

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM

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The Meeting opened at 8.45pm

**PRESENT: 46 members and associates**

The Chairman opened the Meeting welcoming choristers and friends. He drew attention to the Minutes of the last AGM, and mentioned that there will be an open discussion at the end of the meeting.

### 1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Received from:

Ashley Duego; Ray White; Mike Smith; John Allen

### 2. **MINUTES**

Acceptance of the Minutes of the 2016 AGM was proposed by Denis Argent and seconded by Bob Finch and agreed and accepted.

### 3. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

### 4. **ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT**

The President, Nigel Bassett was present and gave his address as follows:

"It gives me a lot of pleasure to say a few words as your President. As you can imagine, I miss being an active member but I would like to congratulate you all on keeping up the standard of singing and for the slick presentation of all your concerts. Fortunately I was able to participate in the 75th Anniversary Concert with the Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment which rounded off my days with the Choir admirably.

I gave up driving some while ago but would like to put on record my grateful thanks to Rod Nicholas for chauffeuring me over a number of months before I finally retired.

I will continue to take a great interest in the Choir's activities and would like to wish everybody well for the foreseeable future."

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The Chairman thanked Nigel for his continued support.

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---

### 5. **TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2017 AND PRESENTATION OF INDEPENDENTLY EXAMINED ACCOUNTS 2016/2017**

#### **Introduction**

This report comments on the accounts of the Harrow Apollo Male Choir for the twelve months between April 2016 to March 2017.

There are three important assumptions to be borne in mind before we look into the detail of the accounts:

1. Cash accounting.

The Choir's accounts take advantage of a dispensation available to small charities, which allows for the preparation of accounts according to "cash accounting" principles. This means that accounts only reflect cash in, cash held, and cash out of the Choir's accounts. No attempt is made to "match" income and expenditure, neither are accruals or other adjustments made.

2. Comparisons

When preparing the accounts, the Choir is required to show not only the financial data for the last twelve months, but also the data for the previous twelve months. This is to allow comparisons to be made, and to highlight changes. However, because the Choir does not do exactly the same activities year after year, and because income and expenditure can fall into different accounting periods, the benefits of comparison data is limited.

3. Audit

The accounts have been independently examined, which involved the verification of cash balances held by the Choir at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and confirmation that the analysis of income and expenditure presented here corresponds to the record of transactions held by the Choir.

#### **Receipts and Payments**

The Receipts and Payments statement is a historic record of the resources which have come into, and left the Choir over a twelve month period ending on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

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---

#### **Overall**

The overall financial position for the choir during 2016/2017 has income in excess of expenditure by £2,948 (primary source is the non payment of Honoraria). In comparison, during 2015/2016 Income exceeded expenditure by £636.

#### **Receipts**

- The Choir had 499 transactions (500 last year), and recorded total receipts of just under £20k (£18k previous year) during the past twelve months. The major sources are from:
  - Concert Tickets
  - Subscriptions – Singing and non Singing
  - Tour
  - 100 Club
  - BBQ
  - 75<sup>th</sup> Dinner
  - Donations

#### **Payments**

- The Choir had 119 transactions (134 last year), and spent just under £17k (£17k last year) over the past 12 months, the major sources of spend are:
  - Rehearsal Room hire
  - Concert Room Hire
  - Tour
  - 75<sup>th</sup> Dinner
  - 100 Club
  - BBQ
  - Charity Payments

#### **Financial Performance of Events**

The HAMC has undertaken a number of choral and social engagements over the past year, where income has been derived and expenditure incurred. The table below highlights the financial performance of these events

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
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---

Event	Performance	Note
BBQ 2016	£2	Surplus
75 <sup>th</sup> Dinner	£20	Loss on Flowers
Bushey Arena (Autumn Concert 2016	£685	Surplus
Watersmeet (75 <sup>th</sup> Concert 2016)	£0	Broke Even as surplus donated
BBQ 2017	-72	To date
Llandudno	-379	To date
Dinner Dance 2017	-120	To date
Watersmeet 2017	-500	To date

Overall these events and activities created a net deficit of £404 – of which a net surplus of £667 was accounted for in last years (2016/2017) Accounts, leaving a residual deficit of £1,071 generated in 2017/2018. This residual deficit carried into 17/18 is likely to be significantly reduced as a result of net income for these events arrives during the year.

