



PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATION

AGM | Saturday 17th October 2020, 16:30
via Zoom

MINUTES

Apologies

1. Rt Revd Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough
2. AnnaMaria Barnes
3. Christopher Bathurst
4. Peter Davies
5. Sophie Eser
6. Steven Grahl
7. David Lowe
8. Anne McDonald
9. Canon Peter Nicholson *"Hope all goes well for the meeting. Best of wishes to everyone from Canon Peter Nicholson, Precentor and Sacrist in the 1960s. 95 next month!"*
10. Canon Paul Rose
11. Dave Stanley

Attendees

(by Zoom username if full name unknown)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Alex* & Chloe Spires | 15. John Martin |
| 2. Arnold Wills | 16. John Watson |
| 3. Chris | 17. Louise Laprun* |
| 4. Chris Brown | 18. Mark Robertshaw* |
| 5. Chris Menheneott | 19. Mary Boyall & Graham Nunn |
| 6. Christopher Gower | 20. Matt Hardy* |
| 7. Cyril Crouch | 21. Ollie Hamilton-Box* |
| 8. Edith & Henry Laprun | 22. Peter Nicholson |
| 9. Elizabeth Cunningham* | 23. Rosie Bell |
| 10. Frank Close | 24. Rowan Williams* |
| 11. Ian White | 25. Samuel Barber* |
| 12. Janet and Andrew Torbell | 26. Sebastian Harper* |
| 13. Jim Percival | 27. Tansy Castledine* |
| 14. John David Clifton | 28. Tim Hurst-Brown* |

*PCOCA committee member

Minutes of last year's AGM

The [minutes](#) of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 14th September 2019 were agreed as a correct record – proposed by Christopher Brown, seconded by Oliver Hamilton-Box, endorsed by all present and signed off by Tim Hurst-Brown, Chairman.

Matters arising

Dr W. Stanley Vann memorial

Tim reminded members that OCA members had raised £5,000 for the Vann memorial between 2014 and 2016. This had originally been earmarked for a desk and chair bearing the name of Dr W. Stanley Vann for the use of the Director of Music, forming part of the new sanctuary furniture near the Nave altar. Although the nave furniture scheme has been postponed indefinitely, the amount is still held aside for this project. Tim Hurst-Brown recently met with Revd Canon Tim Alban Jones and identified a spot for a plaque within the cathedral.

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

Ian White asked whether the plaque would take up the full £5,000, or if there might be some left over. If so, perhaps there might be some funds for a commission of a new piece to mark the plaque's unveiling.

Hon. Treasurer's report

Samuel Barber read his annual report:

Good afternoon and thank you for attending this AGM of firsts. The first to be held virtually and my first as Treasurer. I would like to thank my predecessor Alex Spires for his 25 years of stewardship over our accounts. I hope to prove to be an adequate successor. I am unsure if I will manage a tenure quite so long but I will be following his advice of taking it one year, or possibly more importantly one AGM at a time.

I trust that you have had chance to look at the summary account documents that have been shared in this call. No doubt you will have noticed the format has changed.

When I took over the managing of our accounts, I decided to start doing so via a digital accounts package which has enabled me to have greater understanding of our finances on a month by month basis. This has turned out to be crucial in facilitating a virtual audit of our accounts necessitated by the current pandemic.

I hope that you have found these new reports easy to understand. I do not intend on going line by line through the reports but feel that one point may need particular explanation. Looking at the Balance Report you will see that the Profit for all prior years is noted at £3,988.52, this is lower than the £5,519.69 Balance in Hand from the 2018 accounts. This difference is accounted for by £1531.16 of liabilities in 2018 for costs incurred at the 2018 Federation Festival and the 2018 Christmas Service. These, therefore, have reduced the effective carried forward accrued balance into 2019. I have formally shown this in the Addendum to 2018 Accounts document.

It is my intention to report annual summaries in this fashion reporting expenses when occurred rather than when paid in order to give all members a better understanding of our yearly financial position.

Overall, in 2019 the association made an effective loss of £1,062.13, finishing the year with a total equity of £2,926.40. During the year £4,600.01 was donated to the Choir in addition to £100 that was donated to the Cathedral in memory of Peter Boizot. Of this amount donated some £2600.01 was done so as part of the USA Choir tour fund.

Annual subscriptions were slightly down at £965 with 21 people paying the old £15 rate and 26 people paying the new increased £25 amount. You will notice that I have started to break these down to show how much is raised based on the two membership rates.

