

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 11 OCTOBER 2010
AT BEARSTED METHODIST CHURCH, WARE STREET, BEARSTED**

1. Apologies

David Freed Daphne Briggs, Sian Williams and Ann Putland.

2. Minutes of 2009 AGM

The minutes were read and agreed.

3. Matters arising from minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report

This has been an eventful year for BCS. The format of the Christmas concert was changed to include more audience participation, which I am pleased to say they enjoyed very much.

March saw us attempting to do justice to the Beethoven Mass in C and by all accounts we did acquit ourselves very well.

Our trip to Wissant was memorable for a number of reasons: the fantastic weather, the French audience's appreciation of our introductions in French and their obvious delight in our performance (we did sing well) and the tremendous hospitality of our French friends. We look forward to receiving them in Kent in June next year.

The summer found us in Leeds singing Vivaldi's Gloria and an eclectic mix of songs that only Peter could have thought up. The large audience that included a number of Russians were very appreciative.

I feel that the choir has moved forward; we have a good number of new members who we are delighted to see and we are improving all the time. I feel that we have the right balance between concentration and hard work and all with a keen sense of fun.

At the beginning of the year Maggie Bloor moved on to join the Bach Choir and we have been incredibly lucky to secure the services of Trevor Brearley. We all appreciate his commitment to the choir and his skill when working with young performers, getting the right balance and giving them confidence. Who could forget his amazing piano playing when accompanying the young clarinettist playing Horowitz at the summer concert!

We are most fortunate to have a great team of people working for the choir that form your committee. They do so much work that goes unseen and I thank them all very much for the time and effort they put in on our behalf. I would like to name a few of them. Chris Dodds has been our librarian for quite a number of years and she has done it in such a calm organised manner that she makes it look easy, but it is far from that. Chris is also our choir secretary. She has decided to continue in that capacity but to relinquish being librarian. On behalf of us all I would like to thank her for all the hours she puts in for the choir and say how much her work is appreciated. Catherine Eden-Green who as our treasurer has given so

much time to securing our charitable status and making sure we are solvent. Christine Goody for all her work on publicity, and I can assure you that an awful lot of time goes into publicity, and for co-ordinating the floral decorations. I would also like to thank Sue Dance for her quiet behind the scenes ticket selling and the rest of the committee for their support this year. I also need to thank Roger Barton for his work on the staging and Roger Byard for his valuable advice when we were negotiating our way through our new constitution and charitable status.

Finally, I would like to thank Peter Ashley. His infectious energy and the way he has made us move forward has changed the whole dynamics of the choir and he has made BCS into a choir that is highly respected.

Next year is our 40th anniversary. This is a memorable milestone for us and for those who were founder members of BCS. I am sure that they are delighted that the choir has become stronger and that it will go on for many years to come. We will, I am sure, make it a memorable year and one to be proud of, as all of us here are proud of being part of Bearsted Choral Society.

5. Treasurer's Report

Bank balance at 31.08.10: £6,556.96.

Overall profit for year: £179.46.

Although we do not function to make a profit, it is always more reassuring not to end the year in deficit.

Concerts

We performed in six concerts, three of which were profitable, and three of which were not. There was a small net profit of £549.37.

Receipts

No exceptional receipts. Most notable differences between last year's receipts and the current year:

- As warned last year, Deposit account interest rate has gradually gone down and is now only pence each month. There is no better deposit account at the moment.
- We did not sing at as many outside events as last year. The carol singing at Lavenders was cancelled because of heavy snow.
- We did not apply for a grant from the Bearsted & Thurnham Fayres Committee this year.

Expenses

There were no exceptional expenses.

Score Hire

KCC Libraries are not able to supply all the scores we need. We frequently have to hire from far away and pay hefty carriage charges. The choir subsidised members' hire payments by almost 50% this year.

Sundries

This includes some expenses which were required in connection with our application for Charitable Status.

Auditor

The auditor did receive something for checking our accounts, but it was not cash.

Concert staging

This is the cost of materials for an adaptation to make the men's standing space at Holy Cross concerts easier. For this I would like to propose a vote of thanks to Roger Barton who (once again) generously provided his expertise and workmanship at no cost.

Catherine asked the members if they had any questions on the accounts. There were no questions.