### **Cash Flow**

In many respects cash flow is a more important measure of an organizations financial health than net income or expenditure at a point in time.

The graph below records monthly income, expenditure, and net cash in/out for each month from June 2004 to March 2017 (note both income and expenditure are positive figures, while the net position is calculated as income less expenditure)

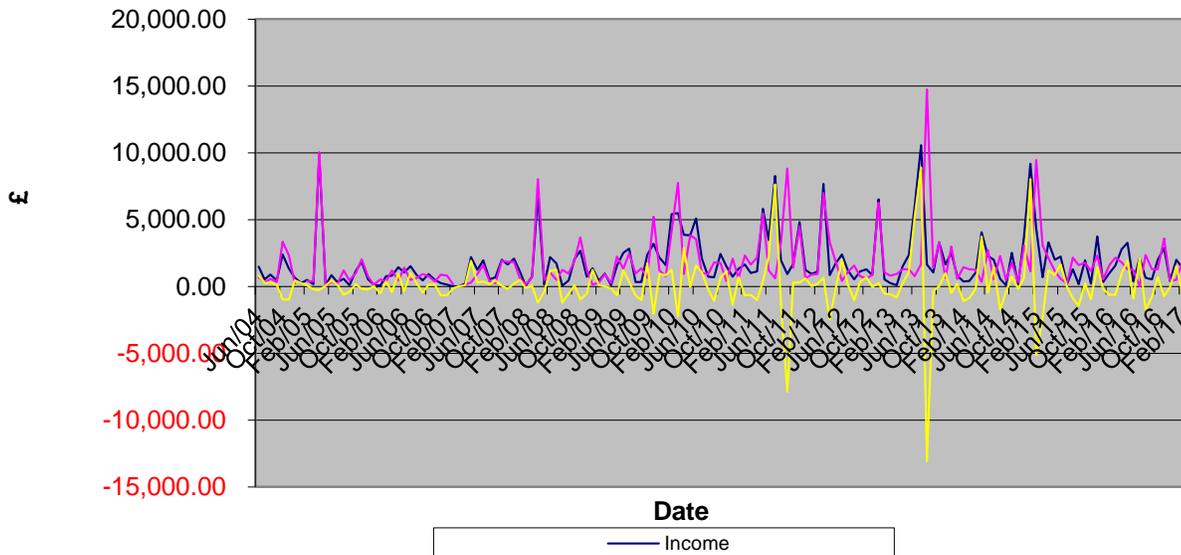
What is noticeable from this graph is that while the movement in the choirs net cash position hovers around £0, the range of net income or net expenditure grew ever wider month on month until October 2013. This is a measure of the growing volatility, and raises the risk (very small) that the choir might not have sufficient cash to cover its liabilities at a future point in time. For this reason the choir has looked at growing its cash reserves, and smoothing the amount of volatility – this it has done successfully (except for a significant swing in the spring of 2015).

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM

---

### HAMC Cash Flow Report June 2004 Onwards



### **Balance Sheet and Analysis of Funds held at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015**

The Balance Sheet and Analysis of Funds shows a snapshot of the cash available to the Choir on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

#### **Balance Sheet**

- As the Choir operates on cash accounting principles the Balance Sheet shows the cash available to the Choir at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. The account shows that although the Choir had £21,549 in the Bank, there were cheques the Choir had raised worth £1,076 and unbanked cash of £150. This meant that the real cash balance of the Choir was £20,623.
- The cash balance of £20,623 was made up of £17,675 brought forward from the previous year, and a surplus of £2,947 generated during the 12 months between April 2016 and March 2017 (see above).

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75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
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---

### **Analysis of Funds**

- Although the Choir operates on a cash accounting basis, this does not mean that all of the £20,623 sitting in the bank is available to spend.
- The following funds cannot be spent, as they may need to be repaid in the future:
  - £1,035 Jacket Deposit
  - £1,575 Income in advance for the 100 Club
- The Trustees have agreed to hold a reserve of £9,266 (equal to one years running costs without optional activities)
- This leaves a balance of £8,747 in the bank with which the Choir can operate on a day to day basis, and can make commitments to hire venues, or undertake tours with a degree of security.

