



PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATION

AGM | Saturday 14th September 2019, 16:45
The Knights' Chamber, Peterborough Cathedral

MINUTES

Present

Tim Hurst-Brown (Chairman), Alex Spires (Hon. Treasurer), Louise Laprun (Hon. Secretary), Samuel Barber, Christopher Bathurst, Arvinder Bhatti, Christopher Brown, Tansy Castledine, Elizabeth Cunningham, Caitlin Goodlip, Oliver Hamilton-Box, Sebastian Harper, David Lowe, Pauline Lowe, Christopher Menheneott, Simon Mold, Sarah Reid, Chris Stanley, Dave Stanley, Andrew Torbell, Alexei Yarwood-Burke

Apologies

Richard Akister, Felicity Baines, David Clifton, Frank Close, David Cole, Cyril Crouch, Alice Cunliffe, Very Revd Christopher Dalliston, Anthony Davis, Sophie Eser, Robert Ferguson, Canon Christopher Gower, Kitty Hardy, Matt Hardy, Bruce Jarvie, Nick Morris, Rob Morton, Ian Nicholson, Canon Peter Nicholson, Bradley Odep, James Percival, Alice Risdon, Mark Robertshaw, Canon Paul Rose, Matthew Searles, Gary Sieling, Dominic Spires, Jeremy Spires, Very Revd Charles Taylor, John Watson, Simon Wilkinson, Arnold Wills

Minutes & matters arising

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 15th September 2018 were agreed as a correct record – proposed by Christopher Bathurst, seconded by Oliver Hamilton-Box, endorsed by all present and signed by Tim Hurst-Brown, Chairman. There were no matters arising that were not already listed as an agenda item.

Hon. Treasurer's report

Alex Spires read his annual report:

As most of you will know, this is my final Treasurer's Report before I pass over the responsibility to a new Treasurer who will be elected, all being well, later at this AGM.

In many respects, after 25 years' service, it has been rewarding to end my stewardship on a high with Peterborough hosting the 88th Festival of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations in 2018 which was strongly supported and received much praise from those delegates attending from around the country. This meant of course that I had to work hard right up to the very end rather than being allowed to wind down into retirement!

You should all have a copy of the Receipts and Payments for the year ending 31 December 2018 to which I will refer.

The financial statement shows that we started the year with a balance of £4,002.25 which is very reasonable having donated £6,000.00 to the Cathedral Choir over the last 3 years to help support music lessons for the choristers / probationers.

Our income from memberships was up but regrettably not by volume of membership subscriptions but due to a very generous life subscription of £410.00 from one of our members. With a change in the annual subscription from £15.00 to £25.00 pa in 2019 I would expect this income stream to increase in next year's figures and let's hope that more than 39 of our members feel it important enough to make a financial contribution to sustaining our tradition here in Peterborough.

Income was further supported by generous donations from our membership totalling £795.00. In addition to this we even managed to extract £8.00 from Barclays by way of credit interest on our savings account.

Receipts from the Annual Reunion due to us hosting the Federation Weekend were higher than our typical year and after costs, a retained profit of around £642.00 was achieved after taking a generous view on last minute cancellations from some delegates.

I must mention the Dr Francis Strawberry Tea event held on the last Sunday of the summer term which was established by the late Commander John Willis before his death and now funded by his widow, Gillian Willis (who coincidentally will be joining us for dinner this evening), to thank the choristers for their hard work during the year and attended by the choir, chorister parents, friends and family.

After our other usual adjustments, we ended the year with a healthy balance of £5,519.00

With this in mind, I propose that we make a further donation of £2,000.00 to the Cathedral Choir (for the purposes mentioned above) to help retain our choral tradition at Peterborough. This will be the fourth consecutive year such a donation has been proposed.

I will now be pleased to take any questions regarding the Financial Statement.

It was noted that one liability item in the financial statement was still outstanding to be paid. The report was then proposed by Andrew Torbell and seconded by David Lowe.

The Chairman thanked Alex for carrying out his role as Hon. Treasurer with great distinction for the past 25 years, on behalf of the Association. Tim Hurst-Brown commented that Alex had been an outstanding officer, a tower of strength, an extremely hard worker and a prudent voice on the committee. Like father and grandfather before him, Alex has been a loyal servant; he really is one of the 'Cathedral Spires'. Tim said that he would be formally presenting Alex with a gift at the dinner later that evening. The present company showed their gratitude to Alex with a whole-hearted standing ovation.

Hon Secretary's report

Louise Laprun read her annual report:

Good afternoon,

Firstly, our grateful thanks go to Julie Aloe for providing and serving the refreshments for this AGM.

Thank you also to Tansy Castledine and the Music Department for facilitating another superb OCA Evensong. Many of us look back at our choristerships with great pleasure and gratitude, and it is a privilege to be welcomed 'home' to sing with the current Cathedral Choir. We have just welcomed a new cohort of Old Choristers, keeping our current membership at about 450 people.

