

Surrey Heath Choral Society

Annual General Meeting

High Cross Church, Knoll Road, Camberley

7.15 p.m., Monday 17th September 2018



MINUTES

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM.
2. **Apologies for absence** were received from Jenny Bertenshaw, Peggy Hoskins, Julia Greg, Madeleine Chowne, and Rosemary Ealden.
There were 51 attendees.
3. **Minutes of the last AGM** had been previously distributed. They were accepted as accurate and signed by the chairman, as proposed by Matthew Sleaf and seconded by David Markby.
4. **Matters Arising** There were none.
5. **Treasurer's Report**

Following is my Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31st August, 2018.

Under the heading Receipts, you will see that the first item is Subscriptions which brought in £10,640.00. The next item is Donations which are listed separately bringing in a total of £2,723.00. The previous year, we had three donations amounting to £648.00 from Waitrose, £1,500.00 from the Humphrey Richardson Trust and £73.05 from Easy Fundraising.

Friends brought in £180.00 and Siemens £4,075.00. However, we are due to receive another £1,050 for this financial year bringing their total to £5,125.00. Out of this money, we pay Rae Evans for her musical direction of Zero Harmony, the Siemens In-house choir.

Raffles made £863 and Drinks £19. As we can no longer use the kitchen, the sale of drinks has stopped. The socials this year were meals where we paid for ourselves, whereas the previous year we had a quiz and raffle and a barbecue plus another social event which brought the total to £771.00

The concert figures are listed, and a full account of the costs were provided on a separate sheet.

Concert wear (bow ties and brooches) sales made £18. Bank interest on the deposit account was £8 and Gift Aid was £1,879.00.

I would like to thank Salma for her efforts with the fundraising, Peggy for her work with Friends and socials, Debra and Pauline for their weekly raffle fund raising, Ann for concert wear and John and Tessa Fullwood for working on the Gift Aid for me. Grateful thanks go to you all.

Now we come to Payments and we start with the Hall. These are payments for rehearsals, and include High Cross, St. Mary's and Kings International College. The MD, Pianist and the Music are all rehearsal fees. The concert figures are listed and a breakdown is on a separate sheet.

Concert wear cost £123 and Admin £5. Making Music includes Membership, Insurance and Performing Rights which made a total of £605.00.

Sundries includes flowers for Ann and Rosemary for their services to the choir and to the committee and £1,599 was paid for a keyboard. The £180.00 under Subscriptions was for subscriptions that were paid twice.

The Siemens amount is paid to Rae Evans for her directorship of the Siemens choir.

This brings the total income to £30,064 and the total expenditure to £35,886, leaving an excess of expenditure over income of £5,823.00

Under the heading Financial Summary you will see that at the end of August 2018 we had a total of £7,906 while we started the year with £13,828.00

This ends my Treasurer's Report for the year September 2017 to August 2018.

Kate Brown, Treasurer. 14th September, 2018

2017/8 ACCOUNTS

SURREY HEATH CHORAL SOCIETY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT - YEAR TO 31st AUGUST 2018

RECEIPTS	2018	2017
Subscriptions	10640	10755
Donations:		
Waitrose	364	
SH Arts Council	450	
Humphrey Richardson Trust	1500	
Rowan Bentall Trust	250	
Easy Fundraising	114	
Other Donations	45	
	2723	2236
Friends	180	170
Siemens	4075	3880
Singet	0	120
Engagements	0	100
Raffles	863	893
Drinks	19	45
Christmas Concert	2007	3216
November Concert	3319	0

Spring Concert	1955	4005
Summer Concert	2379	4042
Socials	0	771
Concert Wear	18	62
Advertisements	0	200
Bank Interest	8	2
Gift Aid	1879	1933
TOTAL INCOME	30064	32430

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT - YEAR TO 31st AUGUST 2018

PAYMENTS	2018	2017
Hall	2437	2159
MD	4760	4555
Pianist	2705	2050
Music	1123	963
Holy Week	0	1257
Christmas Concert	1486	4946
November Concert	1655	0
Spring Concert	5426	8447
Summer Concert	10400	1825
Socials	0	248
Concert Wear	123	0
Admin/Publicity	5	38
Making Music	605	480
Sundries	1693	198
Subscriptions	180	180
Siemens	3288	3745
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	35886	31091
SHORTFALL/EXCESS OF INCOME	-5823	1338
	30064	32430

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Business Premium Account	6079	7071
Current Account	1818	6593
Cash	9	165
	7906	13828
 Cheques to clear	 0	 100

K.M.BROWN
Hon. Treasurer

L. EVANS ACA
Independent Examiner

The Treasurer's report and accounts were then proposed by Andrew Milligan and seconded by Clifford Drake. The members voted unanimously to accept them.

Concern was raised by a member that the future programme must be affordable. Another noted the high cost of the summer concert at which only a limited number of tickets were sold.

