



**Minutes of the annual general meeting held on Tuesday 5th January 2025 at 7pm at Allen's Cross Community Centre, Northfield, Birmingham.**

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**Committee Present:** Sue Hibberd -Chair  
Frances Rumball - Secretary  
Stephen Godber – Treasurer  
Jo James  
Delia Baker  
Valerie Ladbroke

**In attendance:** James Llewelyn Jones – Musical Director  
  
Melissa Morris – Accompanist  
  
A quorum of choir members

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**1. Apologies** Pam Salisbury, Christine Bennett, Annie Gelderd, Elizabeth Brazell, Marian Mudie, Philip and Anne Quirk

**2. Minutes of last meeting**

Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were approved and there were no matters arising.

**3. Chair's report**

It is with mixed feelings that I begin my report for this last year.

It has been another successful year for the choir. We have recruited more new members and we hope you have been made to feel welcome and that you are enjoying your singing experience with us. We have had some very successful concerts this past year and raised some incredible amounts of money for some well deserved charities. The two joint concerts at the Town Hall were a huge success and we have to acknowledge James's vision in pulling these together. The two choirs have worked well together and the opportunity to double up on rehearsal time, really paid off. Thank you for your commitment in dedicating time to two evenings a week of practice, plus all the extra at

home. The financial demands of the Town Hall are such that neither choir would manage to afford a concert single handedly; so it's a worthwhile arrangement which works well and we have raised a phenomenal amount of money for local hospitals/hospices.

Our own concerts have also been very successful and enjoyable and we have been able to support Music Therapy Works again with some healthy donations. It was a real bonus to have some of its members performing with us at Selly Oak. We look forward to our next two concerts in March and July. We are back at Selly Oak Methodist Church on March 29th. It is a great venue for a concert. On July 12th, we return to St John's and St Peter's, Ladywood; another old favourite of ours.

The musical leadership at this choir is second to none. Huge thanks go to James for his commitment, hard work, tutoring and patience in pushing us to achieve the standards we have reached this year. His idea of voice range exercises seemed a bit scary to all of us initially but it has proved to be a very worthwhile exercise, not only in improving the sound of the choir by having everyone in the correct place but also, in many cases, in building individual confidence. Some of us even enjoyed the experience!!!

We are highly privileged to have such talented and skilled accompaniment; big thanks to Melissa for her commitment and hard work every week. She really is part of the MHC family.

As we hoped, we have continued to engage our social calendar throughout the year. The spring lunch was a success (although the weather could have been kinder) and Warley Woods was blessed with some musical entertainment during our summer picnic. We are very grateful to our very own in house quiz master, Hilary, for what has become a yearly event.....I hope you are all swatting and working on your quizzing skills ready for January 25th.

On the subject of "social", I cannot move on without mentioning our Refreshments team who work tirelessly throughout the year to ensure we have drinks and goodies to keep us going; not just on Tuesday evenings but also at Saturday rehearsals and concerts. Over the years they have sacrificed many lunch breaks and social interactions. We are eternally grateful to them.

Yvonne and her team deserve a very big thank you for her hard work in making sure we all have music in time for rehearsals. Not a simple task!

The choir is embarking on some significant personnel changes with new names at the helm. It is time for a change in Chair and Secretary. We also have some additions to the committee which is very

encouraging and I have every faith that the choir is in good hands to continue going from strength to strength.

So this is my last Chairperson's report. I would like to thank the committee for its constant support over the last few years and in making it as easy a job as possible. You make an incredible team and it is thanks to all of you that the choir is in such a positive position at the moment. To all of you, choir members, thank you for your support, commitment and cooperation; particularly to some individuals who busy away behind the scenes unnoticed.

I am sad that I will no longer be part of this musical family but the travelling has become rather untenable; however I will be there in the audience to check that you are maintaining standards!!