Apologies have been received from a number of people this year, many of whom send their warm regards, including Gary Sieling and Canon Paul Rose, as well as the Very Revd Charles Taylor, Dean Emeritus, who gives his "heartiest felicitations to the assembled company".

Former Master of Music, Christopher Gower, and his wife, Sylvia, will be celebrating their 50th 'Golden' Wedding Anniversary on 27th September, so I have a card for all to sign if you haven't already. We think he'll be touched to receive a card from the Association.

We were saddened to hear of the death of our good friend, Peter Boizot, on 5th December 2018. He was 89 and had been in failing health for some time. A public memorial service was held at the Cathedral on Friday 8th February, during which the Cathedral Choir sang some of his most-loved choral pieces, including Mendelssohn's

Hear my prayer, with the famous treble solo (which he used to sing as a chorister). Our Chairman, Tim Hurst-Brown had written an obituary and was subsequently interviewed by BBC Cambridgeshire. If you'd like to learn more about Peter's fascinating life and local munificence, please visit the 'News' section of our website.

As Alex Spires mentioned in his report, he is now stepping down from his role as Hon. Treasurer, which brings his tenure to 25 years. As revealed by Tim last year, Alex has been in post since 1994, and there have only been two Treasurers of the OCA Committee since 1954. We have been exceedingly fortunate to have Alex as our Treasurer and we are indebted to him for his steadfast contribution to the committee, his continued dedication, and hard work. We're sorry Alex has decided to stand down from this position, but we're so pleased he's remaining on the committee, which means his successor will benefit from his expertise.

John Watson has decided to step down from his role as Hon. Auditor, as he lives near Manchester and finds it difficult to attend meetings. John has given the committee 15 years of his voluntary time, also being one of only two Auditors since 1954; his committed and detailed work has been greatly valued. Alex has confirmed that John has already audited the finalised accounts for the year ended 31st December 2018, so we are presently considering next steps.

We are very keen to keep supporting our Cathedral Choir, and we've previously subsidised chorister singing lessons. This year, it may be more beneficial for us to donate towards the cost of choir tours. Tansy will speak more about this later, and I hope you'll all be on board. If you're not already a subscribing member, please do visit the 'Support Our Choir' section of the website or fill in a standing order form today.

Over 40 Old Choristers and friends from all over the country will join us later for our Reunion Dinner at the Bull Hotel with guest speaker The High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, His Honour Neil McKittrick Deputy Lieutenant. Additionally, some of our newest Old Choristers will be talking about their time in the Choir. We very much look forward to hearing them all speak later.

Looking further ahead, we will be singing our usual OCA Christmastide Evensong on Friday 27th December this year before the Old Petriburgians' Reunion at the Brewery Tap. Keep an eye out on social media or via email for updates. Next year, we will be hosting our annual reunion on Saturday 13th June – please save the date.

If any of you are in contact with contemporaries for whom we may not have up-to-date contact details, please do ask them to get in touch and follow us on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram or, even better, bring them along with you next year to our 2020 reunion!

Thank you.

The Hon. Secretary's report was proposed by Samuel Barber and seconded by Christopher Brown.

Election of officers

Tim Hurst-Brown and Louise Laprun both agreed to continue to serve as Chairman and Hon. Secretary, and they were respectively proposed by David Lowe and Andrew Torbell and seconded by Samuel Barber and Simon Mold.

Samuel Barber consented to take on the role of Hon. Treasurer, having been approached by Alex before the AGM, which was proposed by Oliver Hamilton-Box and seconded by Elizabeth Cunningham. Taking on this extra responsibility, Samuel requested permission to step down as FCOCA representative, so Oliver Hamilton-Box offered to take up this duty. This was proposed by Samuel Barber and seconded by Simon Mold. They were both thanked for their commitment and enthusiasm in the past year on behalf of the Association.

Tim informed those present that a replacement for Hon. Auditor will be sought, even if the committee is required to look outside the organisation for someone suitable and willing (which does not go against the constitution). Official permission to appoint was granted by the meeting, proposed by David Lowe and seconded by Dave Stanley.

Caitlin Goodlip kindly volunteered to join the committee as a new Junior Representative, now that Elizabeth Cunningham is over school age. As all others were willing to continue to serve on the committee, the following members were therefore re-elected by those present at the AGM: Elizabeth Cunningham, Sophie Eser, Matt Hardy, Sebastian Harper Bradley Odep, Mark Robertshaw and Alex Spires. These were proposed by Oliver Hamilton-Box and seconded by Christopher Brown.