The fact that Surrey Heath Singers were not registered for VAT was highlighted. It was suggested that Trustees should review this with respect to the CIO.

6. Musical Director's Report

Each year I deliver a report in which I attempt not only to present a review of our musical activities in the previous season and present a detailed outline of the season to come but also to give a broader view of the choir's development in the context of our aims and our aspirations. I hope always to make you, the members, feel proud of your membership of an active, dynamic and ambitious choir and to help you understand what it takes to generate a sustainable momentum which will ensure that this choir has an essential place in its community and a secure future.

However, each year I fear that in attempting to delivery so many messages in one report, the thrust of what I have to say is lost. I try to be clear, but I suspect that some of the messages I try to convey are not received and not retained. They are after all simply words – so easily not taken in and not processed.

I am anxious to put across to the membership the vision that we should all share for the future of this choir. I am keen to see more people engaged with the life of their choir – either by offering help in any of the many roles (both on and off the committee) which keep the choir functioning or by offering to help any of the committee members in fulfilling their roles or by simply taking part in the many extra-curricular opportunities that the choir now offers to its members. I have said many times that by participating more fully in the life of the choir, our members will get so much more enjoyment from their chosen leisure activity and the many essential management and administrative roles will be made so much easier by sharing the responsibilities. I am evangelical about helping our members to enjoy their membership of an exciting, forward-looking choir and I am desperate to ensure that, when I eventually retire from this post (though not just yet) that I leave the choir with a sustainable and secure future – musically

confident, financially viable, administratively energetic and essential to the cultural life of its community.

These have been the messages of my annual AGM report since 2010. The 'call to arms' (I quote here from my very first AGM report on 27th September 2010) is not just addressed to the committee, it is to every single member of the choir. This is what I said eight years ago ... and it is STILL entirely true today:-

So by way of a short *Call to Arms* I would like to ask you all (present and absent) to make a proper commitment to the choir's activities. For, without regular attendance our singers will not improve their own skills – and without individual improvement, the choir cannot develop. And without development, the society cannot survive.

Careful planning and budgeting are designed to help you to get the most out of your membership – and to ensure the stability of the choir in terms of membership, development and finance.

I am ONLY here for as long as you want me here – I am merely a servant of the choir. As such I undertake to do what I can to help everyone enjoy their membership of the choir to the fullest possible extent and I undertake to help develop the choir, its audiences, its reputation and its future.

But I need YOUR help! I can't do this without your support.

Please, help me to help you – by taking your commitment to our work seriously and by seriously enjoying your commitment to SHCS!

And there ends the sermon. As critically important now as it was then!

I was moved to try to reiterate the message today because, when I began to review the last season's work, it became apparent to me that the choir appears to have lost some momentum. I have not seen the treasurer's figures for the 2017-2018 season at the time that I write this report, but I suspect that ticket sales have been down again this year – and therefore, presumably, ticket income too. This makes me think that perhaps some of our singers are not all that bothered about selling tickets or about making people aware of our concerts – perhaps not supporting fully the work of the marketing and publicity people in the choir. In a similar vein, I have not seen the records of attendance for the last year. I fear that we might have slipped below the already poor average of 75%. I know that this doesn't apply to everyone – so, many of you can remain smug about your 100% attendance – however, translating 75% means that on average each member has missed one-in-four rehearsals! Or put another way, at each rehearsal we only have three quarters of the choir. I know these are sweeping generalisations, but it does hint strongly of a problem for the choir as a whole.

The issues of motivation are not necessarily in the hands of each individual – but rather in the way we engage collectively with our activities and the way in which we engage with each other.

We missed the boat last year with a proposed borough-wide Arts Festival. The project was wide-ranging and ambitious but would have seen SHS acting as an umbrella arts organisation promoting events throughout Surrey Heath. Essential in our quest to be seen to promote music and the arts in a wider context and to put Surrey Heath Singers in a strong position to attract major funding. It didn't happen. We also failed to capitalise on the work with schools last season resulting in a couple of concerts which completely missed their intended market. In addition, there was completely unnecessary confusion and debate about the summer concert which resulted in the lowest summer ticket sales for some time.

And all of this in spite of many positive initiatives taking place in and around the choir. I am grateful to those who DO get involved with the work of the choir – in so many interesting and supportive ways. Many of our folk are dedicated supporters in both small and large capacities. Their efforts on our behalf are essential and are gratefully acknowledged here. And I don't just mean the committee. There are several people around us now who work tirelessly in the background, ensuring that we continue to function effectively in so many areas. To them I am enormously grateful.

I would add to the list those who attend the Frimley Park Hospital bereavement services on occasional Sunday afternoons throughout the year. To them I am tremendously grateful. Our sincere thanks should also go to the folk who build the stages for our concerts and to those who ensure that our concerts run smoothly, to those who generate and look after our publicity, to the unsung heroes who fulfil a myriad of silent (and not so silent) roles throughout the year.

