

The Choir Association of St John's College, Cambridge

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 28 January 2023 at 3.30 p.m. By Zoom Video Conference

Present: Mr Tim Jones (Chairman – except Item 12), Dr Mark Oakley (Dean of Chapel), Dr Stephen Darlington (Interim Director of Music - Items 1 to 3 only), Miss Caroline Marks (Choir Administrator), Mr James Beddoe (Choir Marketing & Communications Officer), Mr Henry Montgomery (Manager, Gentlemen of St John's), Mr Ian Aitkenhead, The Rev'd Anthony Bushell, Mr Christopher Carnaghan, Mr Tom Cogan, The Rev'd David Coulton, Mr David Garrett, Mr Edward Hart, Mrs Rosemary Hart, Mr Jeremy Huw Williams, Ms Jill MacMahon, Mr Shantanu Majumdar, Commander Mark Metcalf, Mr Paul Munton, Mr Charles Naylor, and Mr John Thompson.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Tim Jones welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Tom Blackie, Mr Francis Bushell, Mr Dominic Collingwood, Mr Melville Haggard, Mr Tristan Hambleton, Mr Jonathan Hellyer Jones, Mr Selwyn Image, Mr Oliver Lepage Dean, Mr Martin Redfearn, Dr Christopher Robinson, Mr Adrian Smallwood, Mr Geoffrey Smallwood and Mr Robin Smallwood.

3. Report from the Interim Director of Music

Stephen Darlington reported that the Choir had been very responsive to his arrival. All were in very good spirits and it was a great privilege to work with such a fine choir. He was particularly pleased to see how supportive the boy Choristers were of the girls, and he felt the alto section was excellent.

The Epiphany Carol Services had been a great success. There would be some new repertoire included in the Ash Wednesday and Lent Meditation Services, and the final Evensong of term would include The Blues Service by Iain Farrington, accompanied by Johnian Ignacio Mañá Mesas on saxophone.

Tim Jones thanked Stephen Darlington and said that the music this term had been widely appreciated.

4. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 29 January 2022

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 29 January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

5. Income and Expenditure for the financial year ended 30 June 2022

Caroline Marks reported that membership and donation income had shown an increase of around £600 over the previous year. A few paying members had sadly passed away. Another two had resigned their membership owing to other commitments. Owing to the post-pandemic resumption of social events, expenditure had been higher than in the previous two years. Unfortunately pressure of other work had precluded the issue of a Newsletter during the 2021-22 financial year.

6. Choir Association Activities 2022

Tim Jones reported there had been two social events in 2022. The London Drinks event had taken place in March at the Farmers' Club, courtesy of Martin Redfearn. Around 35 members had attended. A Tea Party and Reunion Evensong had taken place in late May. Jill MacMahon

reported that this had been a good spirited event and that Andrew Nethsingha had given an excellent address.

Tim Jones reported that he was in contact with the Master regarding the venue for the 2023 Garden Party, which he hoped might take place in the Master's Lodge Garden. He further reported that the Committee hoped to extend the range of events offered to members, and that the hunt was on for suitable cost-effective venues in London.

7. Choir Association Bursary Awards 2022

Caroline Marks reported that two grants, totalling £2,000, had been awarded in 2022. Tom Butler had received a grant to support his studies at the Royal Academy of Music and Richard Decker had received a grant to support his studies at the Royal College of Music.

Tim Jones noted that the Bursary Scheme is an important part of the Association's activities. Post-graduate study at Conservatoires is expensive, and the grants are very helpful and always gratefully received.

8. Admission of girl Choristers and female Altos to the Choir

Mark Oakley reported that three girls had joined the Choir as Probationers in April 2022. They had been admitted as full Choristers at the end of the Easter Term. Two more girls had joined as Probationers in September 2022. An offer had been made to another girl for September 2023 entry. Three female altos had joined the Choir at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term. All were settling in well.

9. Replacement Organ Project

Mark Oakley reported that the contract with Harrison & Harrison for the refurbishment and installation of the Father Willis organ had been signed in late December 2022. The installation programme was scheduled to start in the Lent Term 2025, and it was hoped to be finished by December 2025. There had recently been some good news regarding the cost of the project – it had been confirmed by HMRC that VAT on the work was recoverable under the Listed Places of Worship Scheme (LPWS). Although this would reduce the total cost of the project, there was still some serious work to be done with fundraising.

10. Choir Marketing & Communications Report

James Beddoe reported on Choir activities during 2022, including special services, album releases and Choir alumni news. Owing to a technology issue, he was unable to show the presentation at the meeting. A copy of the slides is attached as an Appendix to the minutes.

11. Forthcoming Choir activities

Caroline Marks reported that there were plans in hand for a special service during the Coronation weekend, details of which would be circulated to Association members in due course. A nine-day tour to Luxembourg and the Netherlands was planned for December 2023.

12. Election of the Chairman

Tim Jones declared an interest in this item and temporarily left the meeting. The Chair was taken by Mark Oakley. Mark Oakley reported that Tim Jones had come to the end of his first three year term as Chairman of the Committee. Mark Oakley further reported that Tim Jones had indicated that he would be willing to stand for a further term of three years. There were no other candidates.

David Garrett proposed and Jill MacMahon seconded that Tim Jones should be reappointed for a further three years. Those present unanimously approved the appointment.

Tim Jones was invited to rejoin the meeting. On behalf of the Association, Mark Oakley expressed his gratitude to Tim for steering the Committee through some challenging times, and handed the chair back to Tim. Tim thanked the Committee and those present for their support, and said how much he enjoyed the role.

13. Election of Committee Members

Tim Jones reported that there were no nominations for Committee Members ready for ratification at the meeting. However former Choral Students (Ian Aitkenhead (1993-96) and Charles Naylor (1975-78) had recently agreed to become Committee Members. They would be co-opted to the Committee at the meeting to be held in June, and formally nominated for ratification at the 2024 AGM. A further candidate was being sought to fill the vacant Supporting Member post.

14. Vote of thanks to retiring Committee Members

Tim Jones thanked those standing down from the Committee at the end of their tenure. Dominic Collingwood and David Garrett had each served nine years, and Suzanna D'Oyly three years.

15. Any other business

- (i) Caroline Marks reported that an informal social event would be held to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Gentlemen of St John's (date in summer 2023 to be agreed). She also noted that the Centenary of George Guest's birth would fall on Friday 9 February 2024.
- (ii) Tim Jones thanked Mark Oakley, Stephen Darlington, Caroline Marks and James Beddoe for their contribution to the Choir and the Choir Association.

16. Date of next Annual General Meeting

Saturday 27 January 2024 at 3.30 p.m.

C.F.M.
6 February 2023