Officers & Committee Members

Patron: The Rt Revd Donald Allister, Lord Bishop of Peterborough*

President: The Very Revd Chris Dalliston, Dean of Peterborough*

Vice-Presidents:

Revd Canon T. Alban Jones*

Revd Canon I. Black*

Revd Canon S. Brown*

Revd Canon Dr R. Williams*

Canon P. C. Nicholson

Canon P. R. Rose

Canon C. S. Gower

D. Ayling, Headteacher of The King's (The Cathedral) School, Peterborough*

Chairman: Mr Tim Hurst-Brown

Hon. Secretary: Ms Louise Laprun

Hon. Treasurer: Mr Samuel Barber

Hon. Auditor: TBC

Federation Representative: Mr Oliver Hamilton-Box

Committee:

Ms Tansy Castledine, Director of Music*

Revd Dr Rowan Williams, Canon Precentor*

Miss Caitlin Goodlip (Junior Representative)

Mr 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: 13th June 2020

Next year's reunion will take place on Saturday 13th June 2020, following Oliver Hamilton-Box's idea of moving the date of the Annual Reunion back to the summer term in order to gain more attendees. Tim urged members to make a note in their diaries, and to bring along their friends.

Cathedral Choir tour fundraising

Tansy Castledine thanked the OCA for their warm welcome and formally thanked the Association for our previous donations towards the choristers' singing lessons, which has sustained a vital aspect of their musical education. She described the whirlwind and immense joy of her first year in post at Peterborough Cathedral and gave the group an update on the Music Department, including the following:

- The treble line is now completely full, with fifty choristers all making a valuable contribution
- The probationers are now starting to join in with the choir, rather than standing aside and watching for a whole year, and there is also a pre-probationer singing club for the prospective choristers before they join in Year 3
- The girl choristers went on a successful tour to Belgium in May 2019
- The Cathedral Choir has joined social media (Twitter: @pborochoir | Instagram & Facebook: @pborocathedralchoir) to connect with a wider audience
- There is a promotional video coming out at the end of the month, which will reflect the diverse community of the choir
- A new CD charting the liturgical year will be launched on Friday 8th November 2019, now the third CD to be released with the organ at the new pitch but the first with instruments (Prime Brass).

Regarding the upcoming choir tour to America in February 2020, Tansy gave details about the trip and explained the need for financial support.

The tour will take place from Thursday 13th February to Monday 24th February 2020, with all the senior choristers (girls and boys in Years 6 to 8) and an ATB team of twelve. The first weekend will be spent in LA, the middle of the week in Santa Maria, and then San Francisco for the second weekend. There will be a mixture of concerts and services, some coming from invitations from Tansy's contacts, hopefully along with some exciting excursions, e.g. Alcatraz, Universal Studios, Hollywood, Getty Centre, as well as some time on the beach.

The current choir consists of children from all backgrounds, many of whom have never been abroad. This trip will be an excellent, well-rounded educational experience that will provide them with fantastic memories to cherish, which has been validated by the fact that the Headteacher of The King's (The Cathedral) School has given permission for them to take a few days off term time to attend.

Tansy has been working hard for sources of fundraising and has planned for the event to be cost-neutral, with no burden on Chapter. All the senior chorister parents are donating and helping with fundraising efforts (£10,000.00), but the total cost will be c. £55,000.00. Other funding has come from The Hastings Trust, profits from concerts, individual contributions, and company grants.

Alex Spires proposed that the Old Choristers' Association could feasibly bestow another £2,000.00 to the Music Department this year, which was seconded by Christopher Bathurst, and all present were in favour. In order to sustain this level of annual donations in years to come, it was agreed that Louise Laprun would promote the tour on the OCA website, newsletter, emails and social media in order to encourage specific donations from Old Choristers, as well as to boost standing orders from members.

Tansy thanked the Association sincerely for the generous donation towards the tour.

AOB

FCOCA Festival

Christopher Bathurst wished to formally thank Louise Laprun for organising the FCOCA Festival last year.

Dr W. Stanley Vann memorial

Louise reminded members that, between 2014 and 2016, the OCA had raised £5,000.00 for the Vann memorial, which 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. Louise had emailed the Accounts Department for an update, following the hiatus during the cathedral's period of financial troubles coming to light and the clergy change thereafter, who confirmed that the amount is still held aside for this project.

It had been discussed at committee meetings whether the money could either accrue value or be put to good use imminently. Revd Canon Dr Rowan Williams had informed the committee that the nave furniture scheme has been postponed indefinitely; thus, other potential physical commemorations had been considered, including plaques, organ accessories, and contributing to a new concert grand piano.

Louise had recently received an idea from the clergy: a new handsome wrought iron streetlamp, which is currently needed but unfunded. Louise suggested that perhaps Dr Vann could be remembered by 'conducting' the way for those in darkness, with a plaque featuring an excerpt of his *Nunc dimittis* ("to be a light to lighten the gentiles").

Some voiced opposition to this idea, advocating a plaque inside the building instead, not unlike the Keeton memorial in the New Building with the carved musical notes, which might be more fitting to honour Dr Vann's memory. It was decided that members should continue to think about how to use the money appropriately.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 17:40.