I would also like to note that on last year's reunion dinner we made a loss of just under £600. Personally, I feel this is something we should consider as to whether it is appropriate for any Old Chorister event to make a loss since this is, in effect, causing donations and membership fees to subsidise an event rather than resulting in funds for the Cathedral and our Choir. I would also like to highlight our expenditure of £147.87 on postage in 2019 alone.

In regard to our current financial situation we are currently showing a net surplus of just over £2,000 this year although I am awaiting a few expenses to occur shortly. Based on the effective 2019 loss and the current financial position of the Association I am happy to cautiously propose a donation of £1,500 to the Cathedral Choir or for any purpose Tansy suggests. I say this as we need to be cautious to keep enough working capital in order to put on future events. I would also note that the ability to donate this relies heavily on a limited number of large donors to the association, each of whom I would like to personally thank for their ongoing generosity.

Finally, I would like to propose we consider exactly what purpose we see the Old Choristers Association's aim to be. If the members agree our priority is to support the ongoing activities of our magnificent Cathedral Choir then I would recommend we agree to charge the executive to reduce excess expenditure, work on increasing fundraising donations and ensure that every event produced by the association is 'profitable'.

I would like to highlight 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.

I will now take any questions regarding my statement.

It was agreed that events should certainly cover their costs, if not make a profit, and that we should consider the donation towards the choir.

The adoption of the Hon. Treasurer's report was proposed by Arnold Wills and seconded by David Clifton. Tim thanked Samuel for his excellent stewardship of the OCA accounts in his first year as Hon. Treasurer and for his sensible ideas.

Hon Secretary's report

Louise Laprun read her annual report:

Good afternoon,

Welcome to the OCA's first remote AGM!

Firstly, I'd like to thank Tansy Castledine for creating a superb [video](#) in place of our usual reunion. If you haven't yet watched it, you can find it either on my email sent on 13th June, or on our website and social media platforms.

As you all know, Peterborough Cathedral closed during lockdown; nevertheless, the clergy and members of the Music Department and volunteers continued providing worship from their own homes, so congregants could – and still can – join them through online resources.

When the Easter term began, each chorister took part in an individual teaching slot and two group rehearsal sessions per week via Zoom, led by Tansy and Käthe Wright Kaufman (last year's Organ Scholar). The children covered service music and solo songs, participated in a competition to learn and recite all 66 Books of the Bible in order from memory, created Easter gardens and services of their own, and enjoyed their pre-lockdown recordings featuring in online services.

Even though the Cathedral Choir couldn't sing together in person, an awful lot of hard work took place from behind screens, and I'm sure Tansy will let us know what it's been like and how things are looking now that socially-distant worship has resumed.

You'll be pleased to hear that the Cathedral officially welcomed four new members of staff at Eucharist on Sunday 27th September: Christopher Strange (Organist), Adam Hope (Head of Choral Development), Imogen Morgan (Organ Scholar) and Andrew Hannaford (Bass Choral Scholar).

And the leaving choristers' valediction service took place on Sunday 13th September, for which a consort of Choral Scholars and Assistant Lay Clerks sang. It was a leaving service like no other, and I know we can all appreciate how particularly poignant that moment must have been for them. We will soon be welcoming our new cohort of Old Choristers, keeping our current membership at about 450 people.

We are especially keen to keep supporting our Cathedral Choir, and we've previously subsidised chorister singing lessons. We were pleased to donate £2,000 after our AGM last year, plus £2,650.01 from individual OCA donors, towards the Cathedral Choir's successful tour to California in February. Alex Spires (committee member and former Hon. Treasurer) also raised over £2,000 by taking part in the Great Eastern Run half-marathon on Sunday 13th October 2019. In total, the OCA and Alex contributed £6,700.01 towards the tour. Many thanks for your continued generosity, which enabled us to help fund this fantastic experience. If you're not already a subscribing member and can afford it, please visit the [support our choir](#) section of our website to set up your standing order. If everyone gave £25 per year or £2.50 per month, we'd easily be able to give £10,000 to the choir every year!

Looking ahead, we hope to be able to sing our usual OCA Christmastide service on Sunday 27th December this year, but do check social media or your inboxes for updates as this might not be possible. Please note that the Old Petriburgians' Reunion at the Brewery Tap has been cancelled. Next year, we will be hosting our annual reunion on Saturday 12th June – TBC.

If any of you are in contact with contemporaries for whom we may not have up-to-date contact details, please ask them to get in touch or invite them to follow us on social media and, even better, bring them along with you to a future event!

