



Phoenixsingers

Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting

October 2, 2013

Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School, Framlingham at 6.30 pm

Present:

Giles Pebody (Chairman), Peter Moorhouse (Vice Chairman), William Glasse (Secretary) and 22 Members.

Apologies:

The following had specifically asked that their apologies for absence be recorded: Margaret Wilkins, Geraldine Smith, Beryl Belcher, Claire Rowell, Colin Hamilton, Gill Clare, Andrew Cantrill, Frances Barker, Eleanor Barker and Maggie Smith.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 10th October 2012 were approved as being an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

2. Election of Committee

- i) Claire Rowell had completed a three term of office and was not seeking re-election. Claire was thanked by the Chairman for her contribution to the running of the Choir, particularly during the 2011-2012 season.
- ii) Marion Banyard had agreed to serve a single year on the Committee, which had ended. Marian was thanked by the Chairman for her wise counsel and significant contribution as Librarian.
- iii) Miranda Barclay had taken over as Librarian during the past year and accordingly had been co-opted to the Committee. She was duly elected a full member of the Committee for a full three-year term. (Proposed by Marian Banyard and Seconded by Gillian Howell).
- iv) There being no further nominations the Committee has six vacancies.

3. Amendment to Phoenix Singers Constitution

After Consultation during the year and as notified with the Meeting Papers, the Committee proposed two amendments to the Constitution dated 13th October 2010.

- i) Introduction of a set of Guiding Principles for the management of the Society to be inserted to clause 2 and numbered sub-clauses i) to v) respectively. There was discussion about the use of the word 'competent in clause 2) i) but after consideration the original wording would stand.

A second amendment to the same clause changed the word 'joy' to



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'enjoyment'.

Discussion about the use of the word 'local' in clause 2) v) arose from concerns that it was too restrictive. This amendment was not adopted because the word 'usually' had been used to cover this point.

The definitive wording of the amendment of clause 2) i) was proposed by Barbara Howard and seconded by Michael Dawe.

- ii) An additional sentence would be added to clause 4) i) to require an EGM to be called in the event that more than half the Committee elected at an Annual General Meeting should have cause to resign during the ensuing year.
- iii) The amended clause 2) i) and the proposed clauses 2) ii) – 2) v) together with the additional wording of clause 4) i) were adopted, proposed by John Francis and seconded by Peter Moorhouse.
- iv) The Amended Constitution is dated 2nd October 2013 and will be published on the website as well as the amendments being notified to the Charity Commission by the Secretary.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave the following report:

Fellow singers, few would disagree that our 2012-13 season was a vintage season for Phoenix Singers.

Many of you have come up to me at some stage in the year, and not always with a glass of wine in the hand, and said how we, all of us, have taken our choir in hand and given it new energy, purpose and spirit.

I think that every singer can take justifiable pride in our achievement and look forward with pleasure and excitement to new musical opportunities in the years to come. You have seen the audiences grow both in number and evident enjoyment and Gill's Treasurer's report sets out the choir's improving financial position as we have built on the foundations laid by Maggie Smith in the previous year.

We now have the confidence to grow our skills, abilities and performing standards both individually and as a group.

Some while ago, I said that you would be hearing more about audience development. Our audiences are vital. Not only is there little point in what we do without sending it out into the world beyond this room but also, to put it bluntly, we



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need their cash.

Your committee is working hard at various ways of developing our audience. I am sure you are more than aware of some of them, including promoting awareness of the Singers in our community and beyond by flying our flags and leafleting on the Market Hill on Saturday mornings, getting promotional spots in local media, improving pre-concert publicity and distributing it widely, discounted ticket schemes and so on. There are other ways too, such as collaborating with local soloists and orchestras with their own followings and by outreach to other local institutions such as schools, in the first instance, and joining in local activities such as the Christmas Fair on 13th December. In fact, most aspects of just doing the business of being a choral society can be seen as part of the process of telling people we are here and encouraging them to come to a concert.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that one of the principal reasons for our renaissance is understanding what it means to be and making a virtue of the fact that we are a relatively small society and a really very small community. This past year, I believe, we have begun to see that choir membership is not a form of entertainment, something you do because there is never anything interesting on the TV on a Wednesday night, but a chance to benefit from choral singing as much as a shared experience, where the interdependence of the activity is at least as team building as football, as it is a personal activity which promotes health, balance and wellbeing. The sense of community so engendered is very precious in today's lonely and alienated world and it behoves each of us to cherish it. Talk to your neighbour in the choir, ask them 'how was it for you?' or something like that, welcome new faces, grieve over the departure of familiar ones, take pleasure in serving the coffee, and being served and in joining in just as much as you can in our social and organisational life. I have found that the harder I work in rehearsal the better I feel afterwards, just as I have found that working for the choir in my committee role is also great fun, contributing a lot to the answer to that question that we all face from time to time: 'what am I for?'

