



South Devon Choir

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

18 January 2024, 7.30pm

Central Church, Torquay

Present: Jill Stevens (Chair); Sara Smith (Treasurer); Lisa Prager (Secretary); Committee members Fenella Davis, Dee Jevons, Jan Nott and Andrew Riley; Prim Wood (retired Treasurer); John Hobbs (President); Simon Dunbavand (Director of Music); and 38 members.

President's Opening Remarks (John Hobbs)

John commented that the President's role was to monitor the progress of the Choir and look to the future. Over the year, he had sung with the Choir twice, and was in no doubt about the prowess of the Choir and also the expertise of Simon Dunbavand (DoM). However, none of that would work without the Committee, including particularly Jill Stevens for her leadership as Chair, and Rosie Clapham as the Choir's long-serving Librarian, who are both now retiring from the Committee.

A source of encouragement is seeing the number of new members, including some a little younger than many of us. I wish the Choir well this term, and I'm really looking forward to singing the Rossini with you.

1. **Apologies** were received from Rosie Clapham, Sally Laird, Jennie Litt, Hazel Heath, Joyce Roberts, Deborah Atulomah and Melvyn Batten.
2. **Minutes of the 2023 AGM** on 2 February 2022 had been made available to all members via the Choir's website. The Minutes were accepted and signed as a true record (proposed by Stella Currie, seconded by Prim Wood).
3. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.
4. **Chair's Comments (Jill Stevens)**

Jill commented that 2023 had been a very positive year for the Choir in many ways, starting with the well-received and well-attended concert of Haydn's 'Creation' in May, and followed by the choral workshop at Paignton Parish Church, focusing on Vivaldi's 'Gloria' and led by Robin Stubbs. This had resulted in a donation of £950 to Rowcroft Hospice, Torquay, in memory of Mark Saxelby.

Robin Stubbs had invited the Choir to join with Britannia Choral Society for two performances of Jenkins' 'The Armed Man' and Faure's 'Requiem', the first at Britannia Naval College in Dartmouth, the second at St Matthias' Church, Torquay. These were both well attended, despite heightened security measures at Dartmouth. Attendance at the Torquay concert was largely thanks to the strenuous marketing efforts of members and Committee.

The year ended with the Christmas concert at St Mary the Virgin, St Marychurch, which was highly appreciated by the audience, in particular our rendition of 'Schneewalzer'.

Now in 2024, we see slowly increasing numbers of singers, including several welcome new faces since this time last year. We have an exciting programme, including Mozart's 'Requiem' which has attracted some interest from potential new members.

Jill added that she had thoroughly enjoyed being Chair for the past 3 years, and having the support and privilege of working with some of her now-favourite people. However, with children and grandchildren living in distant places, she is looking to the freedom of longer visits. Therefore she is stepping down at the end of this summer.

5. Hon. Treasurer's Report (Prim Wood)

Prim presented the Financial Report and Annual Accounts for 2022–2023, when she had been Treasurer. The Income and Expenditure Account showed income of £10,719 and expenditure of £11,289, resulting in a small deficit of £570).

The largest elements of income were subscriptions (£8,038) and tax repayment on Gift Aid (£1,388). The largest expenditures were the deficit on concerts (£4,550), honoraria (£4,344), and rehearsal hall hire (£1,625). The £4,550 deficit on concerts was made up of a loss of £3,864 on the Mozart concert in November 2022, a £412 loss on the 'Creation' concert in May 2022, and a further deficit of £274 on the 2022 British Legion Remembrance Day concert in Exeter Cathedral.

The closing balance of all accounts at 31 August 2022 was £11,344 (£11,915 in 2022).

Acceptance of the Annual Accounts was proposed by Fenella Davis, seconded by Jan Nott, and approved.

6. Director of Music's comments (Simon Dunbavand)

Simon said the Mozart and Handel concert ('Crown and Glory') at St Matthias' Church in November 2022 was a great concert. Among its other highlights, it had brought a brilliant substitute timpanist from Cardiff at the last minute, as well as featuring Peter King on the organ.

In April 2023, the Choir performed the full version of Haydn's 'Creation', accompanied by the St Matthias' Church organ – the best in Torbay – with Ian Curror on the organ, and three great soloists – Katie Wright, Mark Hounsell and John Hobbs.

Simon recalled the annual summer workshop in Paignton, and looked forward to the one in June 2024 which will feature choruses from Handel's 'Messiah'.

He commented on the joint concerts with Britannia Choral Society in November 2023 ('The Armed Man'), and what a difference it had been to sing with a full-size choir again. The St Matthias' organ malfunctioned just before the joint concert and the church had been unable to provide a piano. However, with the accompaniment of the digital keyboard, the Choir and the soloists John Hobbs and Katie Wright had managed magnificently, and there had been good feedback from the audience.

Simon ended by urging all to carry on recruiting members so that eventually the Choir will be back to pre-covid size, and thanked the Choir for the year of music-making.

7. Election of Officer and Committee Members

In accordance with Rule 5 of the Constitution, one Officer and two Committee positions are vacated each year in rotation. The holders of those positions may stand for re-election.

The position of **Chair** is due for election, to serve from September 2024 to August 2027. The current holder of this position, Jill Stevens, does not wish to seek re-election.

As there were no nominations for this role, the matter was deferred and may be the subject of a Special General Meeting in due course.

The two **Committee member** positions due to be vacated by rotation are currently held by Rosie Clapham and Andrew Riley. Andrew is willing to stand again for election, while Rosie is not willing and a replacement member is needed. In addition, a further Committee member position is vacant (out of rotation), due to the retirement of Ann Richardson; this position will run from now until August 2026.

Four nominations were received for the three positions; a vote was held and three were elected, while the fourth nominee will be co-opted to the Committee:

Andrew Riley: proposed by Stella Currie, seconded by Ann Richardson
elected to serve from now until August 2026

Jane Macey: proposed by Fenella Davis, seconded by Amanda Jordan
elected to serve from September 2024 until August 2027

Cathy Hodges: proposed by Ann Gardiner, seconded by Adele Reynolds
elected to serve from September 2024 until August 2027

Sandra Worrall: proposed by Jane Macey, seconded by Amanda Jordan
to be co-opted.

8. Other Posts (for information)

The following positions are held in the Choir until August 2024:

Independent Examiner of FinancialsDavid Simpson
Orchestral Secretary.....Anna Cockroft
100 Club Organiser.....Prim Wood
Gift Aid Secretary.....Jennie Litt (vacant from September 2024)
Ticket Sales to Choir.....Prim Wood
Publicity Officer.....(vacant)
Membership.....Fenella Davis (Committee)
Music Secretary.....Dee Jevons & Fenella Davis (Committee)
Librarian /Hire Organiser.....Rosie Clapham (Committee – retiring)
Data Protection Officer.....(vacant)
First Aider.....Tania Lumsdaine
Rehearsal Refreshment Organiser.....Jennifer Walker

9. Subscription Charges for the 2024–2025 Season

The full annual subscription of £150 will remain unchanged for the season from September 2024 to August 2025. Sara (Treasurer) pointed out that for people joining the Choir for the first time after 31 December, the fee is half of the annual fee.

People who are under 18 years of age on the day of the first September rehearsal (7 September 2024) have free membership.

10. Any Other Business

John Hobbs announced that **Sally Laird**, who had been an excellent Chair, was due to receive a long-service certificate of appreciation, in recognition of her dedication to the Choir for 50 years. As she was unable to attend, Lisa Prager would deliver it to her.

Signed: ????????, Chair,

2025