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

##### **Thanks:**

- My thanks first of all to Dale for his support as I have taken on the role of treasurer this year. Knowing that he was available and willing to answer my questions has been a great help. I will need to bother him some more as I prepare the paperwork for the annual return to the Charities' Commission.
- Thanks are due to our wonderful refreshments team led by Mary and Val for the regular raffles. As you will see they raise an impressive amount in contributions to our overall finances. Overall, from our weekly rehearsals, Saturday rehearsals and our concerts, refreshments raised £1,857.50.  
Val's raffles raised £1,352.05 for choir funds.
- Friends of the choir and donations also raised nearly £2,000. This may be an area to look at for further development.
- Thanks are also due to those who arranged the Choir Quiz and our Choir Lunch. Valuable social occasions that also raise funds, usually, for the choir.
- Behind the scenes there is also a team of people who sell tickets and programmes, manage our Gift Aid claims and oversee our charity fundraising. Thanks to them for their help and support.

##### **Financial Matters:**

- Financially 2023-2024 was a sound year for the choir. Overall, the choir made a surplus of £8,122. A word of warning though. This figure includes a figure of £6,500 in advanced subscription payments. This suggests that the true surplus would be nearer £2,000.
- Concerts raised the following amounts towards our choir funds.

Christmas Town Hall	£2,965.33
Bowls Club-	£130
SOMC Christmas	£326.55
SFSL	£335.67
Armed Man TH	£277.10

- Charitable Fundraising

Music Therapy Works                      £2,700

Medecins Sans Frontieres              £1,620 + Pay pal

- Gift Aid

Thanks to Ken and Jude. Gift Aid claims produced £5,103.79

- Losses.

The choir lunch made a loss of £393. This was because of an unexpected service charge being added to the bill. It was also the case that several members had indicated they would be attending but then failed to appear and did not pay for the meals that had been booked for them. In future we will ensure that all meals are paid for before final numbers go to the caterers.

We made a loss of £276 with the scores of 'The Armed Man'. It was necessary to purchase scores from several sources to ensure we had the number we needed. One company were unable to meet the order initially but later supplied the number we needed. In the meantime, an order had gone to another company. We managed to return some of the scores that were not needed but still had to pay for some of the excess scores. We will try to recoup some of the money by selling our unused copies on E-bay.

### **Concerns**

- To ensure our financial future we need to keep numbers up in the choir
- Venue costs are rising. In some venues costs have doubled.
- To ensure we cover our expenses we have decided to raise our non TH ticket prices to £15
- The TH costs will continue to rise as Birmingham Council remove subsidies.
- Key messages are that we need to really push ticket sales and maintain/increase choir numbers.

Stephen Godber.    7<sup>th</sup> January, 2025.

There were no questions from the choir.

### **5. Committee Posts**

Sue Hibberd and Frances Rumball are stepping down from their roles of Chair and Secretary respectively.

Nomination forms had been received for the post of Chair from Helen Powick and Michael Wenham. They both spoke to the choir about why they wished to become Chair and what they could offer to support the choir. An election was carried out and the choir voted in favour of Michael Wenham as the new Chairman. Helen Powick has agreed to remain as a committee member.

A nomination form had been received for the post of Secretary from Sue Barclay. The choir present voted unanimously in favour of Sue Barclay becoming the Secretary. Sue has agreed to stand for 1 year with the option to remain longer if she wished.

Nomination forms had been received from 3 members of the choir who wished to join the committee – Annie Gelderd, Angela Grudzinski and Yvonne Attry. All were duly elected to the committee by the choir present.

The existing committee were willing to remain and were thanked for their hard work: Delia Baker, Jo James and Valerie Ladbrooke.

## **6. Musical Director's Report**

What a wonderful year of memorable choral experiences we have enjoyed. Last August marked my 10<sup>th</sup> year since you invited me to become your musical director.

We have tackled some extremely challenging, and I hope, exciting repertoires – I do try and choose repertoires which are a little bit different from the norm, but with music that helps us build and develop both our vocal and choral techniques.

We have raised several thousands of pounds for very worthwhile charities and have furthered our vision to continue to build our choir.

Our audiences continue to be impressed and delighted with our varied programming of music, in many styles and genres.

My aim is to offer something for everyone, ensuring that the audience, and indeed all of you, can enjoy the variety and thrill of such a diverse array of music. The enthusiastic response at recent performances has been a real joy and hopefully, makes the thorough and demanding way in which we work, worthwhile.

We have been fortunate to stage two large-scale and high-profile performances at Town Hall this last year. Our Christmas concert continues to be a real highlight for us and our audiences, and we've another exciting programme of music, with many new arrangements of concert pieces to entertain our audience with this year.