### **Asset Register**

The Choir operates on the basis of cash accounting. As a consequence, the Choir does not capitalize any of its assets onto the Balance sheet, but writes them off to Receipts and Payments straight away.

This does not mean that the Choir is without a significant investment in assets. To recognize the size of this investment a property book has been compiled to identify these assets.

At the end of March 2016 the Property Book, currently has a value of £23.6k, made up of:

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
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---

<b>Asset</b>	<b>Residual £</b>
Organ	£1,149.00
Organ Music Stand	£29.95
PA	£2,043.88
Piano Light	£29.99
Conductor light	£28.58
Metronome	£18.50
Digital Recorder	£100.00
Recording Equipment	£105.00
Conductors Music Stand	£44.98
Rostrum	£66.24
Music	£13,746.24
Teach tracks	£853.27
CD	£1,250.00
Jackets	£2,433.72
Waistcoats + Ties	£1,590.17
Banner	£125.00
Uniform Stand	£58.54
	<b>£23,673.06</b>

### **"Public benefit"**

The secondary objective of the Choir is:

- *To assist and support such charitable institutions or purposes as the Committee shall from time to time determine.*

From Choir records, I have identified that the HAMC has helped raise the sum £115,655 to date in support of this objective, of which £16,239 was raised during the past twelve months, for 17 different organisations:

<b>Total to March 2016</b>	<b>£ 99,416.75</b>
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**75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM**

16/04/2016	RAF Benevolent Fund	RAFBF stall at HAMC 75th Anniversary Concert, Watersmeet	£ 258.16
16/04/2016	RAF Music Charitable Trust	RAFMCT stall at HAMC 75th Anniversary Concert, Watersmeet	£ 604.00
16/04/2016	RAF Benevolent Fund	Donation by HAMC of funds raised at HAMC 75th Anniversary Concert, Watersmeet	£ 1,000.00
18/06/2016	MS Therapy Centre, Harrow	Donation of proceeds from concert at Pinner Methodist Church organised by Vivien and Alan Raggett	£ 650.00
18/06/2016	Alderbourne Rehab Centre, The Hillingdon Hospital	Laptop and Projector from proceeds of concert at Pinner Methodist Church organised by Vivien and Alan Raggett	£ 650.00
07/11/2016	Music in Hospitals	Ensemble performance at Emmanuel Church, Northwood, ladies fellowship (£70)	£ 100.00
29/10/2016	Ruislip Lions	Concert to raise money for good causes supported by Lions	£ 1,500.00
19/11/2016	All Saints' Church, Kings Langley	Fundraising concert for the mission activities of All Saints and Rennie Grove Hospice Care	£ 805.00
30/11/2016	DeHavilland Aircraft Museum	75th Dinner Speaker Donation (Donation for Choristers singing at Vicar of Harefield Mothers funeral)	£ 100.00
30/11/2016	Harrow Music Service	Autumn Concert at Bushey 50% Of Tickets sold by Harrow Youth Brass	£ 75.00
02/12/2016	Paul Strickland Scanner Appeal	Fundraising concert at Holy Trinity Church Northwood	£ 1,000.00
04/12/2016	St Lukes Hospice	1/3 Of £18k Monies raised at the "Light up a Life" event	£ 6,000.00

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**75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM**

08/12/2016	Watford Sheltered Workshop	Donation of fee for Ensemble performing at Watford Business Chamber at Moor Park	£ 125.00
11/12/2016	Bentley Priory Battle of Britain Trust	Xmas Concert at Bentley Priory	£1,645.55
14/12/2016	Harrow Community Choir	Monies Raised at the Carol concert at St Johns Church, Harrow, For Mayor of Harrow and Metropolitan Police	£400.00
19/02/2017	St Anselms Church	Fundraising concert	£917.00
07/03/2017	St Marys Church, Watford	Fundraising Concert	£100.00
12/03/2017	Harrow Carers	Fundraising Concert at Ruislip Manor Methodist Church	£309.00

