

Chairperson's Report Armagh City Choir AGM

2023

Thank you all for attending the AGM, it is good to see such a great turnout.

I hope the change of venue did not cause too many problems for people, and you all found your way here with ease. The Golf Club were sorry they were not able to facilitate us this year — they were told only last Wednesday morning that there would be no electricity on that part of the Newry Road for the entire day, so we are indebted to Kathy, who pulled out the stops, and organised caterers and this lovely venue with just 7 days notice. Thank you Kathy.

After all the drama with Covid, this year reverted back to the norm, and the year progressed very much within the model that had become established over previous seasons.

We once again participated in Armagh's flagship Georgian Festival, always a lovely event which helps to get us in the mood for Christmas.

This was swiftly followed by our Christmas Concert in the Church of Ireland Cathedral. After two years of restrictions due to Covid, it was wonderful to sing carols, and just enjoy the festivities once again.

February saw us hold our annual fundraiser, which this year took the form of a quiz in the County Armagh Golf Club. The event was extremely well attended and members of the choir were very generous in donating gorgeous gifts for the raffle. We managed to raise a very useful total of £997.00 which

helped us pay for the May concert. We are indebted to Michael and Audrey who acted as quiz setters, and question masters. I think we all enjoyed the evening thoroughly.

Finally on 13th May we held our annual Spring Concert, which topically this year featured a few of Handel's glorious Coronation Anthems together with Haydn's Nelson Mass. As ever we were accompanied by wonderful soloists and a superb orchestra and conducted as ever by Michael. It was a glorious evening, and the feedback from everyone concerned has been very positive.

This year we held an Extraordinary General Meeting in September to discuss issues around attendance at rehearsals. After much discussion, it was agreed that choir members would have to attend a minimum number of rehearsals to be eligible to sing in concerts.

A vote was taken, and it was overwhelmingly agreed that members should attend 75% of rehearsals to guarantee a place in the concert. It was also agreed that Michael as Musical Director could ask members not attaining this minimum attendance level to present for audition, and his decision as to who could sing would be final. The choir constitution was duly amended to include this clause- I would point out that since implementing this clause attendance has risen each week by approximately 10 people. Your cooperation with this is much appreciated.

The AGM is always the time to remember and honour past members of ACC who sadly are no longer with us.

I would like to pay tribute to Steve Hartley, who sadly died last October. For those of us who knew Steve, I think we would all agree that he was a Leviathan. The House of Commons bestows the longest serving Member as 'The

Father of the House'. I think many of us felt Steve was the 'Father of the Choir'. He was a founder member, joining the choir at its inception back in 1985/6. He was also our first Treasurer, and he held that role for many years. He was also a pretty useful Bass. Until relatively recently he walked weekly with the Wednesday Walkers (who now walk on a Tuesday, which leads to much confusion for my husband John), during which walks Steve regaled us with stories of his time in the RAF during the last war, and where he always carried a penknife with him. Why? Well, he used to cut off a piece of straight holly tree and whittle us girls a lovely walking stick. He was very special to many of us, and it was a great honour when his son and daughter asked the choir to sing at his funeral.

Finally, I would like to thank a number of people:

Jenny and Maggie, for successfully undertaking to complete our grant application to the local council.

Roger, for yet again working behind the scenes, and producing our beautiful concert programme.

David Braziel, for designing the flyer, programme cover.

Rodney, for accompanying us each week, and giving us a sneaky note, just when we really need it.

The committee, for helping and supporting me during this past year, with special thanks to Kathy our Secretary, Eleanor our Treasurer and Jenny our vice-Chair who were always just at the end of the phone, and never once said no to me for anything I asked of them.

The Royal School Armagh, for the use of their premises, and particularly Colin Magwood the caretaker who looks after us so well (in the background — we never see him).

The Dean and Chapter of the Church of Ireland Cathedral, for once again allowing us to use the glorious setting of the Cathedral.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council for the grant of £2,000 towards our concert

And last but by no means least to our wonderful Musical Director Michael. I think I speak for everyone when I say how much we all enjoy Wednesday nights. I know that I look forward to choir each week, and always ensure that Wednesday evenings are kept free. Thank you, Michael, for making us laugh with your jokes, for being so patient, when you have to go over something complex for the thousandth time, and for teaching us some glorious music. Thank you from each and every one of us.