



# ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL EX-CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATION

*Affiliated to the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations*

## **Minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting Held in the Crypt, Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 12.15pm**

**Present:** Malcolm Bury (Chairman), John Meager (Vice Chairman & Honorary Treasurer) Moira Dean, Laura Hicks, Trevor Jarvis, Peter Jeffs, Pat Hurford, David Ireson, Geoff Ward, John Adams, Maureen Adams.

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chairman opened the meeting with the Old Cathedral Choristers' prayer.

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Parnell, Alan Godfrey, John Tournay, Dominic Lewis-Barclay, Simon Trott, Jim Healing, Robert Price, Nigel Nethersole, Libby Godlee and Tony Price.

The Chairman explained that in the absence of an Honorary Secretary, Peter Jeffs had agreed to take notes during the meeting.

### **2. Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting and matters arising**

The minutes had been posted on the website.

#### **Matters arising:**

The contribution to the ECA's website hosting costs had been implemented (*see Treasurers Report*)

The job description for Honorary Secretary had been included with the notification to the membership regarding this vacant position.

Amendments to the constitution membership clauses had been completed.

Following a review of the FCOCA relationship, the Committee agreed to continue the ECA membership as the cost was minimal. (*See Treasurers Report*) This would enable those members who have an interest to follow FCOCA and other Cathedrals' events and activities.

There being no other matters arising, Trevor Jarvis proposed the minutes be adopted, seconded by David Ireson. The Chairman signed the minutes.

### **3. Chairman's Report (*Attached*)**

Copies of minutes were available at the meeting. The Chairman added some clarification:

The Barry Rose 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations produced a small surplus was donated to Cathedral funds as a contribution towards the cost of additional Lay Clerks.

#### **Forthcoming ECA events:**

The Chairman added a follow-up item from the ECA Spring Planning Meeting. A decision is awaited from the Diary Planning Committee in May regarding the proposal for Exquire to sing at a Saturday midday Choral Eucharist in the Lady Chapel in quarter 4/2015.

Moira Dean proposed the report be adopted, seconded by Pat Hurford.

### **4. Honorary Treasurer's Report (*Attached*)**

The report was taken as read. Malcolm Bury proposed the report be adopted seconded by Peter Jeffs.

## 5. Election of Committee Members

With the exception of John Meager, Vice-Chairman and Honorary Treasurer, the existing Committee Members had agreed to stand for another year.

There being no other nominations, David Ireson proposed they be re-elected '*en bloc*'. This was seconded by John Adams.

### **Vacant Posts:**

The Chairman expressed concern about the vacant positions of Honorary Treasurer and Secretary. There had been no response from the membership following notifications in Alban Notes and the Website. The Chairman admitted to being at a loss as to how to progress, given the importance of governance and management of funds within the ECA.

David Ireson suggested a personal approach may prove more fruitful, perhaps to a parent of an ex-chorister or a friend of the ECA. Some potential candidates were discussed and the meeting agreed that it was an option worth pursuing.

Trevor Jarvis suggested we might approach parents of choristers soon to be valedicted or Abbey Singer parents. Malcolm Bury invited caution as the choristers being valedicted were approaching changes in their lives/education and many were likely to join Abbey Singers in order to maintain their connections with the wider Cathedral family.

It was noted that Gemma Winpenny was always helpful and supportive but was usually kept very busy.

Malcolm Bury explained it was difficult for him to approach people locally given his distance from St Albans, however it was felt that those attending the meeting could/should approach potential candidates and report back to the Chairman.

Given the lack of officers and continuity of our biennial programme it was felt that the impetus for a 2016 reunion was being lost and another large fund-raising event, e.g. an ECA Concert, would be too costly and difficult to arrange with the Cathedral authorities.

The Chairman did offer a 'fall-back' plan:

Honorary Secretary: Tony Price was assisting with the editing and publication of Alban Notes to help the Chairman and secure future quarterly publications.

Honorary Treasurer: John Meager agreed to continue to manage the accounts although given the distance from his home and difficulties driving, he expressed doubts about his ability to attend meetings. The position of Vice-Chairman, created after the Chairman's illness in 2012, was not critical on an ongoing basis, though desirable.

## 6. Other Business

### **Choir Camp/Luccombe visit 2015**

Tony and Ros de Rivaz had been contacted about future events and were enthusiastic providing the field was available but could not commit to dates. Pat Hurford indicated that their involvement was essential to a field camp.

There was some discussion around invitations to ex-choristers, especially under 18s, and the dynamics surrounding such a broad age spectrum, though it was generally felt all ex-choristers should be invited providing relevant legal and reputational issues were properly managed.

Trevor Jarvis advised that Rev. Stephen Humphreys, the assistant priest at Luccombe, had indicated that both he and the Luccombe parishioners would welcome a future visit.

Dates were under discussion and the chairman will pursue these with Tony and Ros di Rivaz and will provide the necessary proposal to including legal compliance, risk assessment and reputational issues to the Master of the Music and The Dean for their endorsement. **Action MGB**

### **Abbey Girls' Choir 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

Judith Weir had been commissioned to compose an anthem (introit) to which the ECA had agreed to donate £1,000 towards the cost. Tom Winpenny is expecting to secure the remaining sponsorship.

The Anniversary would be an Abbey Girls' Choir event, and whilst not singing it was felt the ECA should support and celebrate this event as co-sponsors.

