

Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 39th Annual General Meeting

Held at Mevagissey Social Club on 5th December 2013

Present: Stephen Gibson, Graham Rundle (Chairmen), Nick Nicholls (Vice Chairman), David Leeson (Treasurer), Michael Collings (Secretary), and 29 Choir Members

1. **Apologies:** Terry Coplin, Steve Flavell, Mel Coombe, Bill Roberts, Mike Watson, Humfrey Stobart, Derek Way, Paul Pearce, John Jones, Andy Gill. – 11 members unaccounted for!

2. **Minutes of meeting Thursday 6th December, 2012**

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

3. **Matters Arising**

Stephen Gibson reviewed the action points from the last meeting

- i. Revisit casual uniforms (scheduled for January Committee Meeting) **(Done)** Difficult subject reviewed several times will need to be visited again.
- ii. Soloist Training and meeting with Graham Willcocks, Music Committee and Committee. (Scheduled for discussion at January Committee Meeting) **(Done)** Some coaching has happened and anyone who wants it can ask.
- iii. Recruiting Drive **(Done)** Many thanks to Graham Rundle for his efforts which resulted in several new members this year but needs following up.
- iv. Ladies Committee (Scheduled for February Committee Meeting) Easier said than done. Was discussed and some ladies are aware of the need but nothing formal set up/
- v. Replacement accompanist / assistant MD. Probably best left as Matthew Fox is a hard act to follow or replace.

4. **Reports**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2013

I would like to start my annual report by saying a huge thank you to a great committee. In their care the choir has moved from strength to strength.

It's really hard to say thank you as I will be missing so many out. I well remember my first committee not knowing any names except Robin and Roger.

I don't want to steal our treasurer's thunder but balancing our budget was a key objective of the committee over the past two years. Our fund raising group and publicity group have had some real successes. I'm sure David will say more in his report.

Thanks to our musical director, we continue to get great feedback at concerts the range of music. Some of our highlight concerts must be singing with the military wives at Ashburton a huge thank you to Chis Bale for organising this. One of my favoured concerts has to be the Nos Mayo concert, a great atmosphere. Last year getting the 3 Mevagissey choirs together was a great success and I hope it becomes a fixture for the future.

In the next year we obviously have the exciting prospect of our 40 anniversary concert and our trip to Bath. Having never left the peninsula with the choir I'm looking forward to this being the first of many expeditions. There has been talk of low numbers and lack of commitment, I firmly believe the best way to go is to simply get on with events. If they are good then singing men will follow, those who like to moan are ever present but should not dictate to the rest of the choir.

Thanks to you fantastic men who make the choir, attendance at concerts and practice has been high.

Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 39th Annual General Meeting

One of the privileges of being chair of an organisation like Mevagissey choir has to be that you become aware of the hard work that it put in by its singing members as well as the friends of the choir.

- Unsung heroes of the choir include Ray and his wife who shook the buckets at the quay concerts
- Cliff carrying the risers in the back of his van
- Matt who plays for us public ally but also spends his own time encouraging soloists, practice time etc.
- Steve our archivist, a huge job much of which is unseen by the choir.

Many more I haven't got time to mention

I hope that as my term of office ends that I will become one of those unsung heroes getting on with spreading the joy of singing in our community.

The future of the choir is in our hands. My advice to the new committee is to remember our primary purpose SINGING. Very little else matters.

If we enjoy singing men will follow and the future of Mevagissey male choir secure.

I wish my successor all the best and look forwards to singing with him and the rest of you for many years to come and I thanks the excellent Committee for their work done this past year.

Thank you.

Recruitment is the order of the day.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2013

Good evening gentlemen

The first thing I would like to do is to apologise for my absence a year ago. I had a very poorly wife at home who I really could not leave alone that evening.

After reading the minutes of the meeting I was even sorrier that I could not attend as I was not able to answer some of the criticism, some of which I accept was fair, and which I believe has since been addressed.

