

East Bridge Chorale Annual General Meeting

Friday 25th July 2025 at 7.30pm, Barton Manor School.

Present: as on the register for 25/07/25.

Apologies received from: Annette Walters.

1. Chair's Opening Remarks:

Lucy welcomed everyone and re-iterated many of the points made in the Chair's report which had been previously circulated. This 15th anniversary year is an amazing milestone for EBC. When the choir started the aim was to recruit 20 singers and now we have 120 singers registered to perform our next piece, Verdi's Requiem. Not only has the choir grown, but also the audiences for our increasingly ambitious concert programmes. We have risen to these challenges thanks to our inspirational Music Director, Benedict Preece, who skilfully leads us with energy, insight, intelligence, clarity and most importantly, fun. We are very proud of his extraordinary achievements at the Royal Academy during his scholarship, graduating with record marks and in half the usual time. He also earned an additional diploma and received the prestigious Regency Award for Outstanding Achievement. He has also founded a new choir in this past year.

Lucy announced the sad news that she is returning to Australia in a couple of months and will step down as Co-Chair after the next concert. Leaving the choir, which has been a big part of her life and a source of great joy, will be one of the hardest parts of her departure. Lucy thanked all the committee members and volunteers for all they do for the choir, most especially Mary who does so much as Co-Chair and Membership Secretary, and Helen for her patience and skill with the difficult task of managing our cash flow. She also thanked all the members of EBC for making it so special with their commitment, enthusiasm and friendship.

2. Election of Committee for 2025–2026

Andrew Gardner proposed, and Gill Estcourt seconded the motion that the committee should be re-elected as follows:

Music Director - Benedict Preece, President - Geraldine Wyant,
Chairs - Lucy Rushbrooke and Mary Rudge, Membership Secretary - Mary Rudge,
Press and Publicity Officer - Lucy Rushbrooke, Treasurer - Helen Abbott,
Secretary - Karen Bennett, Music Librarian – Peter Lansley,
Committee Members – Sally Godsell, Jane Kendal and Kate Page.
This was unanimously agreed by the members present.

Andrew Gardner proposed, and Gill Estcourt seconded the motion that Helly Langley and Kevin Wright should be elected as new committee members. This was unanimously agreed by the members present.

3. Minutes of Previous AGM

The minutes from the meeting held on 12th July 2024 were accepted.

4. Matters Arising

At our AGM last year, two new volunteer roles were created. Robert McCrea as Stage Manager helping to organise safe exiting from the stage, clearing chairs and staging after our concerts. Lucy thanked him for his work over the year. Gill Estcourt was appointed First Aider/Safety Officer but thankfully has not yet been called upon.

5. Chair's Report

In addition to some of the points Lucy highlighted in her opening remarks, the Chair's report also expressed the wish that singer and audience numbers continue to grow as we move into our 16th year and that our new singers will stay with us.

6. Music Director's Report

Ben thanked everyone who helped to sponsor his scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music. It was a brilliant year for him and has opened up a wider network of high calibre soloists he can approach to perform with us. Our programme this year has been varied and ambitious; few choral societies would be able to consider performing such a large-scale choral piece with a full orchestra as the Verdi Requiem. Ben would love the choir to continue to expand so we can consider further exciting works and asked that members spread the word about us to encourage more singers to join.

Our ongoing relationship with Caritas Chamber Choir, Ben's 'other choir', provides opportunities for musical collaboration, as in our upcoming Verdi concert. Our Caritas connection also has provided some solo opportunities for some of their singers at recent concerts.

Ben concluded his report by thanking the committee for their trust in his programming choices. He also thanked Lucy for all she has done throughout her years of service to the Choir, most recently securing a much-coveted grant from The Arts Council which will be a huge help in staging the Verdi Requiem concert.

7. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts

A summary of the accounts, which have been independently audited with no concerns raised by the auditors, had been sent out by email to all members before the meeting. There were no questions from the members about the accounts.

The biggest ongoing challenge to the choir remains costs which continue rising across the board. Performing larger scale works has also meant spending more money on the orchestra and soloists. Helen thanked the members who are paying their subscriptions on-line as this makes it much easier for her to keep track of our finances. She also requested that members who are taxpayers complete a gift aid form so we could claim this money back from HMRC. Last year we claimed just over £1,000.