The Chairman will continue to liaise with the Master of the Music on this and other matters. It was noted that Andrew Lucas provides valuable advice and guidance to the ECA. **Action: MGB**

### **Timings of Meetings**

The ECA Committee had discussed the optimum times and days for meetings. Those present indicated a general preference for weekends, suggesting Saturdays were probably the favoured day.

Moira Dean and David Ireson suggested the ECA AGM may be better held on a reunion day, coinciding with a service and/or meal. Pat Hurford suggested a 3.00pm AGM prior to Evensong enabling easier travel for members living some distance away. With this in mind consideration should be given to having the AGM and reunion on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016 prior to evensong, although this would mean that currently elected committee would serve a further period from 31<sup>st</sup> March to June. **Action: MGB/Committee**

### **140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cathedral Choir**

The Chairman is to approach the Cathedral planners regarding any commemoration of this anniversary with a possible event involving the ECA. **Action: MGB**

***Post meeting note: Advice from Andrew Lucas - this anniversary will not be celebrated.***

John Adams questioned the reasons behind difficulties finding dates for events and asked whether the ECA was wanted by the Cathedral, was needed or whether it had served its time in the current form.

It was noted that ex-choristers (not Lay Clerks) may have little knowledge or interest in the ECA activities or raison d'être. The Chairman noted that some other cathedrals were experiencing similar challenges and added that life style changes over the years (e.g. technology, social media, overseas holidays and communications) may work against the current incarnation of the ECA.

It was noted that both The Dean and the Master of the Music were generally supportive of the ECA.

Discussions aimed at finding times when the Cathedral was less busy and communication of the ECA role in supporting the musical heritage needed to continue. **Action: MGB**

The committee should regularly review the current ECA to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate to all members/age groups. In addition, the committee should continue to work with the Cathedral to determine how best to meet the objectives of the ECA and contribute to Cathedral life. **Action MGB/Committee**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12.58pm.

## Chairman's Report for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015

I begin my report once again on a note of sadness that the health of our President, Peter Hurford, continues to decline - our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Pat and the family.

The last 12 months have proved to be fairly "fallow" with fewer than expected events.

Normally, 2014 would have been our biennial reunion and choral evensong however we were unable to hold this event because of the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations for Barry Rose at the Cathedral. A special service of Choral Evensong was held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June instead at which Barry conducted the canticles and anthem and those ECA members who sang with, or played for, Barry were invited to attend the service and sing with the massed choir of around 70 singers from St Albans, St Paul's and Guildford Cathedrals. ECA committee members assisted in managing the event and a small resulting surplus in the region of £250 was donated to Cathedral funds.

To balance the programme of activities for our full membership Exquire (some 20 singers) sang at Music in Bloom under the direction of David Ireson in September. Unfortunately the fire alarm went off twice and the Cathedral was evacuated. However this gave us the opportunity for some impromptu singing on the Abbey Orchard, while the Fire Service inspected the Cathedral, which was much appreciated.

Our 2014 ECA Members' Year Book was published in September and made available to members on request free of charge. This latest edition was improved to include short articles on members who had, or are, pursuing musical careers. My thanks to Peter and Susan Jeffs for their very kind sponsorship of the Year Book.

Our administrative activities have 'ticked over' with our website and membership database being brilliantly managed by Tony Price and we have continued to publish Alban Notes on a quarterly basis.

Sadly a further Ex-Choristers' Camp at Luccombe proved not to be feasible last year due to family commitments of Tony & Ros de Rivaz and the lack of a critical mass of potential attendees. We are looking at another possible visit in 2015.

To wind up my report on last year, I am most disappointed that despite several requests and appeals no-one has offered to take over the role of Honorary Secretary.

Looking at our forthcoming events:

Given that 2015 is an IOF year, which we avoid for our reunions, I have asked the Precentor/Dean's PA and the Cathedral Diary Planning Committee if it would be possible for Exquire to sing at a Saturday mid-day Choral Eucharist in the Lady Chapel in Q4.

The committee is also exploring a "Gaudy" type event; lunch/speaker/choral evensong for sometime during 2015 targeting members from the same period, albeit with the event open to all members.

As mentioned we are also looking at another Luccombe Camp but this depends on finding a suitable weekend, camp leaders and a critical mass of participants.

In 2016 the Abbey Girls Choir celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to mark this occasion a short anthem has been commissioned from Judith Weir to which the ECA has committed sponsorship of £1,000.

Since becoming Chairman in 2007 many of you know that I have been writing a book on the History of the St Albans Cathedral Choirs *which I hope will be published this year by Rhinegold Publishing Co.* As a by-product of my research, and together with the help of Gemma Winpenny, Secretary to the Music Department, an archive of photographs has been compiled. In addition, and with the help of John Adams and Alen Herbert a sound archive or some 60 CD recordings of the choir has also been established and will be held in the Muniment Room for security and posterity. These recordings will be accessible to members.

Finally, I should like to thank all the outgoing committee members for their tremendous efforts and encouragement since last year and especially David Ireson who, as an Honorary Life Member, attends our Committee meetings and makes a very valuable contribution. Special thanks also to Andrew Lucas, Tom Winpenny, Gemma Winpenny and Anna McCrum, Dean's PA without whose support our Association would find it difficult to flourish.

Thank you.

Malcolm Bury – Chairman, April 2015