



**Minutes of the annual general meeting held on Tuesday 6th January 2026 at 7.30pm at Quaker Meeting House, Bournville, Birmingham.**

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**Committee Present:** Mike Wenham - Chair  
Sue Barclay - Secretary  
Stephen Godber – Treasurer  
Jo James  
Delia Baker  
Valerie Ladbroke  
Yvonne Attry  
Angela Grudinski  
Annie Gelderd  
Helen Powick  
Mary Wenham

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

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**1. Apologies** Pam Salisbury, Anna Poyner, Christine Jones, Donna Patel, Siobhan Carter, Janet MacGowan, Sandra Cooke, Shona Brothwell, Shamila De, Jean Dearn, Jean Massingham, Beryl Aitken, Maureen Cridland

**2. Minutes of last meeting**

Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 5th January 2025 were approved and there were no matters arising.

**3. Chair's Report**

I take as my theme for today the titles of 2 Radio programmes for Schools that I recall fondly from my years in primary school in the late 40s and early 50s – **Music and Movement** and **Singing Together**. I will start, however, by going back by no means that far, to this time last year when important decisions were taken about the running of this lovely Choir. Sue Hibberd had done a huge amount of work on our behalf, and I thank her for staying in touch and helping me slip into her shoes. She headed a small Committee. I have been very fortunate in having twice as many to call upon, but before mentioning them, thanks are due to others who have a significant input, not necessarily full-time, without being Committee members. They are, in alphabetical order of first

name: Anne Hornsby [social events], Debbie Wheate [tickets], Edna Neale and Elizabeth Rogers [refreshments], Hilary Halliday [registration], Jude Smith [database], Martin Leeson [John Fletcher website] and Rob Turner [the other Chair Man! and guardian of the keyboard]. Would you please stand to be thanked?

Now to the Committee. We are 12 in total. I'll start with 2 who have specific job titles. When he gave his Report last year, Stephen sounded like someone who would make an excellent Chairman, but then we'd have to find another Treasurer! In what she initially saw as a probationary year as Secretary Sue has served you, the Committee and me as its Chairman wonderfully well. Yvonne heads the team that stores and distributes the music, Angela sends most of the communications you receive. As I hope you are aware from the colourful flyers for our concerts, these are produced by Jo – as was the superb programme for the Joint Christmas Concert. Helen deals with safeguarding. As well as overseeing the refreshments, Mary liaises with venues, as do Jo and Annie in particular at the moment. Annie also shares social events with Anne. De is our fourth tea lady and was the go-between with Allen's Cross. I have deliberately left Val, a previous Chair, till last. Val, I value your experience in what is now my post, and thank you both for running our weekly fundraiser and providing the bulk of our Front of House support. Thanks also to you and Annie for your hospitality for our Committee meetings. Would you all like to stand, please?

With all these dear people doing so much to serve the Choir, you may wonder what that leaves me to do. I ask myself the same question!

The twelfth Committee member is, of course, James. I'll deal with him later!!

On the social side, plans are already in place for similar events this year to those which are fast becoming part of our tradition, namely the quiz, lunch and picnic. This time last year I was determined that Hilary and Rob's quiz, the first event of my tenure, should be a success – and it was. As you know, this year we are hoping to organize a short weekend away in late July, dependent on numbers in the different voice parts. Fingers crossed!

Now, back to my opening theme – **Music and Movement** and **Singing Together**. I'll start with **Movement**, of which we saw more than our fair share in 2025. Although things at Allen's Cross weren't straightforward, I feel it was a pity we had to leave, as we were doing each other a favour. We were giving them a much-needed income by using their facilities, they were providing us with a rehearsal venue. After that, we became something of nomads, wandering minstrels, if you like, with 2 rehearsals here at the Quaker Meeting House before the Summer Concert. Everything was then set up to use St Mary's Church Hall when we resumed in September, only to fall foul of the resident yoga group! As we had booked 4 weeks there, the church felt obliged to let us use the church itself for the remaining 3 weeks, this at no cost. Committee members then began a new search for a venue and were on the point of settling on Lightwoods Primary Academy when Jane Harris alerted us to the Serbian Church Hall. If we had chosen Lightwoods, we would have lost some members who would not have been able to get there easily. Where we are is fine even if we manage to increase our current numbers by 20 or so. Thanks to Jane for her timely suggestion.

Now to **Music WITH Movement**. The movement we have often made while warming up has now extended to serious movement in concerts. Gentle swaying has turned into vigorous exertions in both "Dubula" and "Let the River Run". What next, I wonder? I have long felt that I should be

hearing creaking bones while we are doing our stuff, but this doesn't seem to be the case, so it must confirm the view that singing **IS** good for your health. By that, I mean **Singing Together**, not just in the shower. There are some things I like to do privately, alone, even singing, but there's nothing like the feeling you get when joining in with so many others in rehearsal and then putting yourself to the test before a critical audience.

I come now to the Committee member I have yet to speak about – James. He challenges us to make ourselves that bit better week by week. At our Selly Oak Concert I thought it appropriate to salute both him and Melissa together, as they dovetail so effectively in encouraging our musicmaking. We wouldn't be what we have become without the highly professional input of both of them – and we must not overlook the part played by Heather, Linnéa and Sara either.

In the 3 concerts that we put on in 2025, we broke some new ground, first in having more individual vocal contributions from Choir members, including full solo ones from Tom Syder and, second, in combining with 2 other members of Jo and Martin's Out of the Blue Big Band in the Summer. For all of these concerts we supported Music Therapy Works, a charity that could hardly be more appreciative of what we do for it. Each time Douglas Bott has made a particular point of speaking to me afterwards to thank us. I'm sure we can and will continue our support, but I take heed of a piece of advice I came across in one of the National Association of Choirs' magazines. It said that "sometimes you may have to sing for yourselves. If a choir goes out of existence, there won't be any contributions to charities". I can see no danger of that happening to us at the moment, but there have been times when some of us had to consider that possibility. In that regard, I would like to acknowledge the part Claire Calver in particular played to keep us going when she was in the Chair.

Making music together brings me to the kind invitation from the European Doctors' Orchestra that I was able to announce at our Summer Concert at St John's and St Peter's, Ladywood. I don't know which, if any, other choirs were approached at that early stage, but I very much doubt that we would have been if we had changed our name. It will give us an opportunity to tackle a longer work, accompanied by a full orchestra, something we could not have contemplated on our own. Through negotiation with Ruth Lester, James has managed to extend the invitation to Phoenix Singers. Worcester Festival Chorus and some individual singers will also be in the choir in April, while "Zadok" has been added to the programme. As "The Music Makers" will involve us in plenty of challenging work, you will appreciate that our own Spring Concert will consist of familiar pieces.

Before I sit down, I would like to say that the 3 of us who are delivering reports this evening have not compared notes, so some things may well be said more than once. If so, I think that means that any such issue is, indeed, a significant one.

I write this just a fortnight after our wonderful Joint Christmas Concert in the Town Hall, a hugely enjoyable occasion for all of us, whether seasoned campaigners or first-timers in such an impressive and prestigious venue. For my own part, I was delighted to have the chance to represent our Choir by handling the thanks and distribution of gifts at the end. Your support that day and throughout the year has made my job anything but a burden. I hope I have managed to do what you expected of me. Thank you.

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

A reminder that the report being presented refers to the financial year September 2024- August 2025. If the accounts are approved at this meeting, they will then go to our Independent Checker who will sign a report for the Charities Commission stating that our accounts are in order. This has to be completed within ten months of the end of the financial year.

#### **Thanks**

- Thanks are due to our wonderful refreshments team led by Mary as they raised £1,320.65 during the year for our choir funds. Thanks also to Val as the weekly raffle raised £601.59 for choir funds.
- Friends of the choir and donations also raised nearly £387.00. This may be an area to look at for further development as we actually have only one friend of the choir who pays a monthly amount to us. As far as I can see none of the other named friends of the choir make any financial contribution to us.
- Thanks are also due to those who arranged the Choir Quiz and our Choir Lunch. Valuable social occasions that also raise funds for the choir.
- Behind the scenes there is also a team of people who manage the music library, sell tickets and programmes, manage our Gift Aid claims and oversee our charity fundraising. Thanks to them for their help and support. Special thanks to Ken who has managed our Gift Aid claims along with Jude for many years. Ken has now handed the role over to me.

#### **Financial Matters:**

- Financially 2024-2025 was a sound year for the choir. Overall, the choir made a loss of £1,873.14. This is not a worrying loss in terms of the overall picture but is a warning that we need to look carefully at expenditure during the current financial year. We don't want that trend to continue over the next few years. I will outline some areas that we need to consider at the end of this report.

- Concerts raised the following amounts towards our choir funds after expenses were paid.

Christmas Town Hall	£1,925.65
SOMC Christmas	£338.72
SOMC Spring	£605.19
ARK Summer	£383.25

Concerts combines raised      £3,252.81

- Charitable Fundraising

Music Therapy Works                      £725.80

Significant money is raised for other charities through our joint concerts with Phoenix Choir

Town Hall 2024      Birmingham Hospice   £3,502.95

- Gift Aid

Thanks to Ken and Jude. Gift Aid claims raised £3,795.71

## Other financial matters for your consideration.

- Music Library Costs were £2,842.80. I thought it would be useful for choir members to be made aware of how this figure is broken down each year. The Library is managed by Yvonne who ensures all our music is stored and kept in good order. This is an enormous and time-consuming job and I remind everyone of the need to hand in music returns on time when requested. We have a reciprocal agreement with Phoenix on the loan of music between our two choirs. Yvonne makes orders for new music, following instructions from James, based upon our musical needs for each concert. Many of you will not be aware of the increasing costs of introducing new music to the choir so I will highlight a few examples for you from the last financial year.

For the choir to grow and develop we do need to introduce new music and new challenges but it comes at a cost.

1. Love Divine	(80 copies)	£170.00
2. Ain't misbehaving	(80 copies)	£180.00
3. All the things you are	(80 copies)	£227.00
4. Photocopies of 2 & 3	(80 copies)	£78.40

Costs for introducing three new pieces	£655.40
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## 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.
- 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. Increasing the ticket price for our non-Th concerts to £15 did raise additional money but the numbers attending these concerts needs to be considered.

1. SOMC Christmas	88
2. SOMC Spring	83
3. Ark Summer	73
- What can we do to increase attendance at our non-Th concerts?
- Do we need to raise our subscriptions fees again next year? A question for the committee!

Jo James advised to increase charity giving, Just Giving Pages had been set up for the charities supported by the Town Hall Joint Christmas Concerts for the last three years had been successful, however, this year Guide Dogs for the Blind Just Giving Page had only raised £129 so far. The page will be kept open until the end of January in the hope the giving will increase so that the choirs can name a puppy. The bucket swing raised £1200. £2500 is needed to name a puppy.

Nicky Osborne asked if concerts could be streamed like they were during lockdown, increasing revenue. Our MD responded that the cost of streaming from the Town Hall is costly at £4000.

Mary Rodgers and other choir members suggested the lack of tickets sales and performers for our concert at the ARC in the summer were down due to it is being a difficult place to get too and also the area is thought not to be particularly safe for parking.

## 6. Musical Director's Report

MHC AGM Report 2026 I think we can all agree, it has been a fantastic choral year for the choir. We have performed an incredibly eclectic range of music, and enjoyed some unforgettable performances. Entertaining and enthralling our supporters.

Our audiences continue to be impressed and delighted with our varied programming of music, in so many styles and genres. The enthusiastic response at recent performances has been fantastic and I hope makes the thorough preparation, worthwhile.

We really pushed ourselves last year, learning a wealth of lighter repertoire which was both refreshing and extremely rewarding. We tackled so many difficult jazz arrangements, and by the time we got to our glorious summer concert, "And All That Jazz," the choir was beaming with the success – even though we were very considerably down by over 25 singers. We managed singing no less than 8 pieces off copy! What an achievement and I hope the worry and stress was worth the standing ovation after Dubula.

The Christmas concert last month was, without a doubt, our best yet – the audience were spellbound with the performance, and it was an incredibly powerful way to end a busy and rewarding choral year.

The choir is fortunate to have a hard-working committee, thanks also to those members who give of their time to support the running and organisation of the choir.

We have an outstanding musical team who support me with all matters, musical. The combined talents of Linnéa, Sara and Heather, aiding us in our sectional rehearsals and performances is a tour de force. We cannot underestimate how lucky we are to have not just one, but 3 outstanding accompanists.

To Melissa, a huge thank you. The accolades and gratitude given to you this evening are richly deserved – your support over the last 13 years has been outstanding, and I am so grateful of both your incredible musical prowess and your valued friendship.

Thank you all for the hard work and dedication you have given to the choir this last 12 months.

### **Resignation Letter**

Our MD, then read out his resignation letter to the choir that the committee received the previous evening.

Dear MHC Committee,

It is with a heavy heart I write to inform you that I have made the very difficult decision to move on as Musical Director of the Midlands Hospitals' Choir.

I am saddened to write these words, especially in the 'afterglow' of such a wonderful performance at Town Hall two weeks ago.

I was approached last November regarding a high-profile choral position in London.

Even contemplating this role has forced me to reconsider many things. The position, if I were selected, would involve considerable changes to my personal and working week, both in Birmingham and Wales and this has caused me to evaluate and assess all my current choral commitments.

Considering Midlands Hospitals' Choir, I think it's time for a new collaboration between the musical vision and the committee, to deliver exactly what it is the MHC organisation requires. I feel there may be a desire to return the choir to a more traditional entity. There is nothing wrong with this at all, but I fully admit that it has been my desire to move the choir forward in a progressive and exciting way, trying to make it relevant and engaging to an ever-changing and ageing audience.

