

# Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 38<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

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Held at Mevagissey Social Club on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2012

**Present:** Stephen Gibson (Chairman), David Leeson (Treasurer), Michael Collings (Secretary), and 31 Choir Members

1. **Apologies:** Terry Coplin, Robin Hunkin, Mel Coombe, Graham Rundle, Graham Willcocks, Ron Hocking, John Jones, James Gill. – 13 members unaccounted for!

2. **Minutes of meeting Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2011**

The Minutes, having been previously circulated, were accepted as a true record, proposed by Mike Watson and seconded by Nick Nicholls, nem con, and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Matters Arising**

Bill Collins raised several issues:

- i. Casual uniform had not been progressed. Michael Collings thought it had been discussed and rejected as too expensive. (Subsequent investigation outside the AGM showed it had been discussed in Committee in September 2011 and general agreement had been 'NO' but leave until after the AGM. Raised in February 2012 to be left after the survey: - Survey suggested that at least 11 people would not wear a 'Walking Out' uniform so was dropped. Will be revisited in January Committee Meeting)
- ii. There was a suggestion to drop commitments January to March to learn new pieces and also not to learn too many complex pieces but have more simpler pieces
- iii. Demise of proposed Christmas CD. Stephen Gibson said the whole Choir agrees and Mike Watson proposed we complete the current CD and then get on with the Christmas CD. There was general agreement. (See same topic in AOB)
- iv. Soloists need more encouragement and training.  
Nick Nicholls said it is scandalous that it took 11 months for Mike Tate to be a full member. Stephen Gibson said that music direction is clearly down to the MD and Music Committee but that the Music Committee does not have much sway and is probably right.  
Bill Collins noted that Graham Willcocks often takes the solo when a soloist is away and we need to encourage soloists.  
Geoff Pollard noted that most people had many commitments and it would be difficult to find another night for these activities.  
Bill Reeve thought it sad that these matters were being aired when the MD was absent and that the MDs duties are absolute.  
Bill Collins thought that time may be better spent with soloists and the RAH group than with the Octet.  
Roger Mitchell confirmed that it is the MD then the music Committee in that order who choose the music.  
Des Honey wanted more information why music was dropped and Stephen Gibson thought that by bringing back the section music choice old pieces may be resurrected.  
Nick Nicholls proposed that the initial way forward is for a meeting with Graham Willcocks, the Music Committee and the full Committee to discuss the way forward in an objective manner, seconded by Des Honey, carried nem con.  
Nick Nicholls also noted that we have bought music and sung only for a few times and then discarded. Also some (like Ghost Riders) is not enjoyed by some but is by others,

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Geoff Pollard noted that the same thing had happened under Harold Miller and we do need to bring in small pieces.

Roger Daniel said we have over 200 pieces in our repertoire but that 150 had been taken out and needs to be brought back. We are more modern now than we need to be but Geoff Pollard commented that conversely we need modern pieces to attract younger members.

## 4. Reports

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2012

2012 has been quite a year for the choir. Moving to Mevagissey 5 years ago I joined the choir partly to get to know new people, little did I realise that the choir would become such an important part of my life.

Working as Chair has had many surprises for me, that in itself is no surprise because how could I have known what the job would entail. It's been a real pleasure to work with such a great group of men. At our first committee meeting I had to write everybody's name down and job title. Things are a bit better now I know their names. I also know that they work tirelessly on behalf of the choir. Some you know as they are vocal, others quietly serve the choir and just get on with the job. May I say I think the committee works extremely hard and should take a great deal of credit for the successes of the past year.

The choir has had a very busy year spreading its music across the county. I can report many varied events, some new and memorable, some of them sad, many exciting.

We continued to record our new CD and started to record a Christmas CD, unfortunately neither are completed. CDs continue to be a valued source of income. The new CDs I am sure will add to this.

This year we lost three long standing members Skit, Leonard and most recently Francis. The choir came out in force to honour and remember friends. We will remember them fondly.

The choir continued to endeavour to fulfil its charitable aim of sharing the joy of music. This summer we organised 5 quay concerts. A record 4 were held at St Andrews. Despite this we saw enthusiastic crowds and were required on several occasions to sing an encore.

Again this year we have had a few disappointing concerts with very low numbers and atrocious weather at Tregony. Highlights this year must be

- the Minack with our largest audience and at such a spectacular venue,
- St Augustine
- St Neot (with only 4 tops) supporting Nick Heart and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canoryon Lowen Choir,
- Mevagissey Feast Week always a highlight for us and our community
- The Asylum, a new adventure for the choir
- Our first Christmas concert with the Ladies Choir and Children's Choir is set to end the year in style.

