



PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATION

AGM | Saturday 12th June 2021, 14:00
via Zoom

MINUTES

Apologies

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Rt Revd Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough | 8. Jim Percival |
| 2. Richard Akister | 9. Gary Sieling |
| 3. Mary Boyall | 10. Dominic Spires |
| 4. Elizabeth Cunningham* | 11. Jacob Spires |
| 5. Oliver Hamilton-Box* | 12. Jeremy Spires |
| 6. Andrew Maddocks | 13. Andrew Torbell |
| 7. Anne McDonald | 14. Simon Wilkinson |

Attendees

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Samuel Barber* | 9. Edith Laprun |
| 2. AnnaMaria Barnes** | 10. Louise Laprun* |
| 3. Christopher Brown | 11. David Lowe |
| 4. Tansy Castledine* | 12. John Martin |
| 5. Frank Close | 13. Mark Robertshaw* |
| 6. Sophie Eser* | 14. Alex Spires* |
| 7. Sebastian Harper* | 15. Chloe Spires** |
| 8. Tim Hurst-Brown* | 16. Rowan Williams* |

**PCOCA committee member*

***Newly appointed committee member*

Minutes of last year's AGM

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 17th October 2020 were agreed as a correct record – proposed by David Lowe, seconded by Frank Close, endorsed by all present and signed off by Tim Hurst-Brown, Chairman.

Matters arising

Dr W. Stanley Vann memorial

Tim Hurst-Brown gave an update. He had been in touch with the Cathedral Architect, Stephen Oliver, regarding location, inscription, layout and decoration. Stephen took some photographs of the site to include in his report for the next Fabric Advisory Committee meeting – the FAC being the relevant authority to approve new memorials. There were some concerns about the proposed location, which will be discussed when the FAC next meets in person, rather than via video conferencing.

Tim to await further advice from the Cathedral Architect and Fabric Advisory Committee – **THB**

4. Hon. Treasurer's report

Samuel Barber read his annual report:

Good afternoon and thank you for attending this our second virtual AGM.

I trust that you have had chance to look at the summary account documents that have been shared in this call, these have been signed off by our auditor Oliver Hamilton-Box.

Last year was a fairly steady year for us financially, with no events to manage due to COVID and the fundraising appear for the Choir tour to the USA we were able to donate £2650. The Profit and Loss I have shared shows a profit of £207.57. However, an agreed further donation last year to our AGM of £1500 was delayed awaiting bank details for us to send this to. Therefore, the effective loss in 2020 was around £1300.

Our secretary Louise ran a successful project in 2020 to stop posting of literature out. As a result of this only a single member now wishes to receive a paper copy of our mailings, and as a regular Peterborough Cathedral worshipper this does not result in expense to Royal Mail. Therefore from 2021 onwards we have removed our single largest non-donation expense.

Annual Subscriptions in 2020 were significantly up from 2019, one member has switched from the old £15 to the current £25 pricing and a further 10 people have started subscribing which is a promising sign.

However, our liquid asset position is decreasing year on year with inflation adjusted values showing a gradual decline of around £360 per year. This is shown on the Inflation Adjusted Account Balance that I have shared. The value for 2021 is estimated based on estimated income for the rest of 2021 with no further substantial donations being made this year either to the association from members or from the association to the Cathedral Choir.

My biggest concern as treasurer with the sharply decreasing asset level of the association is that we will soon become unable to organise large events either as reunions or directly as fundraising efforts for the Choir due to poor cash flow. However, personally I would like to see the association able to continue to support the current Choir both in the short term and for future generations, I believe that many members would agree with this sentiment.

Based on this I am uncertain as to the level of donation I could strongly endorse whilst ensuring the long-term financial stability of the association.

Last year I highlighted that if the current members who are paying a subscription donated the price of a cup of coffee per week, we could raise around £7,500 per annum. If every member paid their £25 membership, we could donate over £10,000 to the Choir.

