

# Mevagissy Male Choir – Minutes of 40<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

Held at Mevagissy Social Club on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2014

**Present:** Graham Rundle(Chairman) Nick Nicholls(Vice Chairman) David Leeson(Treasurer) Michael Collings (Secretary) and 32 members

## **1. Apologies:**

H.Stobart,A.Gill,M.Thompson,R.George,B.Reeve,B.Hocking,S.Bray,P.Johns,A.Dibb,J.Lewis,J.Hunkin, J.John,P.Paterson,M.Combe

## **2. Minutes of meeting Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

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

## **3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising

## **4. Reports**

### **Chairman's report**

First of all before I start I would just like to say what an honour it has been for me to be your Chairman for this our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

I was going to list all of our concerts one by one but feel it would be best just to highlight those which for me were the stand out concerts of the year. First off was the sell-out concert at Minack with the Military Wives Choir from Plymouth thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part, Our second trip there it gets better every time, next our Gala concert at Eden, what can I say that hasn't already been said, a highlight of the whole 40 years, Starts with Culdrose MWC was a new venture for us and worth repeating, likewise Crediton which was thoroughly enjoyed more so than the Bath event enough said on that topic!!

We saw Matt get married, we were seen by the world media at both Meva and Heligan during the WW1 commemorations in memory of Meva's fallen servicemen and we thrilled thousands during our annual Quay concerts. We visited Bath and Crediton or as my granddaughter would say good and bad but not in that order.

Committee wise we have made much progress not least being the introduction of a bespoke presentation piece to give on specific occasions such as visiting choirs, we also have a fantastic range of leisure wear sporting a modern take on our choir Logo and being proudly worn by many members, we now have an identity for others to see sadly missing in recent times it also gives us a sense of "being as one" a collective unity and a pride in our Choir.

Publicity and Choir promotion has leapt forward at a rate of knots, we have had TV coverage, extensive national and local radio features our newsletter (the envy of many choirs) articles in National publications , Federation publications and our own website boasting over 10,000 hits not many choirs can boast that, we also have new external publicity displays and new indoor pull up banner kindly donated by ex-top tenor "Doc " Jones, new information boards and the means to print and display our own internal and external publicity posters. Congratulations to all involved.

Looking back at previous minutes, I see that the subject of recruitment has popped time after time we have done really well this year with both numbers and quality of new recruits I will remind you all that new recruits are the lifeblood of any choir without them choirs fold, once we have them we must keep them and not drive them away, new younger recruits need newer material to sing and we seem to have struck the right balance with old and new material, in fact several newer members have told me that the reason they joined was because we did more modern material than other choirs I like to think we are setting the benchmark for others to follow.

I will stress that we, the committee are only here to carry out the wishes of the choir. I personally only want what is best for the choir and will do all I can to that aim.

Looking forward I am hoping we can make some progress on a Christmas CD as every choir member seems to be of that opinion, let's make it happen in 2015.

We have the Cyprus trip to look forward to plus a return to Minack in 2016, several new venues to us are in the pipeline and are being explored.

I personally would like to see us getting more involved with the local community, as with the singing in Truro during February lots happening that we could be a part of such as armed forces day events in St. Austell such as remembrance festivals, torchlight processions, concerts with local groups etc. let's raise our profile, a flash mob has been suggested perhaps at Falmouth regatta week or some such. Let's do it! Cannot do any harm.

Lots of positives to look forward to thanks to all who have supported me and to those who haven't!! With numbers healthy and a fantastic music team in place we are well positioned to start another 40 years

## **MD Report**

What an incredible experience we have all enjoyed over the last 12 months. Our big concert at Eden has to be the standout event. I have to admit to having some very negative emotions during the afternoon practice. At the end of which I thought to myself 'I really hope it goes better than that tonight' that practice resembled a train crash. Please don't misunderstand me; it was nothing to do with your singing but more a total lack of co-ordination between choir and orchestra. I admit to being a seriously worried man during the break between practice and performance. I can only think that the same must be true of David, the orchestra's director. I don't know what he said to them in that break, but boy, what a difference in the evening. The whole thing came together well (with the odd exception!). The highlight of the evening for me were the wonderful Pearl Fishers and singing with that ultimate professional Ralph McTell. The audience reception to the whole event told us all we need to know. How many standing ovations? The Military Wives Choir was cheered to the rafters and the joint piece, Morte Christie sent shivers down my spine because it was so atmospheric. The whole evening was superbly run with so much hard work done by the organising sub-committee. My thanks go to them all and to Chris Williams and John Cornfield for doing the incredibly difficult job of overseeing that beast of a sound system. I know what a tough job they had to achieve anything close to a good sound balance under what can only be described as very difficult conditions. The evening was superbly MC'd by Nick Hart. He is a wonderful musician, a lovely man and a great friend of the choir.