Thank you.

The Hon. Secretary's report was proposed by Samuel Barber and seconded by Mark Robertshaw. Tim thanked Louise for her hard work behind the scenes over the last twelve months.

Proposed constitution amendment

Samuel had some valid concerns about the [PCOCA constitution](#), specifically regarding points 6 and 9 this year. Louise advised that the following additional rule should be added:

The executive committee shall decide that any General Meeting or reunion may be held remotely, cancelled, or rearranged in emergency circumstances.

This amendment was proposed by Ollie Hamilton-Box, seconded by Arnold Wills, and agreed by all.

Louise to update the constitution and publish online – **LL**

Welcome to new members

Seven new members were unofficially welcomed to the Association: AnnaMaria Barnes, Rosie Bell, George L'Estrange, Amaya Morgan-Baxter, Oscar Russell-Aylin, Hannah Samuel and Chloe Spires.

Louise read AnnaMaria's introduction in her absence, which she had kindly written in advance:

Hello, my name is AnnaMaria Barnes. My favourite piece is *The Turtle Dove* by Vaughn Williams. I like it because it brings back nice memories from tour and I think it's just a beautiful piece in general. My favourite part of being a chorister was probably getting the chance to maybe make people's day a little bit brighter, even if it was only a fraction of a difference.

Rosie Bell's favourite pieces are Handel's *Zadok the Priest* and Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*. She really enjoyed the tours to Madrid and America, and thought the Christmas parties were always great fun, too.

Chloe Spires introduced herself by saying she joined the choir in 2014 and has loved being a chorister and all the opportunities it has afforded her. Her favourite experiences were the tour to Madrid and Christmas at Plaisteres' Hall.

AnnaMaria, Rosie and Chloe were warmly thanked by all for sharing their lovely memories.

Election of officers

Samuel had previously recommended that someone already on the committee could fulfil the vacant Hon. Auditor role, and that Ollie Hamilton-Box had offered to do so and had already audited the accounts for year ending December 2019. Tim thanked Ollie on behalf of the committee and those present. It is worth noting that there is nothing in the constitution that stipulates that the Association's accounts require an annual external audit.

The committee was re-elected en bloc, proposed by Christopher Gower, seconded by Arnold Wills, and all present were in favour. Tim thanked the committee members for their continued hard work, enthusiasm and loyalty. Louise thanked Tim for expertly steering the committee.

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 Caitlin Goodlip (Junior Representative)
- Master Sebastian Harper (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

Tansy proposed the idea of an OCA Choral Evensong next September, rather than June 2021, if the pandemic is still affecting events in the summer. A joint celebration with the Friends and Company of St Peter could be postponed to the following year instead, when it is more likely that large events can take place.

Louise to book something in the cathedral diary for a Saturday in September, which can always be cancelled if June 2021 goes ahead as planned – **LL**

Ollie remarked that it was good to see so many people on Zoom for this remote AGM. Ian White and Frank Close both endorsed broadcasting the service and/or AGM via Zoom in future – a practical hybrid situation for people living abroad or those who cannot attend in person for other reasons.

Louise asked members whether they'd be interested in a remote gin tasting event, following the success of the wine & cheese evening during the FCOCA Festival in 2018. From the results of an anonymous poll, 71% of participants were keen, and the majority of those were happy to pay up to £40 for the experience, if not more.

Other ideas were suggested as alternatives, including:

- “Dessert” Island Discs, with a pudding each and playing tracks of the choir from over the years – *Arnold Wills*
- OCA pub quiz organised and led by younger members of the OCA along with the Year 8 choristers, with topics for rounds such as Peterborough Cathedral and The King's School to raise money for the Cathedral Choir – *Elizabeth Cunningham*
- Meet the choristers / meet the Director of Music / a ‘day in the life of...’ – *Tansy Castledine*

Tansy's recent OCA video was praised for being most entertaining, informative and impressive, and a great way to promote the choir.

Louise to arrange a meeting with Tansy and Elizabeth to discuss and arrange a virtual pub quiz – **LL**

Cathedral Choir update

Jubilate Deo CD

Tansy informed attendees that the choir's recent [Jubilate Deo CD](#), launched at the beginning of the year, has sold very well, and there are only about ten copies remaining. She thanked Ben Trenchard (Old Chorister and sound engineer), David Humphreys (former Assistant Director of Music) and all the musicians involved. It may be possible for the tracks to be streamed online in future.