Roger Barton proposed and Anthony Bell seconded acceptance of the accounts.

6. Conductor's Report

1. Bleriot Concert November 2009

- The term soon got underway rehearsing for our joint concert with Chorale des 2 Caps in November. Having chosen the theme of Bleriot's centenary - the inaugural flight across the channel - it was an eclectic mix of music associated with either flying or the sea!
- Our joint items continue to excite the audience and this year we gave a stunning performance of L'homme armé as well as Hallelujah Chorus; For the beauty of the earth; Va pensiero from « Nabucco » Giuseppe Verdi
- It was a really successful weekend despite some minor problems with the ongoing structural work in the church which had led to water cascading down on the organ console rendering 50% unusable – we were ably supported by Martin in constantly trying to find an alternative way of accompanying us with what was still available to use. Our two drummers were also excellent on the night
- The venue proved successful and we will be going there again in the coming year.

2. Christmas Concert December 2009

- The programme was filled with standard carol items with a lot more audience participation and a fable!
- An excellent mix thoroughly enjoyed by the audience with our first husband and wife performance from Sue & Roger Byard!

- Our Chairman also found a new role... are *we sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin...*

3. Maggie Bloor

- Christmas saw the departure of Maggie Bloor as our rehearsal accompanist and principal soprano soloist who had supported the society for over 10 years and had made a significant contribution along the way, for which we are very grateful

4. Trevor Brearley

- Losing Maggie was potentially a significant problem for the society as she had been so versatile. However, who would have thought that here on the door step was an equally versatile gem of an accompanist and we were delighted to welcome Trevor to the role in January

5. Spring concert March 2010

- In March we gave a very demanding concert: Beethoven's Mass in C, previously performed in 1986, and our first performance of Charpentier's Te Deum.
- The Mass was a significant work with quite exhaustive movements so for the first time we incorporated short momentary breaks at the Gloria and Credo
- I was very proud of the way you tackled the work and the vocal delivery was at times outstanding.
- Our soloists also gave enormous support which continued with our first performance of the Te Deum.
- Some of the items were used as preparation for our return concert to Wissant in June.

6. Wissant June 2010

- Summer started with high expectations and a lot of pressure. The joint concert in Wissant with the Chorale des 2 Caps was an outstanding success and once again our hosts gave us the warmest of welcomes.
- We are developing a number of joint performance items that may enable us to do a complete joint concert – although somehow I wonder if we would be able to sing it all without music! I thought we gave a stunning performance of the Adiemus and I have to confess to really enjoying Les Lacs du Connemara, performed by Chorale des 2 Caps
- For those who were able to make the trip we were truly well looked after and the weather was certainly on our side.
- When the association was first established we agreed to do it for 5 years and then review and I think we are coming up to that quite soon now – what would your view be?

7. Summer Concert – July 2010

- Leeds Parish Church is a good venue for our summer concerts and this one was no exception.
- With hindsight I realise that putting the men in one straight line left them somewhat vulnerable so blocking will be considered in the future. However, a secure performance was established in nearly all items with good audience enjoyment during the antics of Songs of

the Sea.

- Our 2 young performers gave another dimension to the evening; Siobhan has agreed to sing formally with us again and Andrew Fowler's clarinet performance was exceptional.
- The Gala performance at St Martin's Church finished off the year successfully.

The coming year provides us with the opportunity of doing a joint concert with Upchurch. This has come about because several of them have been to our concerts this year.

I spend a lot of time looking through items of music which will be suitable for the choir. Would it be possible to have one bass, one tenor, two altos and two sopranos to meet up periodically to discuss and make suggestions for music?

Finally, thank you all for your hard work and support over the year and especially to the committee who have put up with my idiosyncratic ways well.

7. Publicity Officer's Report

Thank you to Sue Dance for her assistance with The Net magazine for North Kent town's editions and the Canterbury and Rochester Diocese newspapers.

The Net Magazine

The Maidstone edition started in January this year. It lists monthly information of clubs and societies with events highlighted in green boxes. The editors are very efficient and pleasant. Our concerts are always shown and because of this we have attracted several new members.