Innovations this year have been the way in which the fundraisers have operated, reinventing the concert programme, hosting our fund-raising concert at St Augustine's. Although the programme is given away free its advertisers having paid handsomely for the privilege.

The choir continues to rely on volunteers such as Gill opening up St Andrews, Cliff lugging the risers from town to town, John producing the newsletter for the Friends. Also John our librarian ensuring that each singing member has a full set of music.

In 2013 we look forward to a tour of the West Country visiting Taunton and Bath to sing with our Silver Choir friends. During the year we will be busy preparing and planning for our 40th anniversary singing in the Minack (already booked) a Gala Concert and a possible European Tour.

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The work of the new post of publicity and recruitment secretary was started by Geoff and taken over by Bill recently has ensured new innovative ways of publicising our concerts.

Our retiring Chairman Bill outlined the need to work on recruitment, this is an area we have made little impact yet. As mentioned we have lost 3 members this year, a couple have moved away and a couple more have left the choir. The singing membership of the choir now stands at 55, this will bring its own challenges and therefore opportunities. We have been pleased to welcome Don to the top tenors and most recently Michael to the baritone section.

The pub singers have started to sing informally in pubs, one of their stated aims is to recruit singers for the main choir. The Octet has been working hard at its repertoire under the guidance of Graham our musical director.

In the following year we really need to address the need to encourage new members to join. It's easy to say that it's everyone else who puts folk off joining. The evidence is that each and every one of us has a part to play. We will need to make the most of promoting ourselves at every opportunity so that the men of the area know who we are and how to find us.

However it's no good inviting men to come along if all they are going to get is a gossip and bad humour.

## New Arrivals

- New arrivals need to feel welcome
- They need to know where to sit; this might mean some of our existing members may have to give up their seat and move!
- They will need a mentor who can ensure they know what the drill is ie where the pub is after practice.
- We may have to go over well known songs so that new members get a chance to learn, a little tedious for long established members but its how we learned them in the past.
- We may need to practice easy songs so that new members will have a song to sing on their voice test ('At last' may not be suitable).

We have had a choir for the men of Mevagissey and its environs for the past 38 years, we now need to ensure that the men of Mevagissey have the opportunity to share music comradeship in the future.

Finally may I thank the Musical Director, accompanists and all the members of the Committee and volunteers who work so tirelessly for the good of the choir and who have made the last year such a success.

Thank you.

Roger Mitchell thanked Stephen Gibson whom he had 'conned' into standing as *Vice Chairman!*

## **MUSICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2012**

The MD was gave his apologies for absence

## **TREASURER'S REPORT 2012**

A comparison of our financial assets at the beginning and end of our last financial year show that they rose from £19,249.63 to £21,803.38, a gain of £2,553.65, but our final Budget analysis of the year proves conclusively that this choir does need a new Treasurer. The choir has ended the year £5,900.00 richer than I predicted, and that, I suggest, is carrying doom and gloom to the extreme. However, I can see reasons for the huge discrepancy. (i.e. I have my excuses)

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- a) The Minack Theatre concert, (Thanks to Graham Rundle) earned us nearly £1,000.00 which I wasn't expecting.
- b) The activities of our fund-raisers (Mike Watson & Graham Hoskins). I'm referring to i) programme advertising & ii) Concert at St. Augustines gave us an additional £1,800.00 at least.
- c) Not going to Brittany saved us £1,750.00
- d) Not making a CD saved us about £1,200.00
- e) Reduced use of coaches - we spent £670.00 less than I expected.

That's the end of my excuses, so lets look forward.

We shall not have a Minack concert next year, and we do hope to launch a new CO, so some of those expenses will carry forward into the next year's estimates, so to rest on our laurels would be to be wearing them in the wrong place.

As you all know we meet to practice almost every Monday night throughout the year. We cannot rehearse successfully without the support of members of our music team to whom we pay a total of £80.00 per practice. The church's new scale of charges, which are not unreasonable, are £24 per session unheated and £30.50 per heated session, so practices cost the choir either £104 or £110.50 per session depending on whether or not we have heating. If each of our 55 members paid £2.00 for every practice that they attended, we would probably still not cover those costs, and £2.00 per week for a year, gentleman, adds up to £100.00 per year. We are only paying £70. I know last year's rise was unpopular, but where else could you have so much fun, training and enjoyment for about £1.40 per session? I do not see a case for reducing our very reasonable membership subscription, though will not be advocating an increase either.