But, before I move on, let me just touch on one point that is still unresolved. You would all like to make a Christmas CD. So would I. But, to be honest, we simply do not have enough material at this point in time and, even with our best efforts, it will take a year or two yet to build a large enough repertoire for a Christmas CD. Next year I will endeavour to introduce two more pieces, and so the project will continue.

And now want to talk about our highs and lows of 2013. First, the highs. We have had several joint concerts which have brought us great credit. Our finest performance, without doubt, was, our concert with the Maesteg Gleemen, in what must be the finest acoustic that I know locally, the magnificent Catholic church in St Austell. When our guests opened proceedings I thought, 'Hang on, these guys are good' - and they certainly were! At that point I knew we had a job to do! Gentlemen, you did not disappoint. Our rendering of 'Anthem' was the best I have ever heard you sing. As your musical director, it was so gratifying to hear such wonderful vocal production mixed with strong emotion, power and subtlety. The whole performance was of exceptional quality. I said to Alan, the MD of Maesteg, that, however much the audience paid for their tickets, it wasn't enough!

My low of 2013 has to be the totally embarrassing moment when I managed to forget the words to the 'Floral Dance' during one of our performances on the quay! Wishing the ground would open up and swallow me whole is still the emotion I have whenever I think of it. Many, many thanks to you all for coming in with the words and retrieving the situation!

Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 39th Annual General Meeting

Thankfully, our lows are very few. We have become so strong musically that we can perform to an amazingly high standard wherever we perform. Consistency in our standard of performance is something we can all be very proud of. Whether our choir is out at full strength or down to what I would call 'a poor turnout' we still manage to sing well. Credit goes to you all for that.

I'm sure that this is why our new CD has been such an incredible success. The quantity sold since its release has been remarkable. We recorded some of the most technically challenging pieces, and some of the simplest, from 'At Last' and 'Bohemian Rhapsody' at one end of the scale to 'Blue Moon' at the other. The standard of production is without doubt the highest we have ever achieved on a CD. All credit goes to Chris and Tommy Williams. They did a fantastic job. My personal favourite track has to be 'Angels'. With drums, bass guitar and of course lead guitar by our very own Graham Hoskins, that track has to be one of the finest things we have ever done. It is adventurous, modern and emotional.

I am aware that the furrow the choir is now ploughing does not suit all the members, some believing that we should stay with more traditional material. My own belief is that, unless we modernise our repertoire as our older members retire, we will not inspire new men to join us, and our existence will be threatened in a way that has seen the end of so many other Cornish choirs. So it is with great pleasure and satisfaction that I would like to welcome all our new members. This year has been very successful for recruitment and all I can say is, 'keep up the good work, guys'. Carry on talking to your friends, carry on talking to the new people you meet. Your enthusiasm will be conveyed to them and will encourage new membership. New blood is vital to the future of our choir.

And, mentioning the future, I am so looking forward to next year. Our 40th anniversary concert is going to be such a momentous occasion. Having the opportunity to sing with a 40-strong orchestra must be every chorister's dream - and we are going to do this! A 400- strong audience, top quality amplification for the choir to balance us with the orchestra, and Tommy at the sound desk. What more could we ask for? Oh yes, what about one of the best women's choirs in the country? Well, we have them as well, in the form of the Plymouth Military Wives Choir. And we all know how good they are. Remember Ashburton? The ladies present on that occasion were only a small representation of what we will have at the magnificent Eden Project venue on the 30th May next year.

The thought of singing 'The Pearl Fishers' with the orchestra is spine tingling. 'Comrades in Arms' as an opening piece will be inspirational. Thanks to Robin and the sub-committee who are working so hard to make this a special occasion for all of us. Have no fear - all the minutia are being looked into and addressed for this extravaganza. We have achieved some great organizational feats in the past, but I'm incredibly impressed with what these guys have done.

I would now like to thank some people who have contributed so strongly to our success this year. Firstly, Matt Fox. I knew at the time of writing this that Matt wouldn't be here this evening, so there is no chance of embarrassing him.