Final Report on Kent International Gateway

Three years ago AXA Insurance proposed a giant road/rail interchange between Bearsted and Hollingbourne. This became a publicity issue because the invitation to join the campaign against this proposal came to my publicity email address as we are a local organisation. To recap:

- I wrote two letters to Maidstone Borough Council on behalf of our choir members stating our reasons for opposition to this development.
- Several of us attended public meetings at Invicta Grammar School and elsewhere.
- Many of us displayed posters and car stickers.
- Maidstone Borough Council voted against it, and then AXA appealed.
- The appeal was heard at a public enquiry in Maidstone lasting the final 7-8 weeks of 2009. I went along twice to observe the process and was required to sign in giving my name and address and also stated my representation of Bearsted Choral Society. The Inspector in charge of the enquiry stated that he had never before seen so much public support against a proposal at an enquiry.
- The proposal then had to go to the Communities Minister in Parliament. By this time Eric Pickles disallowed it on the basis that it was totally inappropriate in this area.
- Axa did not appeal against this decision before the deadline so the matter is now closed and the STOP KIG campaign has been disbanded in triumph.

I have found it necessary to delegate four of the tasks for publicity:

- Concert diary – notice of concerts – Sue Dance.
- Reports of concerts – Rowena Carlton and Chris Dodds.
- Display board – Rowena Carlton.
- Distribution of Maidstone Area Arts Council Leaflets - Daphne Lewis agreed to do this.

8. Election of Committee

Christine Goodey agreed to continue as Publicity Officer. Pat Moore agreed to take on the role of Librarian, but has chosen not to be on the Committee. Pat was proposed by Roger Barton and seconded by Mike Thresh.

- a) Chairman – Graham Mason
- b) Secretary – Chris Dodds
- c) Treasurer – Catherine Eden-Green
- d) Publicity Officer – Christine Goodey
- e) Membership Secretary and Website Manager – Anthony Bell
- f) Social Secretary – Rowena Carlton
- g) Assistant Publicity Officer/Ticket Secretary – Sue Dance

Co-opted members:

Sue Byard and Peter Daone.

The above members agreed to stand and the motion was proposed by Catherine Brown and seconded by Pat Edwards.

Graham thanked the committee.

9. Any Other Business

Anthony asked whether we are planning to keep our links with Maggie. Peter agreed that we could do that. Peter said for our 40th Anniversary year we are trying to get as many people who were formally associated with the choir as we can find to join us for the weekend of our joint concert with Chorale de deux Caps.

Brian Shaw said it would be helpful to have a definitive list of concerts. Peter said if you look at your schedule it has the year mapped out. Brian suggested that as it is our 40th anniversary could we do a little more to identify concerts for the year e.g. bookmarks which could be put in libraries. Graham said it was a very good suggestion. Brian asked if the festival concert is the 15th or the 8th. It was agreed that it was 15th.

Christine thanked Rowena for all the work that she does on the social side.

Choir Dress

Graham said this was discussed about a week ago. It was agreed that black shirts would not be worn. David Freed had suggested that men could wear waistcoats. Graham had obtained a swatch of colours and the cost of the waistcoats would be £15. It was agreed that the ladies dress will wait until the men's attire was decided.

Wissant

Graham said that finances are healthy but not healthy enough. With regard to catering it has been suggested that we could do a hog roast which would take pressure off a lot of people. Graham asked for people's views. It was confirmed that salads will still need to be provided. Catherine said a hog roast will cost a minimum of £400. It was suggested that we have a pot for a weekly collection. Catherine Brown said she would rather give a cheque. Rowena asked what people's views were at spending that amount of money on a hog roast. Catherine Brown thought that people providing the meat when we last hosted Chorale de deux Caps probably spent more money. Rowena said that this is the members' opportunity to give their view. Pat Moore said perhaps the choir could pay for the meat and the members could cook it. So the meat would be cooked at home and eaten cold. Graham said that the school had a number of barbecues. Peter said we could have cold meat and a b-b-q. Teresa asked about platters. Pat Moore said they were quite expensive. Sue Ross said that East Sutton prison has a pig farm and they might provide a hog roast at a reduced price. A final decision was not reached.

Charing Church

Graham asked if the members would be interested in repeating our Christmas concert on Sunday 12 December 2011 at Charing Church. Graham will look into this.

Logo

Graham told the members that a new logo had been designed and he invited members to have a look at it.

Graham declared the meeting closed.