You may think I digress. Not really because I think that once an institution such as ours begins to gel and succeed it has almost limitless potential if you can combine the energy of each member with the growing confidence that success brings. It is, I think, obvious how this bears on the question of audience development. I do not know whether, in the past, you used to persuade your friends to turn out for concerts to hear you sing or convince them that it was a worthy thing to do to support a local group.

The news is that thanks to all our efforts you do not need to be so shy any more. The truth is that the Phoenix Singers is in the process of becoming a very good choral society indeed with national class performing standards. Promote us to any one you meet as a great night out, at least a highlight of anyone's local cultural calendar and



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a surprisingly rewarding experience with the very strong added benefit of being firmly from round here.

So, just on the reasonable side of hubris.

Fellow singers, AGMs are great occasions for thanks and I would like to pay tribute this evening on your behalf to quite a lot of people and I will start with your committee, in alphabetical order:

Marion Banyard, our retiring librarian, head counter and general savante, who has contributed unstintingly to the singers over many years.

Her successor, Miranda Barclay, who has stepped up and taken on an exacting job with enthusiasm and rigour.

Gill Clare, our treasurer. You only need to cast your eye over her figures and consider the speed with which they have been produced to see what a brilliant job she has done.

William Glasse, our tireless secretary. William's attention to detail and efficiency have played a major role in making the Phoenix what it is now.

Liz Hamilton, who has a very wide ranging brief in providing material support to our endeavours ranging from making sure coffee is served each week to organising staging, with may stops in between. Working alongside Liz is Celia Blois who does a brilliant job organising catering.

Peter Moorhouse, vice chairman and general ambassador at large. No institution can really thrive without a strongly outward and forward facing team member and Peter is just that person.

Clare Rowell, also retiring this year. Clare has taken a back seat this year but has never failed in her support for the choir and did great work promoting the Singers in the 2011-12 season.

Judith Russell, who deals with our supporting soloists and players. Judith has great experience in this area and knows almost everyone as well as having an encyclopaedic knowledge of the choral repertoire. Again, a fantastic contribution.

Ladies and gentlemen, your committee.

Then, we turn to our musical team. Our musical director, Drew Cantrill, who continues to amaze most of us with his dedication, his skill at discerning weakness and knowing how to fix it, his drive for improvement combined with a well of patience and an extraordinary ability to graduate his level of direction and intervention just so as to



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move forward without discouraging or overwhelming. Brilliant Drew, we are so fortunate to have you here.

And Geoff Lavery, our accompanist and repetituer extraordinaire. Geoff has brought humour and energy to our rehearsals alongside precision and speed of response that has enabled Drew to get such a high work rate out of the choir. He is also an excellent choir trainer in his own right and we thank very much him also for that contribution.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our musical team.

And, please, never lose sight of the fact that, without each and every one of you singers, individually and together, the Phoenix Singers cannot succeed.

Here's to next year.

The Chairman was thanked for his hard work in leading the Choir and for his inspiring words. Proposed by Peter Moorhouse and Seconded by Tim Barker.

5. Musical Director's Report

Andrew Cantrill was not able to be present at the meeting and consequently would give an informal report during a future rehearsal.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Accounts for the year ending 31st July 2013 had been circulated previously. Gill Clare was not able to be present but her Treasurer's report was given by Peter Moorhouse as follows:

I am pleased to report the financial position at the end of my first year as honorary treasurer, highlighting some salient features. The accounts provide a more complete picture. Numerical values in this report are approximate.