In order to help rectify the decreasing cash reserves and ensure we can help support the Choir for years to come, without relying purely on donations I recommend that the membership mandates the committee to ensure that every event organised by the association makes a 'profit' or at the very least breaks even, to ensure that members subscriptions and donations end up reaching the Cathedral Choir whilst also giving the committee authority to change the arrangements for events organised to maximise both ticket sales and 'profitability'.

I will now take any questions regarding my statement.

Frank Close asked what fraction of the choir's needs the Old Choristers' Association were currently meeting, to which Tansy Castledine replied that the Cathedral's Music Department costs the large sum of £270,000 per year to run.

Tansy thanked Samuel and OCA members for their financial support for singing lessons and tours over the last few years, and emphasised that every donation counts. Although the Association was unable to donate towards the Cathedral Choir this year due to insufficient funds, fortunately there were some reserves from our donation last year still on hold for future singing lessons. This was partly due to disruption from the pandemic, a vacant post within the department, and generous grants from the Cathedral Music Trust.

The Choir is part of the Cathedral's wider budget, and its biggest expense. When asked about sources of funding, Tansy talked about the creative ways in which the choir may be sustained in future, such as a 'Cathedral Family' voluntary monthly giving scheme, and the opportunity for donors to 'Sponsor a Chorister' for £3,000. Tansy explained that the Music Department is regularly defending against pressure points on the budget and rigorously looking at what they're spending – often faced with difficult conversations and decisions. The CMT's grants and the government's furlough scheme, as well as a reduced programme of services, have all helped with the budget over the past year.

Alex Spires reminded everyone that the Hasting Endowment Fund also makes large contributions towards the Cathedral Choir, which Tansy said was extremely helpful for continuity and budgeting. The Hastings Trust is also running a renovation project at Dean's Court, which will include an HMO for future Choral Scholars, as well as three lettable properties to generate income.

Sophie Eser gave an update on the OCA's charity status application. It is a time-consuming and complicated process, but she had received some pro bono advice from a colleague who specialises in charity law. Sophie recounted some drawbacks, which included our membership fee not being classed as a donation, and the fact that our status would be hard to change once set up.

In the meantime, Louise and Tansy have been directing larger individual donations via The Hastings Music Endowment Fund, which now has a [Virgin Money Giving page](#).

The adoption of the Hon. Treasurer's report was proposed by Frank Close and seconded by Alex Spires. Tim thanked Samuel for his excellent stewardship of the OCA accounts.

5. Hon Secretary's report

Louise Laprun read her annual report:

Welcome to Peterborough Cathedral Old Choristers' Association's second remote AGM!

As many of you are aware, we postponed our AGM last year to October, and held the meeting for the first time on Zoom. Although it was a great shame that we were unable to meet in person as usual for Choral Evensong and the Reunion Dinner, newly moved back to the summer for various good reasons discussed at previous meetings, we enjoyed a successful AGM with a variety of members from across the world! Indeed, we agreed that it might be a sensible idea to include a video call link in future so that those who are unable to join us in Peterborough can still participate.

Because the pandemic restrictions were still uncertain this year, the committee again decided to cancel our usual schedule of events and host another online AGM today. Nevertheless, we plan to hold an Old Choristers' Evensong at Peterborough Cathedral on Sunday 17th October, either participating in the singing or attending as members of the congregation, where we can officially welcome our newest members. The arrangements will be confirmed closer to the time, considering the government's guidelines in the Autumn.

We are hopeful that our reunion next year will return to its usual format in June 2022.

Director of Music Tansy Castledine has kindly agreed to hold an informal Q&A session after this meeting, so please do ask her all your burning questions about the current choir! We look forward to hearing from Tansy, and we're grateful for her time today.

Finally, my warmest thanks to everyone who pays the £25 annual subscription. Please do consider giving this amount each year (or £2.50 a month, if that's more manageable) if you don't do so already, so we can continue to support our Cathedral Choir. Details of how to give and why can be found on our website, and in OCA correspondence.

Thank you.