Total to March 2017	<b>£ 16,238.71</b>
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<b>Total Funds raised through HAMC activities</b>	<b>£115,655.46</b>
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### **100 Club**

The choir runs a monthly lottery called the 100 Club – where members are allocated a ball costing £5/month. The draw currently has 52 members (an increase fall from last year’s high of 49), made up of choristers/ partners/ friends of the choir, so there is a monthly prize fund of £130 (50% of subscription) of which 60% goes to the first prize, and 30% to the second, and 10% to a third prize. The remaining 50% of the subscription goes into the choir’s general fund to support running costs. This is a very valuable source of cash flow for the choir, and I would encourage all choristers and partners to get involved in the draw – you don’t have to accept any winnings – you can donate them to the choir.

Bob Finch queried whether it would be possible to keep a small percentage of the proceeds from charitable concerts for ourselves. The Treasurer did not feel we needed to request donations or fees as we therefore enhance our reputation in serving the local community.

Philip Rayner asked how payment was made to the professionals, ie accompanist and MD. The Treasurer said an annual budget was produced at the beginning of the year to cover honoraria’s. He also confirmed that it is necessary that we have sufficient resources to pay any professional fees if required.

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

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ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM

---

Acceptance of the Accounts and the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Mike Gibson and seconded by Stephen Sweden and agreed unanimously. The Chairman and everyone present thanked Andrew for his continued hard work as Treasurer.

### 6. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS AND ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman gave his report as follows:

"This report covers the period 1 May 2016 to the 30th April 2017 which was our 75th Anniversary Year. Overall it was a great success with more events than ever before. We performed on 15 occasions as well as a few smaller events which the Ensemble gave. So, thanks to all choristers, musical staff and committee members for making it a memorable year.

#### 1. Concerts and Performances:

In addition to our "usual" events, such as Bentley Priory, we enjoyed supporting Harrow Lions for an excellent concert in Pinner and Ruislip Lions for a joint concert with the Guildford Friary Brass Band. The concert with Harrow Youth Brass Band in Bushey was also a part of the initiatives to raise our profile, support new charities and share the stage with different musicians. The Ensemble performed at Moor Park Mansion for the Watford and 3 Rivers Chambers of Commerce to widen our appeal in that area. Every event is detailed in our Newsletters. Both the main choir and the Ensemble produced good performances at many venues which won critical acclaim and raised money for a variety of charities.

As we were very busy last year we decided this year to reduce the number of events. Partly to ensure we can learn new music and partly to ensure we don't overburden choristers. We need a full attendance for major events so they are a success both musically and financially.

I am very grateful again to Chris Drew for his enthusiasm and achievements in organising events and seeking out new opportunities with new organisations. He receives many requests and ensures that we carry out the best ones. His diplomatic skills would be very useful in Brexit negotiations.

#### 2. Recruitment and Choir numbers:

At the beginning of the year we had 46 active choristers. A few have retired and the current number is 44. We need to find new members.

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM

---

Recruitment is a continuing challenge for every male voice choir across the country. It is difficult to persuade new and younger individuals to join. We investigated the possibility of a different approach with a company called "Away to Sing" but this would not suit us at present. In the immediate future, we will hold an Open Evening on **13 June** at Pinner Memorial Hall. We need your support to make it a success. Please publicise it widely and encourage your friends to come along. I will issue more details shortly.

The result of last year's choir survey revealed that the best recruiters are yourselves. Personal contacts and impressive choral performances are the best marketing tools. Spread the word that the choir is a friendly group where they will receive a warm welcome, enjoy good music and sing at interesting venues.

### **3. Marketing and Profile:**

As in last year several events were at repeat venues. We supported Harrow Civic events including the Metropolitan Police concert. We will appear again in October at Voices for Hospices at Harrow School. These all maintain our standing locally. We have more contacts now with other organisations and worthwhile charities. They need constantly updating to increase our opportunities to raise awareness of the choir's appeal and good deeds.

