

PLYMOUTH PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Minutes of the **Annual General Meeting** held at Meade King Hall, Plymouth College at 7pm on 12th October 2023.

Brian Gerry, our President, in his address, thanked everyone to their contribution to the success of the choir and congratulated Christopher and the Committee, headed by Margy and ably supported by other Committee members particularly Jen Millward and Anne-Marie Smith.

Brian commented that the past year has been a particularly successful one starting with the “Judas Maccabaeus” concert in the Guildhall on 4th December. Brian was sorry to miss the “Stabat Mater” concert as he had contracted Covid, however received reports that it was both brilliant and outstanding. The John Rutter “Spring of Thyme” was a perfect opening to the summer concert and this contrasted with “Benedicite” with its dramatic music with changes in mood and tempo.

Brian then passed on best wishes from Jenny Shepley, our retired accompanist.

Present: Chair: Margy Keene, Secretary: Jen Millward, Treasurer: Anne Marie Smith, Associate Members' Secretary: Alan Hart, Music Director: Christopher Fletcher and approximately 85 members and associates.

1. **Apologies;** these were received from Lucinda StJohn, Janet Loftus, Lily McConville, Maire Dudleston, Jan Langelaan, Ruth Morgan, Tony Gummow, Kate Knowles, Caroline Atkins, Corinne Collinson, Cathy Vasey, Annette Bolton, Jane Emberson, Robert Powell, Louise Courtnell, Dawn Cawley, Eve Lloyd.
2. **Minutes** of the last **AGM** were read and approved. **Proposed** by Pauline Cornish and **Seconded** by Sue Maries.

3. Chair's Report

The season started with our first Choral Workshop in three years led by David Lawrence and organised by Lily McConville and Sarah Potter. We were joined for this day by members of the Legacy Choir who demonstrated some of their work during the breaks.

Our first concert of the season was Judas Maccabaeus by Handel sung in the Guildhall. This was a work few of us had sung before, however by the time of the concert it was clear that the Choir enjoyed it, and so did the audience.

We held a number of fundraising activities in the run up to Christmas which included 100 Club, a Christmas stalls evening, sales of a Christmas card

designed by Cathy Vasey and Christmas hamper raffles. We also introduced use of a cashless card reader, sourced by our Treasurer after research, to enable us to take payments and donations by card.

We then performed our second concert of the season in our last Guildhall appearance before its' refurbishment, Dvorak's "Stabat Mater" which was received enthusiastically by our audience. We hope to return to the Guildhall in 2025.

Our last concert of the season took place in the Minster Church of St Andrew. We sang "The Sprig of Thyme" by Rutter and were joined by some children from Fletewood School, led by their Headteacher, choir member Rachel Gray for a performance of Andrew Carter's "Benedicite". Thanks are offered to Jenny Hart and her helpers for the well organised cream tea which followed. We were hoping to repeat the success of this concert at the Garden House the following week unfortunately, poor weather resulted in the event being cancelled.

We have lost a number of Choir members and supporters during the year, including Colin Curtiss, Elizabeth Opie, Penny Shrimpton, Tim Briggs, Charles Crighton and Bill Beatty and our thoughts and condolences are offered to their family and friends. We also received the sad news recently of the passing of valued and long standing choir members Greta and Nicola White. Led by our President, Brian Gerry, 18 choir members participated in their funeral service in Loddiswell.

We offer our gratitude to John Hobbs who has led some of our early rehearsals this term for "Samson" following Christopher's unfortunate car accident.

Margy offered thanks to all on the committee who have worked so hard this season including new additions Anna Lewoniewska and Sue Maries. Mark Newberry has stepped down from his role as Deputy Chair and Stage Management Co-ordinator. Robert Jeffery has put his name forward for the latter role.

Thanks are also offered to Irina, our wonderful accompanist, and to Christopher for his energy and creativity which enables the Choir to deliver its best.

The new Constitution agreed last year stipulated that the Chair will be in post for five years before stepping down. This is my final year as Chair and Jen Millward will also be stepping down next October after many years of service to the Choir. The Choir are encouraged to reflect on considering putting themselves forward for roles on the Committee to ensure seamless succession.

4. Director of Music's Report

We gave the audience three great concerts this year. Handel is neglected, with the exception of the Messiah, so it was fantastic to perform "Judas Maccabaeus" which we learned together. The Choir performed this work with communication and discipline and did the work full justice.

Dvorak's "Stabat Mater" is another neglected masterpiece, however this performance was gorgeous, and performed to a higher standard than when the Choir previously performed it. Another neglected masterpiece by Dvorak is the "Requiem" which may be considered for performance in the next couple of years.

