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| **Date:** | 23 October 2023 |
| **Time:** | 7.30pm |
| **Place:** | St James’ Church Wetherby |

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| **Attendees:** | Heather Marsh (Chairman), Kathy Hart (Treasurer), Malcolm Smith (Secretary), John Dunford (Musical Director), and 86 other members of the Society  |
| **Apologies:** | Claire Clark, Stephen Clarke, David Eggleston, Susan Lupton, Gillian Mathie, Elizabeth Mortimer, Lois Page, Joan Roberts, Martyn Watts. |

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| **Item** | **Description** |
| ***1*** | ***Apologies*** - see above |
| ***2*** | ***Minutes of the AGM 13 June 2022.***These were agreed as a true record (Proposed Chris Bishop: seconded Chris Outram) |
| ***3*** | ***Chairman’s report***Heather Marsh’s reported as follows.Looking back at my report last year, I can sense the Committee’s anxiety at that time about the future for the choir post-COVID. What would be the impact on the health of our members? Would people return to singing? How would our finances cope with fewer subscriptions and audience numbers? As it turned out, we are a resilient bunch, and I’m thrilled to report how well we are doing!During our 22-23 season, our membership has continued to increase with both former members returning and new members joining each term. The mood of the choir is a happy one, with everyone doing their best to be inclusive and make our choir community a friendly and fun place to be. Our thanks to you all for supporting a wide range of fundraising activities. Our thanks to you also for a huge effort to sell concert tickets - hasn’t it been brilliant to sing to sell-out audiences for pretty much the whole of last year! And thanks to Kathy, our Treasurer, for spending many days getting to grips with Gift Aid, and submitting four years of claims to HMRC. All of these factors mean that the choir is now in a far healthier position, both mentally and financially. Over the last year, the Committee has worked hard to update our paperwork, and I’m so grateful. Thanks to a herculean effort by Malcolm, our secretary, we have rewritten our Constitution and Members Handbook, and propose this for your approval at this AGM. We’ve also been modernising our approach to publicity with attractive posters (thank you Chris Bishop) and by widening our digital network for promoting concerts. We’ve reviewed local parish and church magazine contacts adding digital posters where Facebook pages are available, expanded our ‘Friends of WCS’ email group, and opened an Instagram account, which is also linked to our own Facebook page. Purchasing a card reader has also brought us into the modern age, and aided ticket sales, and we are currently in the throes of upgrading our website with the support of the music charity ‘Making Music’. So, now we are at the beginning of our 50th season, and its all very exciting! To get us in the mood, we are planning to hold a mini festive social gathering with wine, beer and mince pies at the end of our rehearsal on Tuesday 12th December from 9-9.30pm, together with the BIG Christmas raffle! You’ll hear more about our fabulous Spring concert from John, but its going to be spectacular! We’ve plans to involve the RNLI in this sea-themed concert with a pop-up stall, and we plan to make a big SPLASH (sorry!) with a special 50th souvenir programme. For those of you who have photographs or funny stories from the past 50 years, we would love to hear from you so we can include these in the souvenir programme. Anne and her team’s famous Quiz will be as popular as ever in the Spring term, and a repeat of John’s inspirational organ recital together with a York river cruise are all being planned as part of our 50th celebrations. Every single one of us is reliant on someone else doing their bit to help run the choir. There are so many of you involved, so please can I extend a huge thanks to each one of you. I’d also like to appeal to all members (well, not literally!) to ask you to consider ‘what can I do for my choir’? Some of you will have skills which would be oh so helpful on the Committee, so please don’t hold back as we’d love to welcome you on board. Fundamentally, the role of the Committee is to balance the books and promote activities which contribute towards concert expenses. Traditionally, we have made a loss of approximately £3,000 on every concert, but with your help in selling more tickets over the last year this loss has reduced significantly – hooray! Many of you have also kindly donated extra money above the subscription fee, and we thank you for this generosity. This is also the time to say if any of you would like to sponsor an orchestra member, or are considering leaving a legacy in your will, please feel free to approach the Committee. And finally, I must thank John for working his magic with us every week. You brighten our lives with your love of music and your talents as a teacher, and we are blessed by your energy, enthusiasm, and yes, even your sarcasm! And for willingly undertaking all the myriad of hidden but hugely appreciated back-room jobs we are forever grateful. A million thanks to you!There were no questions on the report |
