



Leighton Buzzard Festival Singers Season Report 2022-2023



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President

Mr Philip Stopford

Vice-presidents

We are grateful to the following for their continued support
as Vice-presidents during the 2022-2023 season

Mr P Dickens

Mr and Mrs J Oxley

Mr N Woolford

Dr and Mrs D Wray

Mr R Watts

Annual General Meeting 4th September 2023

Agenda

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To approve the minutes of the 2021-2022 Annual General Meeting held on March 27th 2023
3. To consider any matters arising
4. To receive the Annual Reports of the Trustees
5. To approve, subject to receipt of a satisfactory report from the independent examiner, the accounts for the year ending May 31st 2023
6. To propose that Roger Chapman, Paul Dickens, Kathryn Emerson, Valerie Fielder, Jean Lawson, Leanne Morgan and Richard Watts, all of whom have indicated their willingness to continue in post, be re-elected as Trustees
7. To consider electing further Trustees
8. To confirm the re-election of the current President and the Vice-presidents
9. To appoint a responsible person to examine the accounts for 2023-2024
10. To make members aware of the draft safeguarding policy
11. Any other business

Minutes of the annual general meeting held at St Barnabas Church
27th March 2023

The meeting, the AGM for the year 2021-22 was held during the weekly rehearsal in St Barnabas Church, Linslade, attended by 35 members of the Festival Singers with Paul Dickens, the Chairman, in the Chair.

1. To receive apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Barbara Ellis, Valerie Fielder, Graeme Lockhart and John Tournay
2. To approve the minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting
The Minutes of the Meeting held on January 17th 2022 were approved
3. To consider any matters arising
There were no matters arising that were not included in the Agenda
4. To confirm the appointment of Sam Huston as Musical Director, with effect from January 1st 2023, with a review scheduled at 6 months
The Meeting welcomed the appointment of Sam Huston and was informed by the Chairman of the more formal 6 month review which would be held at the appropriate time.
Sam Huston confirmed he was enjoying his role, had had some helpful feedback from choir members and encouraged continuing feedback, whether positive or negative.
5. To receive the Annual Report of the Trustees
The Annual Report of Trustees was received and no questions were raised.
6. To approve, subject to receipt of a satisfactory report from the independent examiner, the accounts for the year ending May 31st 2022
It was reported that Mary Hardy, as independent examiner, had provided a satisfactory report and it was:

Proposed by: Jean Lawson

Seconded by: Kathryn Emerson

And passed Nem Con that the accounts be approved

7. To consider a recommendation from the Management Committee on subscriptions for the season 2023-2024

It was reported that the Management Committee had decided to maintain subscriptions at their current level i.e. £150 per annum.

In response to a question about subscription levels for younger members Roger Chapman reported that the Management Committee had already decided to undertake a review of subscription policy in the coming year.

8. To propose that Roger Chapman, Paul Dickens, Kathryn Emerson and Richard Watts, all of whom have indicated their willingness to continue in post, be re-elected as Trustees

Proposed by: Janet Miller

Seconded by: Peter Mundy

And passed Nem Con

9. To consider electing further trustees
It was:

Proposed by: Roger Chapman

Seconded by: Janet Miller

That Valerie Fielder, Leanne Morgan and John Tournay be elected as Trustees

And passed Nem Con

The Chairman indicated that further volunteers would always be more than welcome.

10. To confirm the re-election of the current President and Vice-presidents

Proposed by: Dorothy Fletcher

Seconded by: Janet Miller

And passed Nem Con

11. To consider the election of Mr Noel Woolford as a Vice-president

Proposed by: The Management Committee

And passed Nem Con

12. To appoint a responsible person to examine the accounts for 2022-2023

It was reported that Mary Hardy was willing again to act as the independent person responsible for examining the accounts

The offer was accepted Nem Con.

13. Any other business

There was no other business

14. Date and time of next AGM

To be confirmed but it was intended to hold the next AGM closer to the choir's year end and probably at the beginning of September.