In particular I should thank the members of our long-suffering committee who selflessly attend meetings, discuss subjects as wide-ranging as CIO, GDPR, H&S, M&S, H&M and G&T, drink wine, eat biscuits and generally have a passably good time.

As he relinquishes the role of chairman I would like to thank Crispin for his remarkable work on behalf of Surrey Heath Singers. When he was appointed (presumably five years ago [*ed. actually six years ago*]) I did ask him seriously to try not to get dragged into doing everything himself. I fear that this is another area in which I have failed. He has had a hand on almost everything that the choir has done in recent years, he has been unstinting in his work, tireless in his enthusiasm and essential in the many and various community connections that have been made in pursuit of a sustainable model for the choir. I'm sure that the

membership will recognise the tremendous contribution he has made to the life and to the future of this organisation. My hope is that without the burden of the Chair, he will feel able to continue to make such invaluable contributions to developing our outreach activities in schools, in business and in the community.

I outlined this new season's events last week. We have loads of lovely music and lots of exciting projects to look forward to. These are the things I need you to be motivated by and these are the reasons I ask you each year to fulfil your side of the bargain, work hard, attend rehearsals, join in with the business of the choir, enjoy your singing and be fulfilled. With your support, your engagement, your enthusiasm and your participation, this season's programme can help develop the realisation of our vision and the secure future of Surrey Heath Singers.

7. Chairman's Remarks

To be inserted.

The Chairman noted that the Member who had been managing the SHS Twitter was now on maternity leave, and hence the Choir needs another volunteer to manage this.

8. Charitable Incorporated Organisation

At the 2017 AGM a Member raised the concern of why we had not made the transition to become a CIO. The Committee agreed to revisit this. Following a detailed research, internal review papers were prepared for consideration including the recommendation to proceed towards conversion to a CIO. These were first approved by the Trustee, and then presented to all Members for consideration and support. As highlighted in the review documents, the only negatives in becoming a CIO related to the effort involved in making the application to the Charity Commission. This has now been successfully achieved during the first half of 2018, gaining full support for the change from both the Charity Commission and Companies House. We are now ready to make the transition to a CIO. The ideal time to convert is at the end of a Financial year, so that we can make a clean financial break between the current unincorporated structure and becoming a CIO.

The motion therefore to convert to a CIO was put to the members. This was proposed by Crispin Kirkman and seconded by Colin Gunner. The members voted unanimously to convert to the CIO.

The Secretary thanked the members and stated that the Choir would now make the transition. A member asked for clarification on what still need to be completed to establish the CIO. The Secretary confirmed that the CIO was fully set up.

9. Any Other Business

There were no items raised for AOB.

10. Election of Officers / Trustees

It was announced that Crispin Kirkman had completed 6 year's in the role of Chairman and had in line with our Constitution would not be standing for re-election. Clifford Drake and Peggy Hoskins were also standing down after both had completed 3 years as Trustees. The other Trustees were all willing to be nominated again for their roles.

The Secretary then raised the issue that there had been no nominations for the post of Chairman submitted within the required timescale, although one nomination was submitted on the day of the AGM after the deadline had passed.

The role of Chairman is a mandatory post under both our Constitution and as a requirement of the Charity Commission. With no nominations received by the deadline required, the Trustees had reviewed the options:

- Postponed the AGM and ask for nominations again and so miss the target of converting to the CIO at financial year end (creating additional workload); or
- Come up with a temporary solution that would enable the Choir to continue functioning.

The only acceptable solution available, assuming the members voted to convert to the CIO was to ask Crispin Kirkman to act as a temporary Chairman of the new CIO until a new Chairman can be nominated and voted in. This would be treated as a matter of urgency. This was only possible under our Constitution if we were to convert immediately to the CIO, as this would be viewed as a new organisation by the Charity Commission, and hence under a new Constitution.

It was agreed that a deadline of the 31st October 2018 would be set for a new Chairman to be identified and elected. This proposal from Colin Gunner was then put to the members. The votes recorded were 44 for, 2 against, and 2 abstentions.

For the other Trustees were nominated as follows:

Name	Nominated by
Officers	
Kate Brown, Treasurer	Judith Hill
Colin Gunner, Secretary	Keith Edwards
Committee	
Sarah Maycey	Colin Gunner
Keith Wigglesworth	Crispin Kirkman
Salma Sams	Christine Senior

As the above posts were all unopposed, the members were asked to vote on the Trustee posts collectively. The members voted unanimously to accept the nominations.

11. The Secretary then announced an extra item and he presented Crispin and Clifford with presentation bottles of wine from Denbies Vineyard for their time as Chairman and Trustee respectively.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm