

**North Kingston Choir**  
**AGM Minutes**

**MONDAY 23 JANUARY 2017**

**1. Welcome by chair and introduction of existing committee members**

Jem Goddard (JG) opened the meeting and introduced the existing committee members.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were noted from Simon Thomas.

**3. Chair's summary of existing committee members' reports for 2016**

JG summarised the choir's notable achievements in 2016 as follows:

- Moved to a new Monday night venue (from Tudor Hall to Fern Hill School).
- Performed at 2 new concert venues – Canbury Bandstand in June and The Corner House in Surbiton in July.
- Made the choir's first video (Fix You).
- Upgraded to new folders.
- Learnt no fewer than 25 new songs.
- Choir appeared on radio show 'Meet My Choir' on Radio 3.
- A new look website was launched.
- There were more sectional rehearsals with different members putting themselves forward to lead on these.
- More members got involved with the running of the choir, from putting out chairs to helping with warm-ups.
- Finances have been stronger thanks to more members and a minor increase in fees.
- The choir received several requests to perform, many of which the choir had to turn down to avoid being over-loaded.

**a) Committee**

JG gave special thanks to all other current committee members:

- Jessica Bate (JB), Tristan Bate (TB), Vanessa Hartley (VH), Alan Waterman (AW), Simon Thomas (ST), Emma Richards (ER), Daisy Morris (DM).

JG explained that the choir meets 4 times a year and all members contribute to decisions on all areas.

JG also gave thanks to non-committee members who made special contributions in 2016:

- Georgi Vaughn – for her arrangements of Eye of the Tiger and Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree.
- Diccon Bate, Maike Rentel, Ellie Bate, Simon Thomas, Georgi Vaughn and Corinne Ingram - for their leadership of sectional rehearsals.
- Corinne Ingram and Linton Broadley-Stace for leading warm-ups.
- Asa Backman, for her photography which has really captured the spirit of the choir.
- Hannah Deveson for her research for 2017 events.
- Phil Meir for being our MC at our concerts.
- Alan Waterman for contributing with new folders and arranging Fern Hill as our rehearsal venue. Alan has also put the chairs out every week, which has required him to arrive early at each rehearsal.

JG went on to summarise committee reports as follows:

#### **b) Membership (AW)**

- 1) The choir started 2016 with 30 females (capacity) and 13 males (out of 16 capacity. This is excluding 2 male band members). We currently have 14 men out of a maximum of 16 (excluding the 2 band members).

Today, the choir has 1 female vacancy and 3 male vacancies. 2016 saw considerable movement with 18 new members (7 female and 11 male) and 19 departures (8 female, 11 male).

Offers are out to two new members (one of each sex) plus a further 14 are on the female waiting list. The female waiting list is currently 16 months. There is no waiting list for men.

### **c) Social (ER)**

JG summarised that the choir organised 5 social events in 2016. JG highlighted the importance of social events to ensure the cohesion of the choir and to boost the confidence of members.

In 2016, social events were held at The Albert, The Anglers, The Pottery, Firecracker Karaoke and The Cardinal. Prices ranged from £10 to £35 (at Christmas).

The average attendance for social events has been about 20, with 31 for Christmas.

### **d) Events (DM)**

#### **Canbury Bandstand**

JG summarised that although it was a cloudy June day, it was a very sunny day for the choir and the audience! This was an outdoor performance in a confined space, and despite the weather challenges the choir sounded superb. At this event the choir performed its first unrehearsed song and even performed a sing-along number.

9 of the songs performed at Canbury Bandstand were also performed at The Corner House in July. There were also the additional songs 'Stand By Me' and 'I'm a Believer'.

#### **Corner House Surbiton**

The choir performed at the Corner House in Surbiton in July. This was our biggest and most ambitious set list to date, with 16 songs on the set list. This was a new venue for the choir. Jessica Bate, Musical Director described the performance as:

"..our most electric and magical performance to date." She went on to say that the choir "..resonated with each song emotionally and connected more with the audience than we ever have done before". Particular highlights from this concert were 'Make You Feel My Love', 'All of Me' and our first song in another language 'Gracias a la Vida'. Another highlight was Georgi Vaughn's arrangement of 'Eye of the Tiger'.

This was our first concert accompanied by pianist Henry Tozer.

The summer concert raised a grand £213 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

#### **Rose Theatre**

In December, the choir performed a Christmas concert at the Rose Theatre. The choir performed 9 new songs and the concert was well attended.

A song of particular note was 'How Long Will I Love You', an emotional piece which was performed by ear. Another favourite was 'White Winter Hymnal'.

JG announced that the choir was approached by pubs, the Rotary Club and other choirs in 2016 which was a great honour, but due to the work and commitment required the choir limited its performance list to 3 concerts.

The choir already has a short-list of some 6 possible events for 2017 which is brilliant.

**e) Music (JB)**

JG summarised that the choir performed 26 songs in 2016, 25 of which were new songs for the choir.