LBFS Members

Helen Elves

Kathryn Emerson

Kathy Guess

Jacki Hillier

Sally Johnston

Jean Lawson

Christine Oliver

Elysia Pughe

Saffron Pughe

Fay Smithson

Judith Watts

Anneke Amsden

Jo Ayres

Jill Brace

Anne Chapman

Barbara Ellis

Valerie Fielder

Dorothy Fletcher

Miriam Juviler

Pauline Lyon

Rosalind Mennie

Janet Miller

Leanne Morgan

Margaret Oliver

Linda Plowright-Pepper

Gill Tarbox

Clare Thompson

Bridget Watson

Janice Wearmouth

Brian Bainbridge

Simon Beirne

Nigel Bibbings

Maurice Crowe

Edmund Flach

Graeme Lockhart

Peter Mundy

David Bannister

Roger Chapman

Fred Dorn

Alan Perrott

John Ralphs

Philip Titcombe

Richard Watts

Trustees' Annual Report

2022-2023

Trustees holding office during the year

Paul Dickens
Roger Chapman
Kathryn Emerson
Valerie Fielder
Jean Lawson
Leanne Morgan
Richard Watts

President and Interim Musical Director's report

Handel's Messiah was the choice of music for the autumn concert held at All Saints Church on 26th November 2022, and it was my great pleasure to direct this performance. The choir was joined by soloists Helly Summerly, Anna Boucher, Benjamin Durrant and Edward Price all accompanied by the Aurelian Ensemble. There was a full house at All Saints Church and a joyful atmosphere as the choir completed a strong performance of this most famous choral work, with traditional audience participation in the Hallelujah Chorus.

Following interviews and auditions, Mr Samuel Huston was appointed Music Director beginning in January 2023.

Philip Stopford

Musical Director's report

It has been a great pleasure for me to conduct the Leighton Buzzard Festival Singers since taking up the position of Musical Director in January.

Since then, we have had three major events: our Spring Concert at St Barnabas' Church on 29 April, a performance in the town centre for the Leighton Linslade May Fayre on 1 May and a visit to St Edmundsbury Cathedral to sing at their Sunday Choral Eucharist Service on 25 June.

The Spring Concert was titled 'A Choral Coronation Celebration' and featured music by composers from the British Isles, including our very own Philip Stopford, alongside other choral favourites. We

perform to a large and receptive audience, and the choir and organist John Wearmouth very much rose to the occasion, filling St Barnabas with an excellent sound.

Despite a sprinkling of rain, the performance at the Leighton Linlade May Fayre was similarly productive, providing some lighter relief amongst the more serious programmes for the Spring Concert and Cathedral visit. We performed a selection of folksongs from England, Scotland and Ireland; a Queen medley; and some well-known hymns.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral is a beautiful building set in the pretty town of Bury St Edmunds, and we were very fortunate to be invited to be a visiting choir there for a Sunday Choral Eucharist Service. We sang music by Elgar and Ireland, with John Wearmouth providing an excellent organ voluntary. The Choir sang very well, and we have subsequently been invited to return by the Cathedral, should a suitable occasion to do so arise. While Cathedral visits are not necessarily in the usual remit of the LBFS, it was an excellent day out, and we may look to organise a similar trip in two or three years' time.

We have a similarly busy and exciting schedule for the rest of 2023, with a Come and Sing Day organised for 23 September and a Christmas Concert planned for 16 December. Both of these events promise to provide members with opportunities to sing a wide variety of music, with the former based around a range of operatic choruses and the latter featuring JS Bach's Christmas Oratorio (cantatas one and three). Programming popular but challenging projects continues to be at the forefront of my mind as we seek to create an engaging and enjoyable environment for current members while also trying to expand the LBFS' membership in the future.

Samuel Huston

Chairman's report

The 2022/23 season got off to a great start with a magnificent performance of Messiah at All Saints, Leighton Buzzard, conducted by our very own President, Philip Stopford. The church was full to overflowing and there were, deservedly, many complimentary comments from a knowledgeable audience. The choir sounded superb, with excellent intonation and beautifully articulated vocal lines at just the right tempo, thanks to Philip. This was an exceptional performance by LBFS. Well done everyone, but particularly to Philip who held everything together so well.