### **Proposed Budget for 2013**

As you can see from my proposed budget, I have taken account of the dwindling membership (down to 55). Gift Aid should remain steady. I have based the concert income on the previous years, less the Minack, and remain hopeful that the Quay concerts will again be five in number and will produce income similar to last summer. Mike Watson and Graham Hoskins have worked wonders selling advertising space in our programmes, and I am hopeful that the membership will help them increase the number of adverts carried and hence the income. As Income from investments actually exceeded my estimate last year, I have raised my estimate by £10.00 to £20.00! John Hodgson tells me that there is little money to be made now from the recycling of Ink Cartridges, but hope springs eternal so I have halved the estimate from last year. Web sales were not as buoyant as I had hoped, possibly because the membership did not do their Christmas Shopping through our web site, so I have had to halve last year's estimate to make a more realistic target. CD sales will probably only achieve my target if we launch a new one, but if we don't, we shall save the cost of production, so there will be a consolation. The red figures beside the "Uniform" heading indicate that two members have yet to pay their contributions towards the cost of their uniforms, a situation which could be avoided if we adopted a practice of not issuing a uniform until the money was forthcoming, though that seems rather draconian.

I think the choir was very fortunate in the number of donations it received this year, so I deemed it unwise to reflect this year's experience in my estimate for 2013, though thanks to John Hodgson's superb Newsletters, (which he produces and distributes at no expense to the choir), the number of Friends of the Choir seems to be growing in a very welcome fashion.

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On the Expenditure side, it is fairly easy to estimate the cost of the Music Team, provided, of course, we do not vote to increase their Honoraria this evening. The church has held its hiring fees steady for a long time and my estimate for next year's Hall Hire is based on the assumption that there will not be another increase this year. I have left the estimate of coach costs as last year as we are planning a trip away. The estimate of overheads for the Quay concerts is an alarming (but realistic) 50% of our anticipated income. It should be noted however, that these events have proved a very useful vehicle for CD sales (£460.00 in 2012).

Now the choir has its own printer, it is obviously going to be used, so although programme printing costs may appear high, they actually include the printing of music etc, too, so I have set a figure that reflects last year's costs, though these were not for a full year, so I may have under-estimated.

The rest of the estimated expenses reflect the pattern of last year, which I believe to be reasonable, and the final figures suggest that the choir could well come close to breaking even next year. But that's only my guess, and look how wrong I have been this year!

David Leeson 04.12.2012

## Questions and Comments

Nick Nicholls asked why Committee expenditure was so high and David Leeson explained that it covered: Speaker replacement, Farwell Gifts, (e.g. to Anthony Bond), new printer, Minack Compere and Soloist, plaques for life members, Mevagissey Social Club for Committee meetings.

George Phillips asked why the subs total was an odd number and David Leeson told him that Mike Miller had contributed a half year's sub.

George Phillips proposed that the accounts be accepted, seconded Bill Collins, carried nem con.

Bill Collins thanks David Leeson for the work he does with the detail presented at each Committee Meeting.

John Pearce thanked Geoff Pollard for giving the Choir Mevagissey Bay – to general agreement

There was general discussion on the Voice Test and some members taking a long time to be accepted into the Choir. Some people advocated no voice test and others that it should be done much quicker. While recruitment and retention of new people is important keeping longer serving members is also very important as a few have left recently. Michael Collings read Section 4 of the Constitution which deals with new members. Discussion also centred on use of music in concerts with opinions expressed on both sides but consensus was that performances were better with no music so that heads are not buried in scores. Mike Tate said that he had been welcomed and encouraged by the membership and Michael Collings put forward an idea for recruiting in the New Year.

## 5. Appointment of Musical Director

Graham Willcocks was proposed by Mike Watson and seconded by Humfrey Stobart and was carried by 31 votes for, 1 against and 2 abstentions

## 6. Election of Executive Officers

The following nominations had been received:

<i>Post</i>	<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Second</i>
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Chairman	Stephen Gibson	Nick Nicholls	Mike Watson
Vice Chairman	Nick Nicholls	Stephen Gibson	Bill Collins
Treasurer	David Leeson	Mike Watson	Roger Mitchell
Secretary	Michael Collings	John Hodgson	John Mitchell

There were no other nominations and this was agreed by all present.

## 7. Election of Choir Officers and other posts

The following nominations had been received:

<i>Post</i>	<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconder</i>
Concert Secretary	Clifford Burnett	Humfrey Stobart	Bill Collins
Publicity Officer	Bill Collins	Michael Collings	John Hodgson
Fund Raising / Sponsorship	Mike Watson / Graham Hoskins	Des Honey	Bill Collins
Librarian	Steve Flavell	John Mitchell	Bill Collins
Almoner	Bernard Hocking	Nick Nicholls	Graham Hoskins
Social Secretary	Simon Lawday	John Mitchell	Derek Way

There were no other nominations and these were agreed by all present.