Christopher reported that he enjoyed the final concert less than the previous two as he felt that the Choir did not learn the music quickly enough.

Christopher offered thanks to the Committee and to three people in particular for their support; Pete Cook, Charles Morgan and finally Irina whose inspirational playing makes an important contribution to the Choir.

(Full report can be found as APPENDIX 1).

5. Treasurer's Report

The figures quoted in this report are mostly rounded up or down to make them easier for the listener to take in – the exact figures are on the P&L and Balance Sheets sent out to the Choir.

The 2 concerts with orchestra made a loss (around £5,500 and £7,500). The summer concert made a profit of just under £2,000.

At the end of every financial year, money is transferred from Fundraising throughout the year (this year it was just over £3,000) and put it into the Suspense Account so that it can be seen, how much has been raised and has accumulated over the previous years. The figure in the Suspense Account, ie: Fundraising, is just under **£19,000**.

Although our bank balance is healthy (nearly **£50,000** less by about £2,500 from last year, and down by about £10,000 from the previous year), we should be able to manage another year at £150 subs per person.

Subscription Income this last year was over £21,500 (including Associates) an increase of £6,000 from the previous year.

Fundraising. Last year we raised over £3,000, an increase of £2,000 on the previous year.

Concert programmes have done well this last year with more advertisers. This means a profit on these programmes of £1,155 over the last year.

We've managed to boost the total received from Gift Aid this last year to over £4,000, with an increased number of membership subs.

The increased total in Gift Aid was also helped by the inclusion of refreshment donations and programme donations in our application for Gift Aid, which was a new venture this last year, and was successfully accepted by HMRC.

As an overview, our **Total Income** for this year was over **£34,000** whereas **Total Expenses** were nearly **£42,000**, a difference of around £7,500, much better than last year's difference of £15,500.

The income received from Gift Aid, and increased interest rates over this last year (just over £5,000), the amount we actually lost over the year was only **£2,500** as opposed to the previous year's nearly £10,000. It is important to note that the £2,500 end-of-year loss would have been profit, had we not repaid an anonymous donation of £5,000 (received before Covid) – as we were unable to use it for the purpose it had been donated.

Financial Recommendations

We've done better financially last year than we did the previous year, and considering the effects of Covid and lockdown, our finances are still reasonably healthy, even though reduced by about £14,000 over that period. This reduction would have been more, had it not been for the generosity of the choir members throughout the lockdown period.

It was **proposed** by Pat Brodie that the accounts were accepted and this was **seconded** by Ruth Gozzard. The motion was passed by choir members.

6. Subscriptions

It was **proposed** that Choir subscriptions remain the same at £150 by Frances Spencer and this was **seconded** by Delia Crichton. The Choir voted in favour of the motion with one abstention.

7. Associate Members

Alan Hart reported that since Covid, Associate Member numbers had reduced from around 100 to 60. He encouraged the Choir to invite others to renew Associate Memberships or consider becoming one. New publicity material had been agreed to promote its appeal. Associate Membership would cost £50 this year. Margy offered her thanks to Alan on behalf of the choir.

8. Election of Committee

There are 5 Officers of the Committee, 4 of whom were prepared to stand again:

Chair	Margy Keene
Secretary	Jen Millward
Treasurer	Anne Marie Smith
Membership Secretary	Pat Brodie

Deputy Chairman Mark Newberry has resigned from this role and Charles Morgan offered to undertake this role. He is also Concert Manager for the choir.

Rachel Gray **proposed** these members for the Committee and this was **seconded** by Jackie Visser. The Choir voted in favour of the motion.

Sue Maries (previously a co-opted member) and Robert Jeffery had been proposed and agreed to be on the committee. This was **proposed** by Charles Morgan and **seconded** by Mary Johnson.

The other Committee Members willing to stand again were:

Press Secretary	Mary Johnson
Pastoral Care Co-ordinator	Janet Perks
Voice Representative	Jenny Hart
Publicity Officer	Anna Lewoniewska

These members were **proposed** by Catherine Teague and **seconded** by Penny Boocock. The Choir voted in favour of the motion.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 7.54pm.

APPENDIX 1

PLYMOUTH PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 12th October 2023

CHAIR'S REPORT

Despite the lingering effects of Covid over recent years, the choir has had a wonderful season since our last AGM, starting with our first Choral Workshop for three years led by David Lawrence. The day was excellent and very much enhanced by members of the Legacy Choir who joined us to sing and also entertained us with some of the music they would shortly be performing in the United States

Our thanks must go to Lily McConville and Sarah Potter who valiantly took over the organisation of the Workshop from Pauline Cornish's capable hands and delivered it in real style.

Our autumn concert was Judas Maccabaeus by Handel performed at the Guildhall. This was a work many of us had never sung before but, by the time we performed it we thoroughly enjoyed it and it was plain that the audience did too. Christopher will no doubt want to say more about this piece in his report.

In the lead up to Christmas we had several fundraising projects on the go including the 100 Club, a Christmas stalls evening, a specially designed choir Christmas card by Cathy Vasey and Christmas Hamper raffles for the choir and the concert audience. These raised some valuable extra funds for the choir. However, as change waits for no man, with our fast growing cashless society it became very evident that it was time for the choir to step into the 21st Century regarding how we receive money from now on and thanks to Anne-Marie's efforts we now have a card reader for non-cash payments and donations.

Coming into 2023, we began rehearsing Stabat Mater by Dvorak. This was a wonderful work to sing and we had an amazingly enthusiastic response from our audience when we performed it at the Guildhall in March.

This was our last concert at the Guildhall before the start of its' major refurbishment and we don't expect to sing there again until 2025 at the earliest. So, for our summer concert this year, we moved to our new home at the Minster Church of St Andrew.

To ring the changes, we held an afternoon concert on a very hot day in June, which also coincided with Armed Forces Day and a large pop concert at Home Park. Despite this busy day in the city, we had a good size audience as we sang The Sprig of Thyme by Rutter and Benedicite by Andrew Carter. For the latter we were joined by children from the Fletewood School led by their headteacher Rachel Gray one of our 2nd altos. They sang beautifully

and completely stole the show as guidance to the audience to hold their applause until the end of the work completely went out of the window! When the concert was over, Jenny Hart and her trusty choir helpers served delicious cream teas in the Abbey Hall and I know you will totally understand when I offer her a massive thank you for her magnificent organisation of this part of the afternoon.

A week after our concert we were due to enjoy singing these pieces again at The Garden House in Buckland Monachorum, but sadly the weather got the better of us and it rained for the whole day resulting in the event being cancelled. So our season ended slightly earlier than planned.

As once again there was no Summer Choir Trip this year, we had a long summer break with rather mixed weather. However, this offered us plenty of time to enjoy trips, see family and friends and generally refresh ourselves before meeting up again in September.

Unfortunately, we've lost a few members and choir supporters during the year including Colin Curtiss, Elizabeth Opie, Penny Shrimpton, Tim Briggs, Charles Crighton and Bill Beatty and we offer our thoughts and condolences to their families and friends. In addition, we recently heard the very sad news that two of our valued and long standing choir members Nicola White and her mother Greta White had both died within a couple of weeks of each other. This was an enormous shock and we paid due tribute to them in the weekly Rehearsal Notes and our musical participation in their funeral service in Loddiswell by 18 choir members, well supported by our President, Brian Gerry.

We were really delighted to get back together again for the start of our 2023/24 season to begin rehearsals for Samson by Handel. However, just after our second rehearsal we heard the news that Christopher had been involved in a nasty car accident and had fractured his sternum.

This was a shock to us all and we began to plan for the short term uncertainty this created for our rehearsals as Pete Cook, our deputy conductor was abroad at the time. Luckily Christopher was able to contact John Hobbs, who came down from north Devon to cover two of our rehearsals. We send our grateful thanks to John and offer Christopher continued best wishes for a full recovery very soon.

I would like to offer my thanks to everyone on the committee for their support this season, including Sue Maries who was co-opted earlier this year. In particular perhaps I could mention Anna Lewoniewska who has brought a new and creative energy to the group as Publicity Officer and engendered some positive changes which you will all begin to notice in our publicity material and in other areas as the season progresses.

My thanks too to Pat Brodie, Jenny Hart and Janet Perks who took on the task of creating our new Members' Handbook offering really helpful guidance for new members and established members alike.

Mark Newberry has informed us he will be standing down from the committee this year as Deputy Chair and I'd like to offer him special thanks for all his wise counsel over the past season. He is also standing down as Stage Management Coordinator and we thank him for all the time and hard work he has put into this role.

We recently put out an appeal to the choir for someone to take on the role of Stage Management Coordinator and we are delighted that Robert Jeffery has offered to do so and he has also put his name forward to be elected on to the committee this evening, so many thanks go to him.

Our wonderful accompanist Irina has given us fantastic support again this year and we have all enjoyed her playing enormously. Thank you Irina. Last, but never least, I'd like to thank Christopher for continuing to offer us such wonderful music and for sprinkling it with that special energy and magic that makes this choir the very best. Thank you so much Christopher.