I do hope you all enjoyed singing in a packed Minnick Theatre. What an experience that was. The atmosphere was warm and wonderful. Pity we can't say the same about the weather. As the saying goes, you can't have your cake and eat it! Another great evening with the Plymouth MWC.

A Different MWC at Sterts. This one from Culdrose, and can those girls sing! It was from their repertoire that we first heard Mansions of the Lord. We will sing this in a very different way than they did, but the way they sang it certainly suited their style and made all my hair stand on end! Pity about the chap on the sound desk though, his idea of balance between the backing track and the ladies choir was shocking. None the less, a great concert with a very appreciative audience.

I know I said this in last year's report but I shall say it again. When we go out with what I would describe as an under strength choir, we can still wow the audience with high quality entertainment. This was evident in Redruth Chapel in the Joint concert for the Fisherman's Mission. Yes we were relatively small by our standards but we still received a wonderful reception from the audience. Well done to those who attended. You did a great job.

I thought the Bath trip went really well. Both concerts sung to a very high standard to big audiences. The whole weekend was a great success.

I'm sure we all have some great memories of the past twelve months. Treasure them gents, it's not every year we celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

As for new music, we are able to have another music team meeting where I am hoping we will select another more traditional style choir piece for the future. I know Mansions will be a great success as will the more modern ones such as 'Only You' and 'Fat Bottomed Girls' (the latter of which will only be sung at appropriate venues).

Over the last few years I have been asked many times about the making of a Christmas CD. I hope to at least make a start on this project by asking Chris if we can record several tracks in the coming New Year. The Christmas songs we have been learning have all been chosen with this project in mind. We do not as yet have enough material for a CD but we can make a start and get some tracks on our website available for download.

I would like to welcome all of our new members for whom this is their first AGM. May this be the first of many for you. I am a little concerned about the balance of the choir now. We were lucky enough to have a new prospective member come along last Monday called Mike. He has sung before, reads music and I'm sure will be another valuable addition to our choir. He informed me that he had sung Baritone, however that section is now the largest in the choir so I asked him to sit with the second tenors. Thankfully he said it was in his range and he enjoyed himself. What a relief! Pity he couldn't stretch to top tenor. This is the section that now needs more members. Not long ago the tops numbered twenty, but now many less because of the sad departure of several of our friends. So gents, please don't forget to talk choir to people you meet. You never know what a casual conversation may bring about. Recruitment is our responsibility as individuals. We get more new members by the people we meet than ever we get coming along because they have heard us sing in concert.

At this point I would like to talk about drinking of alcohol before concerts, and rehearsal for that matter. This is a subject I take very seriously. Gentlemen, I don't ask you not to drink before singing because I am a miserable git. There are several very sound reasons behind that request. Point one – even one pint of beer or a glass of wine can take the edge off your concentration for many hours afterwards. Point two – Alcohol dehydrates you. One of the first effects of dehydration is the mucus glands in your throat reduce their output causing loss of vocal quality and increasing the risk of damage to the vocal folds. Please drink water and more alcohol before you sing.

My thanks go to Matthew, a great talent and now a married man. Good luck to you Matthew, we enjoyed your wedding nearly as much as you did!

My thanks also go to Graham for his guitar work, Cedric for having the bravery to sit behind the piano in Matt's absence and all the soloists for their hard work and performances over the last year. It takes real courage to stand and sing solo no matter how large or small that solo may be. I really appreciate it gents

I know the committee are working hard to find us new and exciting venues to perform at so I'm looking forward to the future with great optimism. Let's work hard, carry on singing well and enjoying ourselves as we have this year.