## 8. Confirmation of Other Posts

The following nominations had been received:

<i>Post</i>	<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconder</i>
Choir Marshall	Humfrey Stobart	Nick Nicholls	Michael Collings
Transport Officer	Robin Hunkin	Stephen Gibson	Michael Collings

There were no other nominations and these were agreed by all present.

## 9. Section Leaders

The following members have been selected by their respective sections to represent them on the committee:

<i>Section</i>	<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconder</i>
First Tenor	Philip Vellenoweth	Jim Hunkin	Ivor Morcom
Second Tenor	Roger Mitchell	Terry Coplin	Gil Blamey
Baritone	Robin Hunkin	Stephen Gibson	Bernard Hocking
Bass	Chris Williams	Bill Collins	Andy Gill

## 10. Payments to Musical Director and Accompanists

Simon Lawday proposed that the honoraria remain the same @ £40 per session, seconded by John Mitchell and carried nem con.

## 11. Subscriptions for 2013

Jim Hunkin proposed that the subs should remain the same @ £70, seconded by Mike Watson and carried nem con.

## 12. Any Other Business

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- i. Nick Nicholls raised a concern at the level of Quay Concert expenses and David Leeson told him that they included £21 for each Temporary Event Licence (not payable in 2013 we were told), £80 for music team for each concert and £100 for PA.  
Bernard Hocking asked whether we pay for the hall when used and was told yes and we do pay £28 and do not get the TEN cost back.  
Bill Reeve suggested that we should have CD sales people each end of the Quay and in the lane.  
In general discussion it was noted we probably got benefit this year from nowhereisland and that the Quay Concert audience would probably not go to a church or chapel normally.
- ii. Michael Collings added to the previous discussion that new members should also be helped after being accepted as a member as well as before.
- iii. Nick Nicholls was very disappointed at no Christmas CD and said Monday's rehearsal was a classic and a waste of a talented Choir and only half a rehearsal on Christmas songs.  
Again there was general discussion and suggestions included setting aside two months to learn Christmas music and many who don't go to church or chapel don't know the harmonies and need to learn. Humfrey Stobart joined the Choir because it was secular and would prefer not to sing religious music but was prepared to if the Choir does. It was noted that many other Choirs sing Christmas Concerts often more than one. Pearl Fishers was criticized because it is in French but it was pointed out that we sing Nessun Dormer in Italian! It does seem that the Choir in general does want to sing Christmas music. There are old folders with many pieces about and use should be made of them.
- iv. David Leeson and Nick Nicholls suggested that a Ladies Committee should be formed to help with some of the Committee tasks especially for social events and selection of uniforms.  
Simon Lawday pointed out that Geraldine Way has organized the dinner in January and Bill Collins suggested that we recruit both men a lady cooks to provide a good spread for when East Fyfe visit.  
Mike Watson proposed that the Committee look at the possibility seconded by Des Honey and carried nem con.
- v. Michael Collings proposed an administrative change to the Constitution 'Modification of the Constitution, Section 25. Librarian. Change 'His duties are as shown in paragraph 39.' To 'His duties are as shown in paragraph 41.' Seconded by George Phillips, carried nem con
- vi. Des Honey proposed that we complete the CD currently in progress to be ready for sale at the Finale of the CIMVCF. (There were doubts whether this can be achieved) and then get on with a Christmas CD with the music for next Christmas and production in the New Year.  
Alan Dibb asked what happens if the MD does not like it and David Leeson pointed out that it is down to the MD to decide.  
Humfrey Stobart thought that the priority is performing concerts with CD production second.  
Graham Hoskins though that we should start learning Christmas music from September.

A vote was taken with 29 for, 2 against and 3 abstentions

- vii. Gil Blamey asked how many tickets for Choir members friends/partners were needed for next Saturday. Bill Collins noted that they were £5.00 and on sale at the Post Office.
- viii. The collection for Brian Mitchell's leaving was discussed and agreed that the Choir present him with a cheque to buy a chair. Donations to David Leeson were asked for. It was noted that he is not retiring completely but just stepping back. The cheque will be presented at the joint Christmas Concert.

Humfrey Stobart asked whether we will be looking at a replacement and Stephen Gibson said the Committee will look at the problem next year.

## 14. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the 39<sup>th</sup> AGM was set as Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

Signed

Chairman

Date

The meeting closed at 9.36pm

### Action Points:

- i. Revisit casual uniforms (scheduled for January Committee Meeting) **(Done)**
- ii. Soloist Training and meeting with Graham Willcocks, Music Committee and Committee. (Scheduled for discussion at January Committee Meeting) **(Done)**
- iii. Recruiting Drive **(Done)**
- iv. Ladies Committee (Scheduled for February Committee Meeting)
- v. Replacement accompanist / assistant MD