Rachel Frankel, a marketer, helped us with publicity for our anniversary concert which was sold out. We failed to fill Bushey Arena last Autumn. The challenge is to sell out venues if there is no box office or where we appear alone. Every chorister really must sell a few tickets for annual concerts to make them a success.

Our website needs more updating and improvement. Some has been done and we have updated it more regularly. We are looking for more expertise in the choir to help us do this. If this is not forthcoming we may need to look for another website provider who could provide better support. In this electronic age, the website needs to be more attractive to potential members and organisations who might wish to engage the choir.

### **4. Music Development:**

David Heasman will report on this. I want to thank David for his immense commitment and enthusiasm to keep up the musical standard of the choir. Huge thanks also to Avis Gerry for her wonderful accompaniment and dedication. Well done both.

We need to ensure we have back up for them. I am pleased to report that shortly we will be joined by Philip Southgate in a deputy conductor role. He runs his own music business locally and he is keen to take up the challenge of conducting the choir. A

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM

---

bonus is that he is a pianist as well in case we need assistance there.

### **5. Business and Finance:**

Andrew Machin has reported in detail on choir finances. We are lucky to have his expertise. He has indicated a wish to stand down at the end of the next year. We must find a replacement for him. It's particularly good to repeat that the choir has continued its impressive efforts in raising money for charitable causes. In the last financial year, the sum raised was £ 16,239.

Social events are an important aspect of the bonhomie of the choir. Many thanks to Roz Heasman for organising our 75th Anniversary Dinner in a different format and for ensuring another good BBQ with fine weather.

The future of the Harrow Arts Centre is unclear. Sadly, the redevelopment scheme looks to have failed so Harrow Council is back in control. We think there will be little improvement to the building over the near future. We are monitoring the situation and have a fall back if needed.

### **6. Tours :**

We decided it would be impossible to fit in a tour before Autumn 2017. Denis Argent has arranged for us to visit Llandudno in North Wales in November where we will take part in the North Wales music festival. We are looking forward to that. Thank you, Denis, for carrying out your role as welfare officer with discretion and support. We wish you well on your own tour with the British Lions and perhaps you can recruit a few choristers en route.

### **7. Conclusion:**

In conclusion:

- An exceedingly busy 75th year for the choir with impressive events and performances.
- Whilst we are financially sound with no immediate need to increase the membership fee, we need to make sure our own concert this Autumn raises necessary funds to cover our annual overheads.
- Another year when David and Avis performed heroically to fulfil an increasing number of engagements. For that reason, we are hoping that Philip Southgate who will join us shortly, will be a great addition to the team.
- Recruitment continues to be the main challenge for the choir. We need to find new choristers now.

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM

---

- My thanks to the other officers Andrew and Roz, who served us so well this year. Also to all committee members and life members who gave their time to attend meetings to keep this great choir going.
- I would also like to thank the unsung heroes such as Geoff Lee who provides the music, Chris Jones who has done the newsletter and posters despite ill health and Bob Finch who gets us on stage – if I fail to mention others then your good deeds are still greatly appreciated. It has been a privilege to work with you all.”

Acceptance of the Chairman’s Report was proposed by Cled Yorworth, seconded by Ronnie Davidson and carried unanimously.

### **8. AGREE CONSTITUTION AND ANY RULE CHANGES OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN**

No notice of any Rule changes had been received.

The recommendation to appoint Philip Southgate in the joint role of Deputy MD and assistant Accompanist was carried unanimously.

### **9. MUSIC DIRECTOR’S ANNUAL REPORT**

The MD reported as follows:

“It’s not easy being a chorister – at least not if you want to become proficient. That requires first of all the desire to give of your best, to constantly learn and improve and to put time and effort into so doing.

The recent email exchange under the heading “View from the Front” has, I think, been very useful although the number of choristers who have become involved has been hugely disappointing. Of the 42 choristers who have access to email, the number that have responded can be counted on the fingers of one hand but I hope that as many members as possible follow the exchange and find it useful.

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM

---

The reasons for starting the weekly missive were mainly:

- to convey my view on the previous rehearsal/concert and
- to focus on particular points that arose in the rehearsal
- to maintain momentum between rehearsals
- to allow choristers to highlight issues that they would like addressed
- as a way of keeping everybody in touch other than just once a week
- to remind choristers of points to work on between rehearsals.