Have a Merry Christmas and a very happy and tuneful New Year

### **Treasurer's Report**

Hasn't this been an exciting year for the choir! Does anyone feel that they haven't had value for money from their subs? I shouldn't speak for any of you. So I'd just like to say as a singer (I use the word loosely) in this choir, I have had a great time. As the Treasurer well, sometimes it was frantic. I'm not an accountant – somebody please recruit an accountant – even if it's only to the Baritones! Perhaps we could offer 2 years free of subs to anyone who can recruit an accountant, instead of the one year for successful recruiters. My system has served me well over normal years, but this year it began to creak a bit which made me nervous, but never more so than on Friday November 21<sup>st</sup>. My Dad's birthday incidentally, when I got the dreaded call from the accountants. Now this year £36,916.60 has flowed into our accounts and £37,794.95 has flowed out, resulting in an overall loss of £878.35. That's about £74k of transactions, 143 cheques and 35 deposits. Lots of scope for errors. Surprise, surprise, they agreed with my figures, but were querying which heading some items should appear under – a concern I shared, and the weakness of my system, so the spending summary for the year is even less accurate than usual. Which is why there is additional paper from me this year, to help answer some of the questions which the Summary begs. The important thing, however, from both your and my points of view, is that the books are ok and reflect what our bank statements say is happening to our finances. I don't know about you, but it's a hell of a relief for me!

If we first look at the sheet analysing our engagements and CD sales, income is in the first two columns, in black, and was from fees or tickets sales and CD sales. The costs are in the other columns in red. It looks a lot of red, but they are mainly small figures compared to those in black. Bethal was straightforward, Ashburton, the organisers paid for the coach, and the event actually took place the previous year. The Gala Concert, our biggy, co-artists were Cornwall Symphonia and the Military Wives, the coach was for the Military Wives, venue hire included the hall and the seating, extras were technical support – sound, lighting, equipment, piano moving, presentation bouquets and bottles and pasties. On the Quay concert line, we donate £50 annually to the Harbour commissions for the use of the quay, and we pay Tommy for the setting up and use of his PA system. Any queries there?

On the subject of CD sales, on the right of the same page, I know that we seem to have a £120.00 discrepancy between this analysis, and the Summary for the year. Not sure why, but I guess I missed some entries somewhere. I detailed the sales from the outlets that I thought may interest you.

Please could you now look at the back of that sheet to see the lists of General Costs and sources of income for the year. I am not going to insult your intelligence by reading the list, but it serves as an explanation of the larger sums under the vague headings of the summary. I would draw your attention, though, to the bottom three items, we spent £400.00 trying to save money and keep the old printer going, and then HAD to buy a new one which only cost £350! That's life. We can only do what

we think is best at the time, and I would like to thank Graham Hoskins for discussing the old printer's condition with me at each stage of its decline to the ultimate demise.

At the bottom of the sheet, you will see summaries of Subsidised and Transient funds, which shows the level of subsidy from choir funds for each. In future years, I hope to make this information more accessible than it has been in the past.

Now to the summary of the year, which, as I have already explained is not as accurate as I would like, but it does give some useful indications of where our money is coming from and going to.

Providing everyone pays their subs, I have a pretty good idea how much money will come in under that heading, but as you can see, it doesn't even cover the cost of the Music team, let alone the hire of the Church for practices. From the subscription income I can estimate that about £800 can be reclaimed from Gift Aid, but that still leaves us about £1,200.00 short of our essential income, and the rest of those income sources are in the lap of the Gods!

The sheet gives some indication of how things worked out compared with our expectations and also, at the bottom, the progress, losses and gains of various transient funds and projects, of which we have had a confusing number this year.

Some, but not all, of the items under this last heading are included in the main document, which is where errors and anomalies will have crept in.

To try and eliminate some of the errors and difficulties which I know have arisen this year, I have revised the headings for next year's spending plan, as you will see on the reverse side, but the proof will be in the use of it.

To look briefly at the figures, as I said earlier the subs line is fairly predictable, but as we become more proactive in setting up our concerts, I am hoping that we will be rewarded with increased returns, though £3K could prove optimistic. Under 'uniforms' £250.00 represents only 5 new members and as I have only allocated £800.00 on the debit side, I'm banking on Robin doing some enlightened recycling!

I am optimistic that we can maintain our CD sales through concerts and the Web at something only slightly below this year's level. After all, it's a very good CD.

I have kept the Quay Concert outcome on the pessimistic side because we are at the mercy of the weather, and a number of other factors – like General Election outcomes and the general public confidence in the financial situation.

