced to pay for every score we used.
- Karen for the tour and the publicity machine
- and to the Committee in general

5. Appointment of Committee

Lulu referred us to the draft resolution on the Agenda for the appointment of the Officers and Committee Members. Samantha had now stood down, and we thanked her for her hard work. All the other Committee members were willing to continue in their roles.

Gordon Banner pointed out that there was a slight mistake in the resolution - all members of the Committee, not just the Officers, were also de facto Trustees, according to Charity Commission rules.

Since that resolution had been added to the Agenda, Liesje Thomas had agreed to step up as Chairman. As no one else has asked to stand, that made a simple slate of candidates. The meeting agreed to adopt the committee as in the resolution, plus Liesje: proposed by Kate Cotton, seconded by Judy Taylor, passed nem.con.

Those elected were:

Music Director	Chris Dawe
Chairman	Liesje Thomas
Treasurer	Graham King
Secretary	Gordon Banner
Publicity	Karen Gilbert
Concert Manager	Phil Pratt
Committee Member	Lulu Chivers

6. Other business

Georgia Lowe relayed a message from Charlotte Nicklin who was away in Malawi - she sent her love to everyone, was having a fabulous time so far, but would be very happy to get any messages - she could be found on FaceBook, WhatsApp and her blog.

Anne Mitchell mentioned a website called EasyFundraiser - we would need to set up the choir as a beneficiary on there, but after that if anyone did their online shopping via that site, they could arrange for the choir to receive a small percentage as a donation. There was some concern about whether there was some "catch" in the scheme, but one or two people had had good experiences with it via other charities. We agreed that the committee would look into it.

Rosemary Hadfield asked if we could get a more up-to-date photo on the website, perhaps something from the Lisbon trip. Lulu confirmed that that is planned. Karen mentioned that the photos were available on Flickr, and that Phil was working on a souvenir Tour Photo Book. More photos were still welcome on the DropBox account. The Tour Book would probably be made available on Photobox so individuals could arrange to print copies if they wished.