Choir tour

Tansy shared a selection of delightful photos from the [Cathedral Choir's tour to California in February](#) this year. The choir enjoyed the beautiful architecture of their concert venues and churches, and the extremely appreciative American audiences. They also visited the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, Griffith Observatory, Space Shuttle Endeavour, The Getty Center, Universal Studios, and two local schools. Tansy reminded everyone that being a chorister isn't just about singing; it's a holistic education.

Lockdown

In addition to lots of singing practice via Zoom and taking part in an online RSCM celebration on Easter day, the choristers were busy honing their baking and plant growing skills, creating lego cathedrals, looking after chickens, and growing the cathedral's canine family.

Michaelmas term

Now that schools have returned, the workload for the Music Department staff has increased dramatically. There are presently four concurrent morning rehearsals with separate staff provision taking place every morning. Tansy was grateful to Samuel for his recommendation of a £1,500 donation from the Old Choristers' Association this year – to a large extent made possible by one generous OCA donor – which will help to sustain the choristers' singing lessons and rehearsals this year.

Services on Sundays are currently being sung by volunteers, and there will be a phased and staggered return of the full Cathedral Choir. The choristers will be involved in Remembrance, Advent and Christmas services and events, and will also be recording some music in advance as a precaution. Tansy encouraged members to tune in to 'Carols on the Couch', which will be live streamed on Saturday 19th December.

New staff

Following a question about the new staff mentioned in the Hon. Secretary's report, Tansy explained some of her thoughts on the restructuring of the [Music Department](#).

The Organist, in addition to accompanying services and mentoring the Organ Scholar, will be able to provide organ lessons to the choristers.

Mindful of how to further develop the choristers' musicianship, Tansy hopes the Choral Development Director will be able to help shape the choristers' broader musical education, including their conducting skills. There will also be a focus on outreach within the city and perhaps to our twin city Bourges in France, and Peterborough, Ontario in Canada.

Sing forever

Tansy finished her presentation by broadcasting the video of '[Sing forever](#)'. Aled Jones, Elizabeth Watts (both former choristers) and 2019's BBC Young Choristers of the Year joined a virtual choir of over 250 cathedral choristers from across the UK to produce this recording for the Cathedral Choirs Emergency Fund.

Tansy thanked the OCA officers and committee for their support. On behalf of the Association, Tim gave his grateful thanks to Tansy for her fascinating presentation.

AOB

Gift aid, charitable status, and wills

Frank Close queried how members might donate with gift aid, or perhaps leave a legacy. Whilst the OCA committee is looking into becoming a registered charity, which is a lengthy and complicated process, Louise and Tansy are directing larger individual donations via [The Hastings Music Endowment Fund](#) for the time being.

Louise also stated that The Company of St Peter offers a free legal service for drawing up your will, details of which are included in their [membership brochure](#).

Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations

Arnold announced that Ollie was co-opted onto the FCOCA committee earlier today, and that he will be sponsored for the development role. Peterborough being one of the founding associations in 1910, Arnold hopes that some PCOCA members will attend the festival taking place at Ely from 15th to 17th October 2021.

Ollie reported that people are looking to Peterborough as leading the way in terms of attendance, our broad range of membership, the way we have adapted and developed to stay relevant, and the success of the FCOCA Festival in 2018.

PCOCA committee members to share knowledge with FCOCA – ALL



John Martin

The assembled company sang 'Happy Birthday' to John Martin, who turned 94 this week. Tim noted that John is the Association's oldest Old Chorister, a distinguished scientist, and former Vice-Master of St Catherine's College, Oxford. John shared a picture from c. 1940, shown below (also available to view on the [OCA website](#), and shared on [Facebook](#)).

John said he was living in Oxford, near Frank Close, but suffers from pitch distortion so no longer enjoys music. He has a supportive family whom he loves, and FaceTime is a tremendous boon! He sent his blessings to all and thanked everyone very much.

Rev'd Ronald Sibthorp (Precentor) is centre and John Martin to his left. Graham Aubrey (2nd row, 3rd from R), Peter Boizot (3rd row, extreme R), Roy Sims (3rd row, 4th from R) and Heaton Spire (2nd row, 2nd from L).

John David Clifton also thanked Louise and the committee, and passed on his greetings from Oxford as well.

Chapter update

Arnold requested an update from the Canon Precentor. Louise passed on Rowan's apologies as she had left the AGM earlier to lead Evening Prayer.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 18:00.

Minutes submitted by Louise Laprun on Thursday 22nd October 2020