I am hopeful that Gift Aid will exceed £1k, but don't think it will by much, and Easy Fund-raising is in our hands, but I will tell you that I was informed this morning that a recent purchase of mine had benefited the choir by 75p. If you all did that just once, we would make £42.00. If we all did it every month, we would raise £504.00. What a chance you are missing!

On the expenditure side, a lot of these figures are based on this last year's experiences, which were not necessarily typical, but as we seek new ventures and arrange our own events, we launch into uncharted waters, so any strong correlation between these figures and the final outcome would be very gratifying if not downright lucky.

If I may end with one or two general remarks, although our financial position is relatively comfortable at the moment, some of the possible projects on the horizon, (I'm thinking of a trip to Cyprus for example) where we would offer a considerable subsidy to singers, will make a big dent in our reserves unless we all take a bit of trouble. I don't think we should raise the subscription, but 17 members have not completed a Gift Aid form which would enable me to claim back tax on their subscriptions. If you

can't remember whether or not you have signed a form, come and check with me. I have the info with me this evening and at every practice, and a supply of the forms. Similarly, only about 9 people, one called Phyllis if I remember rightly, are buying anything through the "Easy-funding" link on our website. Now it doesn't cost you anything except a little time and trouble to shop through that link and earn money for the choir. I do whenever I can. It doesn't bring in much, but some supermarkets say – every little helps.

## 5. Appointment of Musical Director

Graham Willcocks was proposed by Stephen Gilbert and seconded by Michael Collings and was agreed nem con.

## 6. Election of Executive Officers

The following nominations had been received:

<i>Post</i>	<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Second</i>
Chairman	Graham Rundle	John Mitchell	Gil Blamey
Vice Chairman	Nick Nicholls	Michael Collings	Gil Blamey
Treasurer	David Leeson	Michael Collings	Chris Williams
Secretary	Tony Scarratt	Michael Collings	David Leeson

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

Graham Rundle took over the Chair and thanked Stephen Gibson for all his work and for leaving the Choir in such a good position for him to take over.

## 7. Election of Choir Officers and other posts

The following nominations had been received:

<i>Post</i>	<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Second</i>
Concert Secretary	Clifford Burnett	Michael Collings	Gil Blamey
Publicity Officer	Mike Tate	Steve Flavell	Michael Collings
Fund Raising / Sponsorship	Graham Hoskins Mike Thompson	John Mitchell	Chris Williams
Almoner	Bernard Hocking	Peter Bowker	Michael Collings
Social Secretary	Simon Lawday	Steve Flavell	Michael Collings

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

## 8. 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>Second</i>
First Tenor	Philip Vellenoweth	John Mitchell	Graham Rundle
Second Tenor	Roger Mitchell	Gil Blamey	Cliff Burnett
Baritone	Robin Hunkin	Geoff Evans	Stephen Gibson
Bass	Chris Williams	Steve Flavell	Graham Rundle

## 9. 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	Michael Collings	Steve Flavell
Transport Manager	Robin Hunkin	Chris Williams	Graham Rundle
Federation Rep	Chris Bale	Steve Flavell	Peter Bowker
CIMVCF Rep	Terry Coplin	Steve Flavell	Peter Bowker
Librarian	Steve Flavell	Gil Blamey	Michael Collings

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

**10. Payments to Musical Director and Accompanists**

Payment to stay the same, Prop. G. Phillips, sec, S. Lawday, passed unanimous  
Des Honey asked about deputy MD, Matt to stand in but not in concerts G. Wilcocks proposed to help matt with unaccompanied pieces but not to pressure him.

**11. Subscriptions for 2015** to stay the same Prop. D. Leeson , Sec, G.Blamey passed unanimous

**12. Any Other Business**

N.Nicholls discussed the Octet and all seven appreciated G. Wilcox's help.  
G.Rundle talked of preparing for Christmas CD and more local concerts  
Gibson stated that we should use Christmas music more. Mevagissy Christmas concert co-in siding with the lighting of the lights try not to let this happen again, G. A'lee stated Fowey has a book to stop mix-ups happening there.  
G.Rundle pushed for more recruiting as choir down to 54 singing members secretary to write to new members that have left to ask why, mentors to be better appointed D.Honey asked for feedback to choir members of members leaving

Meeting closed 20-45

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the 41st AGM was set as Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015.

Signed

Chairman

Date