For me, the response from the audience at Town Hall showed me that my sometimes 'unconventional' musical decisions, were right for the event, and it has left me feeling conflicted that there are some who believe my decisions were not right.

I have always considered Midlands Hospitals' Choir as a real highlight in my career. I am immensely proud to be able to say that I have led you for these past 12 ½ years, especially considering the incredible things we have achieved together, particularly the joint ventures at Town Hall and Symphony Hall.

So, what now? I should know by end of February/beginning of March more about the London situation. That role would start in September but, as I said, there are many considerations whether or not this is the right thing for me and a lot will depend on my discussions with other groups.

I will fully support the committee and choir, as much as I possibly can, with the process of finding someone to replace me - to take the reins and move the choir forward in conjunction with your requirements. That may be September or, if I don't find myself in London, then in January 2027, after the Town Hall concert in December.

I will stay as long as it takes, but I am resolute in my decision that my time with MHC is sadly now closing - it is time for a fresh start for both me and MHC.

Very best wishes to you all,

James

Our chairman responded thanking James and acknowledging that it was a difficult decision to make but it was a great opportunity for his career.

Jo James remarked that the majority of choir loved the choice of music.

Angela Grudinski said the Joint Christmas Concert was well balanced, varied and the audience responded to his vision. Other choir members agreed.

The Chair asked if the Joint Concerts would still be possible. James replied it would still be possible and he would ensure it would continue but it does depend upon who comes in as the new MD.

## **7. Long Service Awards**

Gold: Michael Rogers was presented his badge by the Chair

Silver: Ann Hornsby, Christine Bennet, Jasmine Penny, Rob Turner will be presented with their badges.

## **8. Any other business**

There was none.

The committee were happy to be re-elected and were re-elected en block as proposed by Helen Meniss and seconded by Tony Turpin.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.



# **MIDLANDS HOSPITALS' CHOIR.**

**Receipts and payment statement for 12th month to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025. End of financial year.**

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>£</b>		<b>Payments</b>	<b>£</b>
Registrations	3,534.50		Venues	3,642.00
Tea Money	1,320.65		Director Fees	8,199.03
Raffles	601.59		Accompanists	3,360.42
25/26 Registrations	5,070.00		Registration Refund	485.00
<b>Town Hall Concert</b>				
Income	4,660.65		Costs	2,735.00
<b>SOMC Christmas</b>				
Income	1,130.52		Costs	791.80
<b>SOMC Spring</b>				
Income	1,681.64		Costs	1,076.45
<b>Quiz Night</b>	309.00		Costs	105.00
<b>Ark Summer Concert</b>				
Income	1,537.57		Costs	1,154.32
<b>Town Hall Dec 2025</b>			Flyers	105.00
<b>Summer Concert SFA 26</b>			Hire Deposit	100.00
	£19,846.12			£21,758.02
			Surplus/Deficit	-1,911.90
<b>General</b>				
Friends/Donations	387.00		Music Library	2,842.80
Interest	96.01		Flowers/Gifts	46.50
Gift Aid	3,795.71		MTW Donations	725.80
Folder Inserts/Scarves	82.00		Choir Lunch 25	1,604.00
Choir Lunch	1,610.00		Marsh Commercial Insurance	198.86
			John Fletcher Music Files	176.00
			Choir Lunch Refund	35.00
			National Association Choirs	53.00
			Choir Lunch Deposit 26	250.00
	£5,970.72			£5,931.96
			Surplus/Deficit	38.76

<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>Total Payments</b>	
		Total Surplus/Deficit	-1,873.14
	<b>£25,816.84</b>		<b>£27,689.98</b>

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<b>Funds</b>				
			Represented by:	
Balance b/f 31/8/2024	20,357.84		General Account Aug 2025	11,728.46
Surplus/Deficit on Accounts	-1,873.14		Savings Account Aug 2025	6,756.24
Total Funds	<b>£18,484.70</b>			<b>£18,484.70</b>



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A

#### Independent Examiner's Report

##### Report to the trustees

MIDLANDS HOSPITAL'S CHOIR

##### On accounts for the year ended

AUGUST 2025

Charity no  
(if any) 1149642

##### Set out on pages

1-2

(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 2025.

##### Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

##### Independent examiner's statement

~~[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the set name of applicable-listed body]. Delete [ ] if not applicable.~~

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- ~~the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or~~
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report 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:

18-3-2026

Name:

PETER PATRICK PLUMMER

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

ASSISTANT BANK MANAGER (RETIRED)

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