The Hon. Secretary's report was proposed by Mark Robertshaw and seconded by Sophie Eser. Sophie thanked Louise for her work, echoed by Tim Hurst-Brown, which was followed by a round of applause.

Election of officers

The current officers were all happy to stand for another year. The committee was re-elected en bloc, proposed by Christopher Brown, seconded by David Lowe, and all present were in favour.

Following last year's AGM and subsequent committee meeting, Louise was delighted that two from last year's group of leavers had shown enthusiasm for joining the OCA committee, which would bring it to maximum capacity. When Tim Hurst-Brown raised some concerns about the committee becoming too large, Louise reminded everyone that the constitution states the following:

7. The executive committee shall consist of The Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Auditor and not more than ten other members, at least two of whom shall be junior representatives from The King's (The Cathedral) School and/or members of the Cathedral Youth Choir. The Canon Precentor and the Director of Music shall be ex-officio members of the executive committee. Five members of the committee shall form a quorum. The executive committee shall have power to co-opt additional members as necessary. If committee members should miss two consecutive meetings, including the AGM, without having sent their apologies, they shall be released from their position on the executive committee.

Several voiced their support, and all present voted to welcome AnnaMaria Barnes and Chloe Spires into the committee as Junior Representatives, noting that some members may be released from their position within the next year.

Chairman: Mr Tim Hurst-Brown

Hon. Secretary: Ms Louise Laprun

Hon. Treasurer: Mr Samuel Barber

Hon. Auditor: Mr Oliver Hamilton-Box

Federation Representative: Mr Oliver Hamilton-Box

Committee:

- Ms Tansy Castledine, Director of Music*
- Revd Dr Rowan Williams, Canon Precentor*
- Miss AnnaMaria Barnes (Junior Representative)
- Miss Caitlin Goodlip (Junior Representative)

- Master Sebastian Harper (Junior Representative)
- Miss Chloe Spires (Junior Representative)
- Ms Elizabeth Cunningham
- Dr Sophie Eser
- Mr Matthew Hardy
- Mr Bradley Odep
- Mr Mark Robertshaw
- Mr Alex Spires

*ex officio

Next year's reunion

Louise reported that she had emailed Amber Homer-Wooff (Events and Cathedral Diary Manager), Dawn Caplin (Head of Fundraising and Development) and David Way (Chair of the Friends) in order to come up with a date in June 2022 for a joint event.

AOB

Frank Close

The OCA extended heartiest congratulations to Old Chorister Professor Frank Close OBE, newly elected Fellow of the Royal Society, on this well-deserved and outstanding honour. Frank had dedicated his membership to

Stanley Vann, who taught the choristers the importance of being organised – amongst many other things. Tim Hurst-Brown has notified Martin Vann, Stanley's son.

Simon Johnson

Warm congratulations to Old Chorister Simon Johnson on his appointment as Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral from 1st September 2021.

In memoriam

Louise Laprun and Tim Hurst-Brown passed on the following news:

Paul Rose

We were sad to learn of the death of Canon Paul Rose on 14th April. Paul was Precentor at Peterborough Cathedral from 1967 to '72, and was a keen supporter of the Old Choristers' Association. His funeral took place at Peterborough Cathedral at beginning of May, with Old Choristers Arnold Wills and Louise Laprun in attendance, and Paul now lies in Aldwinckle with his wife Judith and daughter Helen. Requiescat in pace.

Desmond Swinburn

Desmond Swinburn, Assistant Organist to Douglas Hopkins, sadly died on 20th January this year. His funeral took place in Kings Lynn in February. Requiescat in pace.

James Griffett

News of the death of James Griffett in 2019 reached the Association this year. James was a Lay Clerk in the 1950s and '60s, with a superb tenor voice. He died at the age of 80. Requiescat in pace.

Newsletter

Tim Hurst-Brown encouraged members to send in their news for the 46th annual newsletter.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 14:52.

Minutes submitted by Louise Laprun on 17th June 2021