8. Matters for Discussion

Friends and Sponsors. We are very grateful to a number of anonymous benefactors for their generosity in donating extra funds. Lucy has been looking into introducing a Friends scheme to raise extra money for the choir; several choral societies already do this. It was suggested that members could approach friends and family initially to see if they would be interested in supporting us in this way. Their membership would give them some perks such as priority seating, a free glass of wine etc. The cost of a personal membership might be around £50 a year. Corporate sponsors, or patrons in a position to give more, could perhaps sponsor a soloist, orchestral chair, our Music Director, or even a particular concert. The benefit of this kind of Friends programme would be extra and regular income that would help Helen with managing cash flow, as well as helping us to budget for large-scale pieces.

Subscriptions. As our costs have shot up across the board over this past year it was proposed that we increase our subscriptions to the equivalent of £6 per rehearsal (£60 for a 10-week term to include music hire). This is in line with other local choral societies. Alan Rooke proposed, and Helen Govier seconded the motion which was unanimously agreed by the members present. This will commence in October when we start the next set of rehearsals for The Messiah. Helen stated that we could be flexible about payment and asked anyone struggling to pay their subscriptions to contact her.

9. AOB

There was no additional business to discuss.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.

Accounts 30th June 2024 to 30th June 2025

Brought forward **£ 12,303.97** **£4,929.81**

2025

2024

Income

6/30/2025

6/30/2024

Membership		£	19,920.74		£	13,743.50
Tickets		£	7,331.90		£	4,359.40
Music hire						
Printing						
Donations	4VPO	£	500.00		£	750.00
	Private	£	1,100.00		£	1,000.00
	Member donations	£	370.48		£	1,988.53
	B. Preece	£	3,745.35		£	7,265.00
	Sponsorship	£	2,000.00			
Gift Aid	Membership	£	1,074.65		£	1,780.75
Music refund		£	36.00			
Raffle/ Fund raising		£	1,142.87		£	701.00
TOTAL		£	37,221.99		£	31,588.18

Expenditure

Musical Director		£	6,560.00		£	5,675.00
Rehearsal pianist HC		£	810.00		£	990.00
Rehearsal and performance AH		£	945.00		£	675.00
Rehearsal pianist SB		£	450.00			
Soloists		£	2,180.00		£	2,040.00
Musicians		£	16,050.00		£	10,305.00
Music Hire		£	773.22		£	375.63
Rehearsal Venue		£	1,225.00		£	1,391.00
Performance venue		£	1,346.00		£	715.00
Equipement; staging		£	1,408.05		£	605.00
Printing, postage, stationery		£	1,942.02		£	491.82
Refunds		£	50.00		£	65.00
Insurance		£	468.00		£	213.00
Gifts and refreshments		£	357.63		£	722.57
Repairs		£	36.88			
Royal Academy of Music		£	10,800.00			
TOTAL		£	45,401.80		£	24,264.02

Income		£	37,221.99		£	31,588.18
Expenditure		£	45,401.80		£	24,264.02
					£	7,324.16
Less B. Preece Fund					£	7,265.00
					£	59.16
Liabilities	Uncashed cheque added				£	50.00

C/Fwd		£	4,124.16		£	5,038.97
Balance in the account Including Bens fund					£	12,303.97

Independent Examiner's Statement

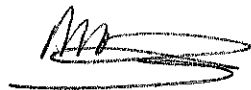
In connection with my examination, no matter of significance has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the Accounts to be reached.

Given the complex nature of the various sources of income and expenditure, the Treasurer should be commended for producing a clear, accurate and detailed presentation of the Accounts.

Auditors full name and Address: **ADRIAN JOHN RUDGE**
1 GILHAM GROVE
DEAL, CT14 9AX

Personal signature:



Date of completion:

15/7/25

Independent Examiner's Report to the Members of East Bridge Chorale

I report on the Accounts of the Trust for the year ended 30th June 2025.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees (Members) and Examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the Accounts. The charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act.
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.