The spring concert gave us an opportunity to return to the beautiful St. Faith and St. Laurence Church for a varied programme with some lighter pop music, not for everyone I appreciate but the packed church enjoyed these upbeat classics. It also gave our audience a glimpse of our initial preparations of *The Armed Man*, a major work we started preparing from January, given its complexities and vocal challenges.

In July we had the thrilling experience of performing Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man*. The praise and plaudits were in abundance, and I believe, we produced some of our finest singing ever. It was a powerful and moving experience and one which will stay with us and our audience for a considerable time.

A few comments from the event...

### **From Bob Vivian,**

"It was an immense achievement and only possible thanks to all the hard work, skill and encouragement from you.

A couple of the players in the group said to me last night, (which I echo their sentiment) that it was a privilege to have been involved in such a powerful, emotional, and musical performance.

Your choirs were simply incredible and fantastic.

Their singing throughout this musical marathon was exemplary as was their stamina and their musicianship.

I hope you heard the massive applause you received from not only the audience but every player on the stage.

Having such a good flautist and cellist was the icing on the cake!

Well done once again and thank you."

**From Nigel Turner, trumpeter in Gemini Brass.**

"Hello James. This is Nigel from Gemini Brass. I'm sorry I didn't catch up with you at the end of the concert. Had I done so I would have congratulated you on the joint Choirs performance this evening. It really was outstanding. I don't think I have heard them sing quite as well as they did tonight. I really was very much impressed. Here's to seeing you again in the run up to Christmas!! Many congratulations for tonight's performance, methinks an awful lot of hard-work had been gone through - but it paid off handsomely. Best regards. Nigel"

**From my sister...**

How are you feeling today? You must be shattered.

Well done for getting that concert together- it was AMAZING ☐ ☐☐

Hope you realised you had 2 standing ovations

One after Armed Man and one at the end ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

**And my sisters- in-law...**

Congratulations and thank you for an amazing and emotional concert yesterday. You and your choirs plus everyone else involved, certainly pulled out all the stops!

It really was a first-class performance and all the work that went into it was incredible. Thank you, we wouldn't have missed it, for the world. We have sent a donation to MSF. A never to be forgotten evening which certainly demonstrated the world's need for peace from the futility of war. Thank you for giving us an experience we'll never forget.

It was a glorious way to celebrate my 10<sup>th</sup> year with both the choirs.

Then came the challenge of building a Christmas repertoire fit to stand up to our summer performance and try and thrill our audience with equal measure.

I figured as the Concert for Peace was quite an emotional and an intense experience for us and our followers, our Christmas concert needed to be light, entertaining, and short! It was again an extremely powerful but joyful concert experience; I've already read out many of the high praise we've received from people who were blown away with your performance.

We are hugely fortunate to have the outstanding musical talent of Linnéa, Sara and Heather assisting us in our sectional rehearsals and performances. What a team they are.

To the committee, Yvonne and her team with the music, Rob with the logistics, thank you all for your tireless work and efforts in creating such a well-oiled machine. We are very lucky to have such a focussed group of hard-working individuals. Thank you all. To our wonderful tea ladies, we have not one, but 4 Mrs Overalls. De, Edna, Elizabeth and Mary thank you all despite the lack of Jaffa Cakes.

To Melissa, a huge thank you. We are so lucky to have you, and I thank you for your incredible, unflinching support and your talents.

These last 10 years have raised considerable challenges and hurdles for us as a choir, more than most organisations would have to deal with; managing of the transition of musical directors, a full

resignation of an entire committee with complex secretarial dramas; covid and its decimation of chorister numbers and the subsequent near folding of the choir.

All these issues have been dealt with and resolved by a small group of people, but we must say a special, huge thank you to Sue and Frances, most of these dilemmas fell were placed at your door. Your tireless efforts with the support of the other few committee members have saved this choir and we're so grateful to you both for everything you have done.

Thank you all for the hard work in making this such a great choir.