Gents, as I'm sure you're aware, Matt is a star. He is so talented; I turn green when I hear him play. He sees a piece of written music and turns it into a piece of art. Filling in extra where it is needed, leaving out notes when they get in the way of what we as a choir are trying to achieve. I swear sometimes he can be telepathic. I ask him to go back to bar number somewhere and he is already playing the notes! He truly is remarkable, we are so lucky to have him with us. Oh yes, and he's a nice guy too! Makes you sick doesn't it?

Talking of nice guys, Paul Pearce is another huge talent I have to thank. What a voice! As he matures, (thought I'd say 'matures' rather than 'grows older') his voice just gets better. I thought your performance at Bethel was superb, Paul. Many thanks for all you've done.

I mustn't forget Terry who always does such a lovely job with his contribution, 'The Rose'.

Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 39th Annual General Meeting

Then there's the octet. These guys come early every Monday to get 30 minutes of work in. Such a short time, but they work so hard. Their commitment and singing prowess is starting to show real dividends. Well done guys.

Now I come to something very personal that I have never shared with you before. Meva Cappella have been singing together for over 20 years. The quality and range of repertoire we have sung is a matter of pride for us all. It is technically and vocally challenging, and it has been my absolute pleasure to sing with Chris, Robin and John.

The tenor part has to be the most challenging of all. It's high in the extreme, and needs a rare vocal quality. John has mastered that craft with consummate ability. When John suffered his stroke we didn't know what to expect. We hated the thought that, after all those years, we may never sing together again. Thankfully, John has made a remarkable recovery. We still enjoy the thrill of singing together every week, and that will continue.

However, as you all know, Dom is now taking over *some* of John's duties within the quartet – and I stress the word '*some*'. I want to make it clear that this has been at *John's* request. Although he is capable of continuing, he feels his voice is not as strong as it once was. But John has no intention of fully retiring from the quartet. It is his wish to carry on, sharing the role with Dom, and he is now instrumental in helping Dom to learn some of our repertoire so that they can share sing-out duties. It is still our ambition to sing 'Bring Him Home' with John at our 40th anniversary concert at Eden, if time within the programme allows. At this point I want to thank Dom for being brave enough, (or should that be foolish?) to volunteer for the demanding task of singing tenor for Meva Cappella. Dom is not only a lovely singer but also a great guy (even if he is a Mancunian) who is fitting very well into what can only be described as one of the toughest jobs in singing.

I want now to pay tribute to Brian Mitchell and Marshall Tamblyn. Brian, retired now from the choir, was my guiding influence for so many years. He and the late great Marshall were who I went to for advice. I could and did approach one or other of them on many occasions, asking 'What do you think, Brian?' or 'How do you think I should approach this problem, Marshall?' and I would always get an immediate and very wise response.

Brian and Marshall were both huge influences on me and I am so grateful that they were around when I needed help. Trust me, as a greenhorn in the world of the male voice choir, there were times I needed that advice, with only my Gilbert and Sullivan experience plus good old barbershop to fall back on.

Gentlemen, it has been my privilege to be your musical director for 15 years now, and long may it continue.

Have a lovely Christmas and a happy new year.
Thank you.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2013

If I may plagiarise a line from one of Paul Pearce's songs — When the Choir was 39, it was a VERY good year! I'm sure there will be a number of reasons propounded for this, and it is not for me to pontificate, but I'll readily admit that our financial performance this year has blown my estimates and spending plan clean out of the water. I budgeted for a £600 loss and the choir made a £3.5k profit! It really is time you found a new Treasurer! I am however, pleased to tell you that the Choir's cash assets are now back above £25k.

I've always tried to slightly underestimate our potential income and over-estimate our potential spending, but this year I'll let you decide whether or not my caution has bordered on incompetence. I never guessed that our new CD would sell so well (giving £1,900 more income). This at a time when some thought CDs were passé and the downloading of tracks was the way to

Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 39th Annual General Meeting

go, which I agree with, with some consternation, but when, and how quickly will the transition be made? We must be careful not to carry too big a stock of CDs, or we could be caught out big time. I never dreamed that our concerts would earn £1,000 over estimate, or that the Committee would spend so little (and save about £900). Just those three errors account for £3,800 of the discrepancy.