In 2023 we welcomed our new Musical Director, Samuel Huston. His first concert, at St Barnabas Linslade, was coronation-themed to celebrate King Charles's accession. Amongst many well-known coronation pieces, we discovered a little-known Coronation Gloria by Stanford to open the concert. The choir sang a wonderful arrangement of The Lord is my Shepherd by Philip Stopford. There was a good audience, and the concert went well, thanks to Sam's careful rehearsing of the choir. Thanks too to John Wearmouth on the organ – it was a big play.

We sang again in the High Street for May Day and some choir members sang for the Sunday morning Eucharist in St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, in late June.

Our membership has increased over the year, and we look forward to our next season with confidence that the choir is now pretty stable (touch wood!).

With my eternal thanks to the many who take on volunteer roles for the choir

Paul Dickens

Membership secretary's report

The singing membership of the Choir at the end of May 2023 was 46 (soprano 11, alto 20, tenor 7, bass 8), an increase from 31 over the previous 12 months. There has been a very welcome number of expressions of interest in the choir, most of which have translated into membership. However, recruitment is central to the future success, both musical and financial, of the choir, especially if we are to perform much of the standard choral repertoire and the Management Committee will continue to look for opportunities of promoting the choir and all members are encouraged to look out for potential recruits.

Feedback has indicated that the re-introduction of coffee breaks in rehearsals has succeeded in fostering a more welcoming and friendly atmosphere and the Committee is very sensitive to the need to continue to encourage the social development of the choir. Success will be dependent on the willingness of members to support any such initiatives.

Roger Chapman

Treasurer's report for year 2022-2023

This year started off in a bad way financially. The problem was that we held rehearsals throughout the summer. Although this cost slightly less than the current £205 per rehearsal, without any income our bank balance was drained significantly – so much so that I was warning the committee that the choir may not see the end of the season out due to lack of funds.

The reason that this did not happen was due to the success financially of our two concerts I predicted that the Messiah concert in November 2022 would make a loss of over £1500 due to the cost of having an orchestra (£2200). However the very large numbers of tickets sold countered this resulting in us only having a £600 loss. Similarly the 'Choral Celebration for the Coronation' in April 2023 made a profit of £1500 instead of breaking even or a slight loss which I expected.

We were grateful for the various grants we received, namely £500 from Leighton Linlade Arts Forum and £1000 from Osborne, Morris and Morgan. We also have a grant of £1000 from the Wixamtree Trust to be used for our December 2023 concert.

There are two ways of making money for the choir that are not utilized as much as they should be. The first is gift aid – I have had no new registrations for this so the only claims I can make are for 11 pre-2020 members for which I get just over £200. I would urge any tax payer who has not filled in a gift aid form to do so. There is a form that can be used in the member's area of the web site or come and see me. Secondly we are now registered with easyfundraising.org.uk. If you sign up for this with Leighton Buzzard Festival Singers as your nominated charity the choir should receive money for purchases you make on-line from a number of retailers.

We are now in a slightly better financial state going forward especially if ticket sales continue at the same level. However things could just easily take a bad turn again and cause another financial worry.

Ros Mennie

**LEIGHTON BUZZARD FESTIVAL SINGERS
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023**

		2022-23			2021-22		
	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Incoming Resources							
Subscriptions and donations							

Note 1

Accounting Policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the society's financial statements

Basis of accounts: The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention

Note 2

Fundraising receipts are payments from Amazon Smile

Note 3

Other receipts: music hire to third parties

Other expenditure includes depreciation; choir refreshments ; purchase of scarves and coach hire (Southwark)

[illegible]

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2121-22		
	717 0 0 <u>7,033</u>	7,750
	1,480	-1,480
		<u>6,270</u>
Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
£	£	
6,795		6,795
-507	-18	-525
<u>6,288</u>	<u>-18</u>	<u>6,270</u>