You may remember that last year you voted to accept our new Constitution. This states that the Chair will only be in post for 5 years and will then stand down. So, if I am re-elected this evening, it will be for my final year as your Chair and I will stand down in October next year. In addition to this, Jen Millward has informed me that she too will be standing down as Secretary next October after many, many years of amazing service to the choir.

Succession in any organisation is a very important element of planning and is one which we are all very aware of in our various roles, so I would like to invite you all to consider stepping forward for the committee or the roles of Chair and Secretary over the next year in order to take this wonderful Philharmonic Choir community forward to sing yet more great music under Christopher's baton. Thank you.

Margy Keene
12th October 2023

Plymouth Philharmonic Choir
Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison
As of August 31, 2023

	Aug 31, 2023	Aug 31, 2022	£ Change	% Change
ASSETS				
Fixed Assets				
Electronic keyboard	20.00	20.00	0.00	0.0%
Tiered staging	80.00	80.00	0.00	0.0%
Total Fixed Assets	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.0%
Current Assets				
Other Current Assets				
Suspense Account	18,814.04	15,814.04	3,000.00	19.0%
Total Other Current Assets	18,814.04	15,814.04	3,000.00	19.0%
Current/Savings				
COIF Charity Funds	6,495.08	6,326.95	168.13	2.70%
National Savings Income Bond	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	0.0%
NatWest	7,659.71	14,083.04	-6,423.33	-45.60%
Virgin Money	14,834.68	14,084.33	750.35	5.30%
Total Current/Savings	30,989.47	36,494.32	-5,504.85	-15.10%
Total Current Assets	49,803.51	52,308.36	-2,504.85	-4.80%
NET CURRENT ASSETS	49,803.51	52,308.36	-2,504.85	-4.80%
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	49,903.51	52,408.36	-2,504.85	-4.80%
NET ASSETS	49,903.51	52,408.36	-2,504.85	-4.80%
Equity				
Opening Bal Equity	13,327.03	13,327.03	0.00	0.0%
Retained Earnings	39,081.33	48,902.33	-9,821.00	-20.10%
Net Income	-2,504.85	-9,821.00	7,316.15	74.50%
Total Equity	49,903.51	52,408.36	-2,504.85	-4.80%

Plymouth Philharmonic Choir Profit & Loss Prev Year Comparison September 2022 through August 2023

	Sep '2022 - Aug 2023	Sep '2021 - Aug 2022	£ Change	% Change
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
Fundraising	3,245.35	1,256.74	1,988.61	158.20%
Gifts and Donations Income	-4,630.00	1,344.90	-5,974.90	-444.30%
Miscellaneous Income	288.45	16.00	252.45	1,577.80%
Subscription Income	21,515.00	15,641.00	5,874.00	37.60%
Ticket & Programme sales	13,973.15	16,497.15	-2,524.00	-15.30%
Total Income	34,371.95	34,755.79	-383.84	-1.10%
Expense				
Concert expenses	23,908.55	25,121.69	-1,213.14	-4.80%
Donations	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00%
Dues & Subscriptions	632.36	334.77	297.59	88.90%
Hire of premises	4,575.00	4,515.00	60.00	1.30%
Hire of scores	658.60	1,218.24	-559.64	-45.90%
Insurance	269.00	182.00	87.00	47.80%
Postage and Delivery	202.44	357.32	-154.88	-43.30%
Printing and Reproduction	229.20	947.19	-717.99	-75.80%
Programme Expense	1,318.53	1,119.03	199.50	17.80%
Publicity	870.06	864.46	5.60	0.70%
Stipends	10,532.00	10,207.00	325.00	3.20%
Sundry Expenses	-1,396.58	5,388.58	-6,785.16	-125.90%
Total Expense	41,899.16	50,255.28	-8,356.12	-16.60%
Net Ordinary Income	-7,527.21	-15,499.49	7,972.28	51.40%
Other Income/Expense				
Other Income				
Dividends	46.01	6.63	39.38	594.0%
Gift Aid reclaimed	4,057.87	5,660.28	-1,602.41	-28.30%
Interest Income	918.48	11.58	906.90	7,831.60%
Total Other Income	5,022.36	5,678.49	-656.13	-11.60%
Net Other Income	5,022.36	5,678.49	-656.13	-11.60%
Net Income	-2,504.85	-9,821.00	7,316.15	74.50%

I have examined, without audit, the books and records of the Plymouth Philharmonic Choir provided to me by the Hon. Treasurer Anne-Marie Smith, and these accounts are in accordance therewith.

Robert CH Weeber

13th October 2023