The rueful irony of this is that if I had managed to access the H.M.R.C. Charity website before the end of our financial year, we would have had an additional £1k in our account, and the profit would have been even bigger, but that money has yet to be claimed which explains why I have put in such a large estimate for Gift Aid in this coming year.

As we look at our Income, I would like to propose thanks to Mike Watson and Graham Hoskins for their tireless work in finding advertisers, and printing extremely presentable concert programmes. Although there are overheads involved in the costs of paper, ink and printer servicing, their time they give for free, and we reap the benefit to the tune of at least Elk.

For the first time this last year, our web-site sales exceeded my estimate, and have already given us another £100 this month, and Mike Collings is to be thanked for that.

Thanks in part to John Hodgson and now to Mike Tate, The Friends are becoming an ever greater source of encouragement and finance to the Choir. Thanks to Mike's excellent newsletters we are receiving not only more subscriptions, but more donations, and these I am earmarking to the Friends to ensure that we cover Mike's costs.

In the light of this year's experience I have drawn up a tentative plan for next year, which you will find on the back of your sheets. It assumes that our Subscription and membership remain the same, that I claim two tranches of Gift Aid, and that Concert Income is slightly reduced (we have had a very good year this year).

If all programme advertising revenue had come in before the end of our financial year, it would have exceeded £2k, so that estimate is fair. Interest rates may move slightly next year, but I've been saying that for the last 3 years at least, so am leaving that estimate as per last year. At last, web-site sales seem to be taking off, so I am taking a chance and hoping for £400 in the coming year. CD sales have been unprecedented and I can't see them being sustained at this level so have not put too much store by them for next year. We have had a number of new members, so would expect to receive some more contributions towards their uniforms which the choir will probably subsidise, despite Robin's best efforts, to the tune of about £700.

Donations are always difficult to predict but Mike is doing such sterling work on the Newsletter, that I am hopeful that they will continue at much the same level. On the Expenditure side, I have allowed a margin of 4 concerts/practices over this year in my allocation for the Music Team's Honoraria, and slightly increased the allocation for Hall Hire in case we have a cold spring and have to pay for more heating. I've increased the coach allocation to take account of our booking at the Minack and our forthcoming visit to Bath. Quay Concert costs this year did not include a donation to the Harbour Commissioners, as that came out of a different pocket, and I think it should be covered in our allocation for the Quay Concerts, so I have allowed for it under this heading. Programme Printing actually includes all the Choir's printing activities, including the newsletters, and I think the printer is getting a bit tired, so have built in a little extra flexibility. The Librarian's allocation has been substantially increased because I anticipate that there will be arrangement fees in addition extra music to be bought or printed for our Anniversary Concert. Insurance, Subs, licences etc. don't seem to go down, so I have increased the allocation slightly, but I've not put any money aside for the production of another CD, as, from Graham's remarks on Monday, he doesn't see us getting all our Christmas tracks in the can before our next Concert Season is upon us.

You will notice that I have identified £2k as a potential subsidy for our Anniversary Concert. If our Hard-working Anniversary Committee is suitably rewarded, the money will not be needed, but just in case the worst should happen, I have built in a cushion to soften any unwelcome blows,

Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 39th Annual General Meeting

and we would still have a comfortable reserve. If we don't need it, then the committee may consider increasing the Subsidy for the Trip to Bath, but that will be a committee decision.

On the subject of Deposits for the Royal Albert Hall Concert, which we have recently had returned to us, rather than issue a large number of cheques, I intend to reduce the annual subscriptions of the people concerned by £25, and hope this meets with their approval.

As previously intimated, Mr Chairman, in the light of the current situation, I would recommend that we retain our Membership Subscription at its present level of £70 and continue to offer a year's free subscription to anyone who successfully introduces a new chorister.