Cash reserves had tended to deplete year on year from 2008 onwards (first graph). Therefore, the financial aim this year was to increase Phoenix reserves to approximately £10,000. The end of year accounts show a balance carried forward of £10,479. This was partly owing to one-off donations, an increase in income from advertisers in the concert programmes, fundraising and to the Friends.



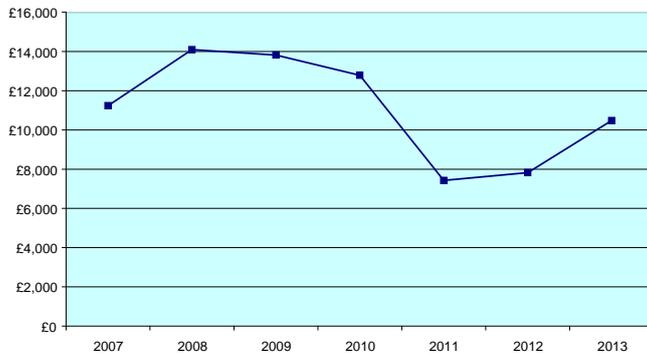
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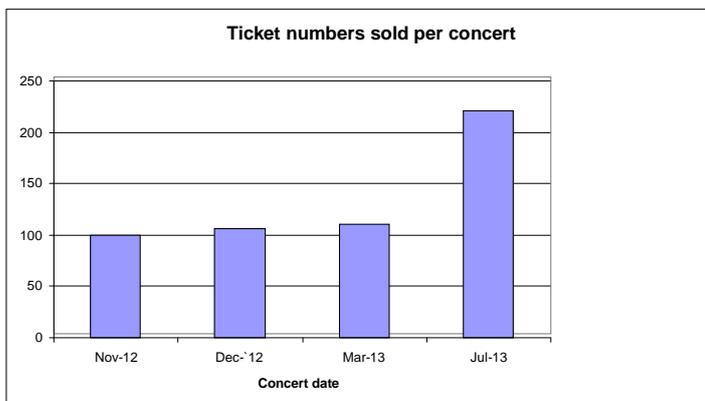
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Balance carried forward at end of financial year (2007-2013)



However the major source of income in 2012-2013 was from subscriptions paid by loyal members (39%) who have supported the Society by paying an annual subscription; the figure of £8005 being equivalent to 64 full fee-paying members. New people have joined throughout the year, sometimes for a single concert. The number of people attending rehearsals fluctuates, and not all sing at each concert.

The Society held four concerts in 2012-2013. The major source of expenditure was rehearsal costs. The Society subsidized the cost of the concerts by about £2,140. This figure is considerably lower than in recent previous years. Owing to the enthusiasm and dedication of members, ticket sales increased for each concert (second graph). Ticket sales accounted for approximately 33% of total income. This helped reduce the subsidy substantially.



Gift Aid for 2011-2012 was deferred and claimed this financial year (2012-2013), owing to changes both in HMRC methodology and in committee membership. The Gift Aid



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accrued in 2012-13 will be claimed in 2013-2014.

It is noted that the effect of not claiming Gift Aid in 2011-2012, coupled with other estimated outstanding payments due, means that the real increase in reserves from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013 is judged to be in the region of £900. This is a much lower figure than the 2012-2013 accounts show, but nevertheless a step in the right direction.

The current financial position allows us to look forward to the 2013-2014 season optimistically, but not complacently, as none of our income is guaranteed, particularly from ticket sales. A provisional budget is in place and I recommend aiming for a modest increase in reserves of about £500, i.e. to approximately £11,000 at the end of the financial year 2013-2014.

I would like to thank Maggie Smith for her help at the beginning of the year and for passing on the books in such good order. Marion Banyard and Peter Moorhouse have guided and helped me throughout the past year. Their expertise, knowledge and support have been invaluable. I hope that these end of year accounts meet with the Choir's approval.

The accounts were adopted this being proposed by Peter Moorhouse and seconded by Gillian Howell.

7. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.17 pm

Signed.....(Chairman)

Date.....