

HARLESTON CHORAL SOCIETY

REPORT of the Committee Meeting held on Thursday 7 March 2019

Present: John Awty, Julia Awty, Joanna Barfield, Stella Brownsea, Malcolm Butcher, Jo Curry, Carol Hammond, Jenny Hyams, John Layton, Kate Peacher, Caroline Rodbourne

In attendance: Janette Ruocco

Jo welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially new Committee members Stella Brownsea, John Layton and Kate Peacher.

1. Apologies for Absence - none

2. Minutes of the last meeting (Thursday 24 January 2019)

Confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to two minor amendments.

3. Matters arising

(i) Acapella Concert: there are no immediate developments, but on Janette's suggestion it was agreed to try to arrange an Acapella Concert for a Sunday afternoon at the end of September/beginning of October.

(ii) Voice part leaders: it was agreed that this is necessary, as a point of contact for all voice parts and especially for new choir members. Jo will ask for volunteers at choir practice.

4. EGM

Jo thanked Caroline and Jenny for deputising for her. Responding to the criticisms which have arisen about the Chair's job description, she pointed out that all HCS Chairs have carried out duties as they have seen fit, but she agreed that some duties in her job description could be delegated.

Jo went on to say how important the choir is locally, and although the choir could continue to function without charitable status, ie without a Chair, it would then lose considerable financial benefits. It is therefore imperative to have a new Chair at the AGM (23 September), and she hopes that the next six months will allow adequate time for someone from the existing Committee to come forward and to shadow her, and that this should be before the end of the summer term (22 June).

Kate will begin to shadow Carol's role as Friends Co-ordinator immediately, and was thanked for this initiative.

On the question of an aisle/or not at choir practices, Janette said that the only way it can work is to have the men at the front. It was agreed that there are benefits in moving around. Janette will consider: moving the 2nd Sopranos behind the 1st Sopranos; when necessary, asking Karen to play voice parts, and also a pause after the Altos' first note and before that of the 2nd Sopranos; and giving specific homework from week to week.

5. Treasurer's report

(i) **Current state of finances:** Malcolm distributed copies of the Income & Expenditure for the year ended 31 August 2019, and the Cash Forecast 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019. He said that it is very disappointing that the surge in choir numbers to 62 at the beginning of the Autumn term has now reduced to 48, which means a drop in subs of £1700, although Gift Aid is £380.00. It is hoped that some leavers may come back in September. The predicted cash balance at 31 August 2019 is £4062.00.

Janette suggested that one way of increasing choir numbers might be to hold two dedicated 'Come and Sing with Us' sessions, with a friend, during the early part of the Autumn and Spring terms, possibly during choir practice, or as a Workshop.

Kate pointed out that there are various other local ways of raising money for the choir, ie getting the Co-op to designate one of its green discs for HCS; and approaching Barclays, as the one remaining bank in Harleston, for sponsorship. Malcolm also suggested again asking Harleston & Redenhall Town Council for a grant.

(ii) **Raffle:** Stella reported that both the St John's Revd Canon and the Church Warden are happy for HCS to hold raffles in any part of St John's. The pews are going, and will be replaced in the next few months by chairs, for which they are asking for sponsorship. The chairs will mean that there will be an opportunity for more ticket sales, and also for hiring out the increased space to other organisations. Jo thanked Stella for her successful negotiating.

(iii) **Expenses protocol:** there was considerable discussion on the pros and cons of having a protocol. It was finally agreed that expenses are there to be claimed, should the claimant feel it is necessary, and that a protocol removes the inherent guilt from the process of claiming. On this basis, the earlier version of the protocol was amended and will now be posted on the Members' area of the website.

(iv) **funding application to GWF:** Jenny and Jo reported that this is ready to go, subject to registering the application on line, which they will do next week. Malcolm suggested, and it was agreed, that it would be sensible to apply for £5,000 rather than the £2,500 currently requested.

6. Summer Concert, 22 June 2019

Janette distributed copies of the proposed dress rehearsal schedule and Concert running order (*a copy of this will be posted on the Members' area of the website after the Easter break*).

7. Future Concerts

(i) Christmas Concert, 14 December 2019, 'The First Nowell'

Janette distributed copies of her plan for this concert. She asked the Committee to consider holding a 'bring a friend'/open rehearsal (*and see 5 [i] above*) on 14 or 21 September.

(ii) Summer Concert, 20 June 2020, 'Songs and Cries'

Janette distributed copies of her plan for this concert, which will require only one soloist and a second pianist, and possibly a children's choir from the local primary school, which she would personally coach. She feels that this would be an ideal opportunity to engage with the local community and to recruit new choir members. Jo thanked Janette for her very helpful future planning.

8. Quiz Evening, Saturday 30 March 2019

The sub-committee reported that everything is in hand. Jo will ask at choir practice how many are expecting to come and, if they are not coming, if they would be prepared to donate raffle prizes

9. Dates of next meetings

Committee Meeting: Thursday 23 May, 2.30 pm
Pre-concert check list meeting: Monday 17 June, 7.00 pm
Summer Party: Saturday 13 July
AGM: Monday 23 September

10. AOB

(i) Friends: Carol reported that the number of Friends is dwindling. It was therefore agreed that the benefits of being a Friend should be promoted, and that more people should be encouraged to become Friends.

(ii) HCS 20th year

Joanna pointed out that 2019 is HCS's 20th year and suggested that this should be appropriately marked. It was agreed to incorporate this in publicity, and on the programme for the Summer Concert.