It's not easy being a Music Director either. Not in the context of a Choir such as ours. First of all he (or she) is faced with a group of singers who have a wide range of ability and experience ranging from none at all to, in a very few cases, many years as a chorister. Some choristers have not sung in a choir since school and one or two had never sung in a choir until they joined us. So to join late in life and basically learn a new career is extremely difficult. Unlike a professional or even semi-professional chorus where the voices have all had some sort of training and for the most part read music to a high standard.

There is a major crisis in the Male Voice Choir world and that is the difficulty of recruiting new members, or even maintaining present numbers. It's a dilemma, because younger choristers are hard to get, whilst the existing members are getting older. The genre originated in different times and the traditional repertoire is now, sadly, out of date as far as attracting recruits is concerned, whilst the public perception of the Male Voice Choir appears to be that it is a thing of the past. Yet if you consider the amount of fun you get out of it, the amount of pleasure audiences get out of our performances, the camaraderie you enjoy and the pleasure from weekends away, isn't it something that should be promoted?

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM

---

So I my policy is to take a broad approach based on the following criteria.

- most important is the selection or repertoire, the songs we sing ultimately have to please both audience and choristers
- the music has to be demanding enough to stimulate the more capable members but not too difficult for the less experienced
- what we do has to be fun

Having said that, I think we do remarkably well compared to many other choirs and have been complimented by other choristers that have heard us. Comments include "how smart (we) look" and "how nice it is to hear the words". This is gratifying given that we have only one rehearsal a week and given the individual limitations that I have touched upon.

But we should not be complacent and we must keep striving for a better performance, because standing still leads to decline. There are many ways of upping our game such as, by both vocal and physical exercise, correct practice of notes, listening to teach tracts, learning the words, reading theory books and so forth. But as someone once said that only works if you want to do it and are prepared to commit time and effort! No-one knows it all and spending time between rehearsals, getting involved in the dialogue established in "View from the Front", just spending 10 minutes a day doing scales, learning how to breath properly can all be done in your own time. It doesn't have to take time out of rehearsal where time is precious.

There are many books available but one that is universally recommended especially for untrained singers is called simply "How To Sing" by Graham Hewitt. It's not expensive and is easy to follow – but there are others.

The overall message is that there is only so much I can achieve in the limited rehearsal time we have but you can help by spending some of your spare time improving your skills. Extra rehearsals are an option but would require your support.

## HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

### 75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 8.45PM

---

Finally let me say that it's a pleasure being your MD, and hard work, but the end result is what counts and for the most part last year has been a pretty successful one in terms of performances and long may it continue."

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to the MD, seconded by Mike Gibson and carried unanimously.

#### **10. ELECTION OF NOMINATED LIFE VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Andrew Machin has been nominated as a Life Vice-President. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Tom Murphy and carried unanimously.

#### **11. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

CHAIRMAN	Mr. R Evans	Carried unanimously
VICE CHAIRMAN	There were no nominations	
TREASURER	Mr A Machin	Carried unanimously
SECRETARY	Mrs R Heasman	Carried unanimously
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Mr J Taylor	"
	Mr C Drew	"
	Mr S Sweden	"
	Mr R Nicholas	"
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	Mr M Meyer	"

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**75TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT HARROW ARTS CENTRE, HATCH END, HARROW  
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---

**12. AGREE SINGING MEMBER AND ASSOCIATE SUBSCRIPTION 2016/2017**

The Treasurer proposed that the subscriptions remain at £80 for full membership with associate membership staying at £10. A vote was taken on the proposal and carried unanimously by all those present.

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Chris Drew asked if the Choir should consider moving to another venue for rehearsal in view of the lack of facilities at the HAC. After some discussion, it was agreed that we should book the venue for another year and request that various improvements be put in place, e.g. the piano and Clavinola to be serviced and the lifts to be in working order.

**CHRIS**

**14. DATE OF NEXT AGM**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 9.45m. The next AGM will be held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

**CHAIRMAN .....**

**DATE.....**