

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009

Held at Malbank School on Wednesday 30th September 2009

Ron Kelley opened the meeting at 7.08

Apologies: Anne Barnard, Rita Davies, Margaret Whitehurst, Joyce Clegg, Kath & Graham Wilks.

Present: The Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Musical Director & 69 members of the choir.

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2008 had been distributed by e-mail/via the newsletter & were accepted as an accurate record – all agreed & were duly signed by the vice- Chairman.

Matters Arising: nil.

Chairman's Report: Anne Barnard (AB) read by Ron Kelley in the chairman's absence.

The chairman has pleasure in presenting her last report. Most of the committee's activities were covered in the Autumn newsletter, however there are a couple of additional points to cover. Subscriptions will remain at £90 with the first term free for new members. Last year we raised additional income almost equal to the total of subscriptions which has been important in maintaining the Society's financial health. We were urged to sell as many Christmas Raffle tickets as possible & hope to benefit again from Barclays 'match funding'.

The newsletter has been an excellent method of communication & AB thanked Ron Kelley for the huge amount of work he puts into it. Articles, observations & suggestions from members are welcome. Following the world banking crisis, AB clarified the actions of the committee to safeguard Society funds. We now have 2 accounts with HSBC – one 'savings' & one 'current', the RBS account is to be closed once Standing Order/BACS payments have been completed. The Nat West account is to be closed since they declined to provide statements each month to the 3 signatories – as a safeguard since for cheques under £300, only one signatory is required & over this amount, 2 signatories. We also decided to 'ring fence' an amount calculated to cover the costs incurred for a major concert if we had no ticket income, our membership dropped dramatically or any other unforeseen circumstance arose. The sum for the coming year has been assessed at £8,000 & is held separately in a savings account with Standard Life.

The final account held is with NatWest for the 200 Club & is quite separate from general funds. We look forward to a substantial sum being transferred annually, so please encourage family & friends to invest £20 to support the Society.

In conclusion AB would have liked to have been able to attend the AGM & thank you in person for the help & support given to her over the last 3 years. It has been a tremendous privilege to represent you & she will continue to give NCS her full support.

She thanked everyone for their encouraging messages & apologised for not acknowledging them & offered her very best wishes to her successor, Roger Boulton.

Treasurer's Report: Liz McCrone (LM)

Liz McCrone presented her report via power point presentation,

The balance at the start of the year was £22,176 & ended at £19,337 ie a cost to the Society of £2838. There has been a substantial fall in subscriptions, concert income was £12,367 & costs were £22,581, ticket sales were disappointing & 2 of the concerts were fully orchestrated & therefore expensive. Fundraising ~doubled this year.

There was an unexpected expense of £1000 to St. Mary's towards the alteration to the front pews.

Adoption of the Officer's Reports was accepted unanimously.

Musical Director's Report: John Naylor (JN)

1. B Minor Mass – Super performances from the choir & orchestra – shame about the soprano soloist. Coppenhall turned out to be a good venue.
2. Carol Concert – well attended & good to have the children with us again. Andrew's 'Night before Christmas' was a great success & JN proposes to repeat it this year.

JN thanked us for bearing with him while on his sabbatical in Australia/New Zealand, with particular thanks to Andrew & Jonathan.

3. Gounod in March went well & despite everyone's misgivings we gave a very convincing account of Rutter Psalmfest This was choral singing of quite considerable difficulty & you did extremely well.
4. In comparison, Haydn's 'The Seasons' seemed much more straightforward 'though there was quite a lot of it. The splendid soloists & orchestral playing seemed to inspire us & it was a great performance. A pity there wasn't a bigger audience in the Civic Centre which also turned out to be a good venue.
5. Our recording – having spent time with the recording company going through the first session a good version of 'The Night Before Christmas' will emerge & I'm waiting for the first edit of the second session.
6. JN's perception is that the majority of us have worked hard at the music which is extremely satisfying & he feels rehearsal schedules are helpful.
7. In general attendance at rehearsals has been good, though sometimes it seems one week's attendees are completely different to those who attended the week before! – This comes with the territory of a voluntary choir.

Criticisms:-

1. Need to improve standing/sitting – no Mexican waves!
2. Improve time keeping for rehearsals – aim for 7.25 not 7.35pm
3. Ticket sales – JN made no apologies for emphasising that the best attended choral societies are those whose members are the most active in selling tickets. If we could achieve sales of 2 tickets per member for all concerts as a minimum that would be a good start.
4. That being said – to have undertaken such an ambitious repertoire including 2 major concerts with professional orchestras & top-flight soloists & still have a healthy bank balance at the end of the year, is very commendable indeed. If only you could pay subscriptions, raise extra money through Christmas raffle, The 200 Club & other activities & sell tickets, what superstars you all would be!

Future repertoire:-

1. Sing it Yourself Messiah in Jan.
2. Singing Day with a difference in Feb.
3. Mendelssohn's St Paul in March
4. Summer Serenade – more opera excerpts & choruses & pieces from 'In the Mood'
5. Nov – an evening with Mr Handel to include Coronation Anthems (Zadok the Priest), the stunningly exciting Dixit Dominus & the 18th Century Concert Orchestra playing 'The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba'

All this is to be publicised on a 2010 list of concerts rather than the usual Seasonal Flyer.

Future venues – St. Mary's should now be more accommodating for us, though orchestra options will still be limited. However, The Civic Hall & Coppenhall have proved congenial venues, rather better than some of us suspected.

Thank yous:-

1. All the members of the retiring committee who have been absolutely outstanding in the work they have done on your behalf. Many of you probably don't realise how much they do, so efficiently & cheerfully & I'm personally grateful to all of them. It would take a long time for me to sing their praises individually, but we should be grateful for all they have done.
2. In my time with you I've had the pleasure to work with 2 outstanding chairmen – Ron & Anne. Both have worked tirelessly on your behalf & although they approach the task in slightly different ways, both have been outstandingly successful. I'm so sorry that Anne isn't here for us to thank in person but I know that she is so grateful for all your support & good wishes. So no pressure Roger but I can genuinely say that I'm looking forward to working with you to develop the Society's future.
3. Andrew continues to be the best colleague one could possibly wish for. I'm truly grateful for all the support he gives me & especially for gently guiding me around potential hazards which he's spotted & I hadn't. I'm not looking forward to his departure at the end of next summer, but that's for later.

4. Lastly, but most importantly thank you for all your support, your enthusiasm, your super singing & your friendship. It is truly a privilege to work with you all & I can honestly say that I enjoy every minute of it.
5. The peaks of Gerontius lie immediately before us & I'm confident we will scale them successfully together. After that – ever onwards & upwards!

AOB nil

Election of Officers: Chairman – Roger Boulton
Treasurer – Adrian & Stephanie Percy
Secretary – Rachel Pentecost

Committee Members – Eileen Robertson
Joy Guest
Vanessa Layfield
Jonathan Layfield
Anne Nicol
Fiona Field
Sue Briscoe
Ester Harries
Bob Pugh

RK proposed election en bloc – all agreed

RK welcomed Roger Boulton (RB) as Chairman. RB thanked Anne Barnard & the outgoing committee.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Rachel Pentecost, Minute Secretary.