## **7. Long Service Awards**

Badges presented to the following by the Chair:

Bronze: Margaret Duffy, Rowland Hopkins

Silver: Jan Macgowan, Andrew Menniss, Philip Quirk

Gold: Edna Neale

## **8. Any other business**

- Sandy Cresswell wished to give particular thanks to Angela Grudzinski and Valerie Ladbroke for adapting and highlighting her music so that she is able to read it clearly and sing in the choir. It is very hard work and time consuming but she was very grateful.
- Mary Wenham asked the choir members who are going to the Quiz to put their names on the list of required food.
- Rob Turner asked whether the refreshment termly card could be paid by means of the card reader. It was agreed that cash was better as we would not lose the commission.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

## MIDLANDS HOSPITALS CHOIR

Receipts and Payments for August 2024      End of financial year balance

RECEIPTS	£	£	PAYMENTS	£	£
Registrations	7,030.00		Venues	3,273.75	
Tea Money	1397.4		Director Fees	7,445.00	
Weekly Raffle	1,352.05		Accompanists	2,961.00	
<b>Bowls Club</b>		350	<b>Bowls Club</b>		220.00
<b>Town Hall Concert</b>					
Tickets	4,428.00		Town Hall Fee & Rehearsal Venue	2,554.00	
Rehearsal Refreshments	132.15		Director's Fees	957.50	
B.Music Credit	1,020.36		Accompanists	664.5	
Phoenix Singers	4,867.82		Gemini Brass	2,055.00	
Programmes	236		Organist & Soloist	1150	
Programmes Adverts	100.00		Programmes	410	
			Flyers	28	
<b>SOMC</b>		748.55	<b>SOMC</b>		422
<b>SFSL Spring Concert</b>			<b>SFSL Spring Concert</b>		
Rehearsal Refreshments	41.50		Posters and flyers	101	
Tickets	1245.42		Director's Fee	302.5	
Concert Refreshments	72.25		Soloist	120	
			Director's Rehearsal Fee	220	
			Accompanist's Rehearsal Fee	132	
			Venue and Sat Rehearsal	418	
			Accompanist's Concert Fee	220	
<b>Armed Man Concert</b>			Director's Fee	820	
Rehearsal Refreshments	214.2		Accompanist	250	
Programmes/Adverts	346		Town Hall Fee	2400	
Tickets	2,617.09		Programmes and Flyers	600	
Phoenix Singers Advance	2,000.00		Armed Man Film Hire	500	
B. Mus Credit	724.26		Gemini Brass	2,310.00	
Phoenix Settlement	2220.99		Organist and Soloists	905.44	
			SOMC Dec 24 Concert Deposit	50	
2025 Registrations	6,505		Summer 23 Concert Donation	140	
		37,649.04	Surplus/Deficit	6,019.35	31,629.69
<b>GENERAL</b>			<b>Medecins Sans Frontieres</b>	1,620.00	
Friends	370		Keyboard	486.48	
Donations	1,621.98		Music	899.98	
Interest	90.07		Musicianship Workshop	165	
Music Therapy Works	720		Music Therapy Works	2,720	
Gift Aid	5,103.79		Voice Checks	165	
Quiz Night	235		Admin/Stationery	375	
Armed Man Scores	834.19		Insurance	183.18	
Music Hire	25		National Association of Choirs	53	
Choir Lunch	1270.15		John Fletcher Music Files	172.62	
MSF Bucket Collection	1,620.00		Quiz Night	100	
		11,890.18	Armed Man Scores	1111.16	
			Choir Lunch	1,663.37	
			Taster Session Print	72	
			Surplus/(Deficit)	2,103.39	9,786.79
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>		49,539.22	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>		41,416.48
			Surplus/(Deficit)	8,122.74	
<b>TOTAL</b>		49,539.22	<b>TOTAL</b>		41,416.48
<b>Funds</b>			<b>Represented By:</b>		
Balance b/f 31.08.23		12,235.10	General Account August 2024		13,697.61
Surplus/Deficit on Accounts		8,122.74	Savings Account August 2024		6,660.23
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>20,357.84</b>			<b>20,357.84</b>
			Variance		0





CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's  
report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

MIDLANDS HOSPITALS' CHOIR

On accounts for the year  
ended

AUGUST 2024

Charity no  
(if any)

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2024

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

Independent  
examiner's statement

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

P. P. Plummer

Date:

25-4-2025

Name:

PETER. PATRICK PLUMMER

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Assistant Bank Manager for Lloyds Bank Limited (RETIRED)

Address:

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Oldbury

West Midlands