It has been agreed that going forward, the choir will use some of the back catalogue alongside new songs.

The choir had one workshop in 2016 from Delia Rosenboom. This was an acapella workshop with no words or music, which helped the choir to focus on our listening skills. Delia taught the choir a variety of music from spiritual songs to a South African anthem.

The Choir is expecting to hold one or two more workshops in 2017.

In 2017 the choir aims to hold more sectional rehearsals. There are also ambitions to tackle more challenging music, so it's important to keep practising at home!

It was noted that the band is an integral part of our choir and sets us apart from many others.

Jessica Bate's report summarised as follows:

"The choir continues to evolve as a nurturing and supportive experience with many more members singing their first solo since joining us."

**f) Communications & Media (TB)**

JM outlined that in 2016, the choir increased its profile significantly:

- A choir video was made (special thanks were given to Steve, Diccon and Tristan). The video has had 1231 views, an incredible number. These views help to attract new members and give the choir more performance opportunities.
- The choir has expanded its new website, with more photos and 7401 more website hits.
- The choir currently has 744 twitter followers.
- Performance videos have been watched 15076 times on YouTube (a 50% increase on last year).
- The choir created a new Instagram account (with 54 followers).
- We featured on the 'My Choir' show on BBC3 (Special thanks were given to Rob Hicks and Tristan Bate for organising this).

**JG announced that the choir is looking to make a new video in 2017, and asked that if anyone has video editing experience, or is interested in gaining**

**experience in this area, and would like to help with the performance videos they should put themselves forward.**

**g) Secretary (ST)**

JG read the very short and to the point secretary report “No glory but all meetings are minuted and posted on the website – an important discipline”. JG expanded to say that although taking formal minutes can appear to be tedious and un-necessary, it is in fact a vital part of the choir – particularly in ensuring that the choir is taken seriously as a charity (including for claiming Gift Aid) and for insurance purposes.

**h) Treasurer (VH)**

JG confirmed that a copy of the accounts is available to all the choir.

- 1) The closing balance at the end of 2016 was £1115. (at the end of 2015 it was £644). This has given the choir the flexibility to pay for musicians, sound engineers, workshops, 50% of folders, performance venues, music and some equipment.
- 2) The 2016 fees were raised to £32 per term (which equates to approx. £3 per rehearsal per person). JG confirmed that there is no need to increase the fees further at this time.

JG stated that an ambition for 2017 is for the choir to claim Gift Aid on fees.

**4. Nominations for 2017 officer positions**

JG announced the nominations for the 2017 committee as follows, confirming that a majority vote is required:

- Musical Director – Jessica Bate.
- Treasurer – Alan Waterman.
- Secretary – Ellie Giffard.
- Events Officer – Penny Hamilton & Phil Meir (shared).
- Membership Officer – Kyla Furness.
- Communications Officer – Tristan Bate.
- Social Secretary – Simon Thomas.
- Chair- Jem Goddard.

**All voted in favour of all committee members, who were each appointed to the new committee.**

JG confirmed that a handover will be done between outgoing and new committee members where required.

JG also confirmed that the Metro bank account signatories will change to the new treasurer, Alan Waterman, and other members of the 2017 committee. JG confirmed that Vanessa Hartley will be removed as a signatory.

## 5. Motions

JG announced the motion to proceed with Gift Aid.

Vanessa Hartley, outgoing Treasurer, clarified what Gift Aid is, i.e. Gift Aid allows charities to reclaim tax on a donation made by a UK taxpayer. The annual fees to the choir can be counted as donations which means that fee donations will be worth 25% more to the choir at no extra cost to members. The choir claims back from the government 25p from every £1.

Higher rate tax payers can also claim additional tax relief. For higher rate tax payers (paying tax at 40%) this works out as 25p for every £1 donated and for the highest rate tax payers (paying tax at 50%) this works out as 37.5p for every £1 donated.

Vanessa Hartley confirmed what is needed to claim Gift Aid:

- Full name and home address.
- A donation made from a personal bank or building society account.
- Gift Aid can't be claimed on donations from company accounts. The donation must be Members' own money and not the proceeds of a collection.
- The Member must be paying income tax or capital gains tax which at least equals the amount the BHF will claim in the appropriate tax year (6 April one year to 5 April the next).
- Using the declaration form, the choir can claim Gift Aid on all donations in the last 4 years and all future donations.
- Once a Member has become a Gift Aid donor, the Member should let the treasurer or a member of the committee know if they stop paying tax or if they change their name/address so that the committee can update its records.

### Vote on Gift Aid

**The Choir voted unanimously on proceeding with Gift Aid, and forms were handed out to the Members who were eligible and who wanted to donate to Gift Aid.**

## 6. Any Other Business & Thanks to outgoing committee members

There was no other business raised. Outgoing committee members were thanked for their contributions over the past year.

***Meeting was closed***