This proposed spending plan would result in an overspend of about £1k, but this is our Anniversary Year, and the overspend would represent only 4% of our cash assets, so I don't think it is at all foolhardy or over-ambitious.

It only remains, Mr Chairman for me to re-iterate my recommendation that we retain our subscription at its present level, which remains well below that of other singing groups in our neighbourhood, thanks to the hard work of a number of committed members, for yet another year.

Questions and Comments

Stephen Gibson congratulated David Leeson on doing a splendid job.

Bernard Hocking asked for clarification of the free subscription and David Leeson told him that it had been agreed that any member introducing a new member who passed his voice test and stayed to the end of the year, would qualify for a free year's subscription.

George Phillips asked about non singing members and Friend's subscriptions and was told that any non-singing members would be a Friend who paid at least £6 a year.

Robin Hunkin asked why subscriptions differ from the estimate and was told that was due to people not paying and leaving and some paying in installments.

Roger Daniel asked whether the St Andrews payment for the hall was fixed and was told we pay £24 per session and £30.50 if we had the heating on.

Stephen Gibson noted that the Monday rehearsal costs about £110 with music team's honoraria and the hall costs.

Bob Whittaker asked what interest we get on our accounts and was told it is about 0.5%. David Leeson told him that because of our type of organization we can't get a better deal.

Des Honey proposed, seconded Roger Daniel that the accounts be accepted and agreed nem con.

Robin Hunkin proposed a vote of thanks to David Leeson agreed by all.

5. Appointment of Musical Director

Graham Willcocks was proposed by Stephen Gibson 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>Seconded</i>
Chairman	Graham Rundle	Graham Hoskins	Michael Collings
Vice Chairman	Nick Nicholls	Derek Way	Des Honey
Treasurer	David Leeson	Mike Watson	Derek Way
Secretary	Michael Collings	Mike Watson	Stephen Gibson

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

Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 39th Annual General Meeting

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>Secunder</i>
Concert Secretary	Clifford Burnett	John Mitchell	Des Honey
Publicity Officer	Mike Tate	Bill Collins	Des Honey
Fund Raising / Sponsorship	Mike Watson	Graham Hoskins	Mel Coombe
	Graham Hoskins	Mike Watson	Mel Coombe
Librarian	Steve Flavell	Gil Blamey	Des Honey
Almoner	Bernard Hocking	Michael Collings	Nick Nicholls
Social Secretary	Simon Lawday	Stephen Gibson	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>Secunder</i>
First Tenor	Philip Vellenoweth	Nick Nicholls	Alan Dibb
Second Tenor	Roger Mitchell	Gil Blamey	Graham A'lee
Baritone	Robin Hunkin	Mike Watson	?
Bass	Chris Williams	Bill Collins	Andy Gill

9. Proposed Changes to the Constitution

Michael Collings proposed, seconded Roger Mitchell and agreed nem con, the following changes to the Constitution:

CHAIRMAN

The Chairman will chair Committee, Annual General and Special Meetings. He will direct the general business of the Choir and act as its spokesman when necessary and control the general activities of the Choir.

SECRETARY

The Secretary will issue agenda for Committee, Annual General and Special Meetings and take minutes at each meeting and distribute to the meetings' participants. He will maintain the Constitution up to date and post any request for change on the notice board with sufficient notice as required in the Constitution. The Secretary will maintain the Choir Directory and provide Joiners forms to Section Leaders for new members. Will maintain efficient correspondence as required.

TREASURER

The Treasurer will maintain the Choirs accounts and Bank Accounts efficiently and will close the accounts at year end in time for an external audit. He will monitor subscriptions and chase where necessary. He will present details of current transactions at each Committee Meeting. The Treasurer

Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 39th Annual General Meeting

will keep files and accounts for any addition activities agreed by the Committee. He will complete the Charity Commission Annual Return.

FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE

One or more Federation Representatives will be elected at The Annual General Meeting and shall hold office for one year. He shall be eligible for re-election. He will represent the Choir at Federation Meetings and update the Choir on any relevant information or activities.

CIMVCF REPRESENTATIVE

One or more Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival Representatives will be elected at the Annual General Meeting and hold office for one year. He shall be eligible for re-election. He will represent the Choir at CIMVCF Meetings and update the Choir on any relevant information or activities.

10. 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	Humfrey Stobart	Mike Watson
Federation Rep	Chris Bale	Gil Blamey	Des Honey
CIMVCF Rep	Terry Coplin	Gil Blamey	Des Honey

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

11. Payments to Musical Director and Accompanists

Simon Lawday proposed that the honoraria remain the same @ £40 per session

George Phillips said that accompanist and MD should be the same.

Graham Rundle said that he had canvassed other choirs and we are similar to others. Some pay annually and other by the session as we do,

George Phillips asked what has been allowed for honoraria next year and was told the plan is as the previous year. If it is decided to change then the numbers can be changed.

Mike Thompson asked how long the honoraria had been at £40 and was told 3 -4 years.

Bill Reeve said a concern had been that when we had 2 accompanists the cost for each session were £120, now we had only 1 accompanist the fees would be lower.

Peter Bowker proposed, seconded Bill Collins that the honoraria be raised to £50 per session.

Graham Hoskins asked how many sessions there are a year and was told approximately 60.

George Phillips proposed that as it had been static for some time a 5% increase should be made.

David Leeson noted that a £10 increase would add about £900 a year to our costs.

Mike Thompson asked whether expenses were paid as well and was told not and Roger Mitchell commented that it would create a huge problem for the Treasurer.

Roger Mitchell proposed, seconded Nick Nicholls that the honoraria should be raised to £45. Peter Bowker withdrew his proposal and it the proposal was carried by 33 votes to 1.

12. Subscriptions for 2013

Simon Lawday proposed that the subs should remain the same @ £70, seconded by Stephen Gibson and carried by 30 votes to 4.

13. Any Other Business

Mevagissey Male Choir - Minutes of 39th Annual General Meeting

Bill Reeve said that Peter Bowker had done several CAD based seating plans for the 40th Concert despite being difficult to fit. We may now be able to seat 470. The next step is to get Health and Safety agreement from Heligan. We need to let Bill Reeve know ASAP how many Choir tickets are needed (and how many people do not want tickets) before they are put on sale to the general public. He made a vote of thanks to Peter Bowker for all his help.

The day will be challenging and help will be needed to put the chairs out and clip them together and to stack them the following Monday.

Graham Rundle thanked the subcommittee for all the work they had done for the event.

Patron.

We have not heard from our patron Mr Williams for some time and Roger Daniel said he is sick. A query was raised whether we need a patron and Bernard Hocking said that there had been no communication form some years.

Geoff Pollard noted that he had been to the 10th Anniversary Concert but had not been seen since. He had been asked to be patron as he had always stood by Mevagissey.

It was agreed as a courtesy to leave it as it is for now.

Graham Rundle made three points:

1. He said that having bee to the RAH, he realized that our MD is the finest and we are lucky to have both Graham Willcocks and Matthew Fox as our musical team.
We have a professional looking web site and people pay to see us. Our puzzle is how to put back pride in the Choir and where to go next.

2. In or music we agree that to an extent we need to keep traditional male voice choir music but we need a mixture of old and new to get younger singers in.

Graham Willcocks believed that we need both old and new but also a middle ground such as Pearl Fishers and not just old Welsh hymn scenarios. If we stay a traditional choir we will die as some other choirs already have – we need the middle ground to survive.

3. On our web site the main recruitment point is Graham Willcocks and we need to get some more ideas with everyone trying to recruit friends etc.

If anyone feels strongly about anything, please don't just moan in the bar but talk to your Chairman. After all it is YOUR choir not the Committee's or MDs.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the 40th AGM was set as Thursday 4th December 2013.

Signed

Chairman

Date

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