| ***4*** | ***Treasurer’s report***The approved accounts for 2022/3 and the Treasurer’s projections for 2023/4 had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.Kathy Hart said that she was pleased with the outcome for the past year and felt that it put the Society in a good financial position for the current financial year. She was thanked by the members for all the work she had put in as Treasurer.There were no questions on the accounts. Jackie Faulkner proposed that the financial statements be accepted. This was seconded by Anne Sweet and carried *nem con*. |
| ***5*** | **Music Director’s Report**John Dunford’s spoke to the meeting as follows: **Concerts**1. Bach Christmas OratorioSuperb in every way – choir, soloists, orchestra, audienceReplacements tenor (5 days) and mezzo (evening beforehand)2. SolomonSuperb in every way – double choir with SSATB alternative,Soloists – Chloe Latchmore as Solomon, Jane Burnell as Solomon’s Queen, 1st woman, and Queen of ShebaOrcehstra, audience. 3. Choral Music with organ accompaniment An unusual programme for WCS and the choir sang magnificently, rising to new challengesOrgan accompaniment superb by Dave Grealy YEP brass superb with their own choices but too loud in the accompaniment of the choirVery well received by the audience many of whom liked the change of style of music from our usual repertoire. **My ambitions for the choir:-**1. To continue to provide choral concerts in the great British tradition of choral music with orchestral accompaniment2. 2022-2023 provided some new singers a year after lockdown. 3. A wonderful effort in money raising last year. 4. Thanks to all who inspired and contributed to those efforts, in the organisation and the participation. 5. This has put the choir in a very good financial position. **Concert costs explained**Christmas Oratorio as an example4 soloists & conductor = 100 ticketsOrchestra = 180 ticketsOther concert costs, hire of music, venue, printing etc = 40 tickets320 tickets need to be sold to break even. At 180 the church is very close to capacity. The shortfall on the cost of a moderately sized orchestral concert is therefore £2800 & this is the reason that we need to have additional fund-raising activities.Harrogate Choral Society were considering raising their subscriptions to £250 this year - because they face the same problems that we do in raising the income to provide a good range of orchestrally accompanied concerts. - They settled on £200. - But were our subs to be set at £200, for example, albeit with help for those who would struggle to pay, we could create an extra income of £5700 - including gift aid from about 80% of members - and this would go a long way to ensuring that Wetherby Choral Society had the financial stability to produce quality choral concerts. **People**Much of the leadership of a choir is about leadership and I would like to thank a few people in particular for their contributions. The three officers are key. So Thank you to ….. 1. Heather Marsh for encouraging and positive leadership 2. Malcolm Smith for his incredibly clear thinking and thoroughness in organisation of us all3. Kathy Hart for organising the accounts, which has involved changing our bank and making the bank accounts more transparent to the committee, compiling a Gift Aid claim to cover the last 4 years where a claim had not been made, and changing the accounting year to end on July 31st, enabling us to plan a season at a time with greater accuracy and knowledge. Beyond these, there are two or three others I wish to mention ….. 4. Christine Outram for her enthusiasm and organising of fund-raising activities, including the use of her home for a summer garden party.5. Tony Gooch for his organisation of the staging and many unseen acts on behalf of the choir that enable rehearsals and concerts to take place6. Dave Grealy, who we have been privileged to have as our accompanist and whose performing skills we were able to enjoy at last summer’s concert**And, last but not least** …… 7. To the entire membership, for your generous gift to me after 30 long years as Musical Director – why it only seems like yesterday – to you all - for still coming to rehearsals eager to hear my witty comments, jokes, asides and stories – all of which you have heard before – but also to everyone who makes Wetherby Choral Society such a positive group focussed on giving the best concerts we can – Thank you. There were no questions on the report. |
| ***6*** | ***Proposal to adopt a revised constitution and members handbook.***The revised constitution and its accompanying members handbook had been circulated prior to the meeting, together with an explanatory note.Malcolm Smith explained that this was the culmination of two years of discussion in the Committee and would bring us into line with current Charity Commission guidance. The constitution has to be agreed by a 2/3rds majority, but the handbook was for noting and would regularly be reviewed by the Committee.There were no questions.The following resolution was carried *nem con*.*This meeting agrees to adopt the revised Constitution of the Society (October 2023) and to note the Members Handbook* |
| ***7*** | ***Election of Committee members******Secretary***One nomination had been received for Malcolm Smith. (Proposed Heather Marsh, seconded Kathy Hart)***Committee members***Three nominations had been received.Kate Auld (Proposed Heather Marsh, seconded Lynne Shaw)Sarah Lane (Proposed Heather Marsh, seconded Ann Cooper)Lianne Williams (Proposed Heather Marsh, seconded Janet Doemling)There were no other nominations and the meeting gave its unanimous approval to the four above. |
| ***8*** | ***Any other business***There was no other business and the meeting closed at 19.55. |