

St Albans Cathedral Ex-Choristers Association

THE CATHEDRAL AND ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. ALBAN

Affiliated to the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2018

Saturday, 16th June 2018, 1.30pm
The Deanery Chapter Room

The meeting opened with prayer from The Dean.

Welcome & Apologies

The Chairman welcomed the members and guests. Apologies were received from: John Adams, Helen Charlston, Stephen Darlington, John Dean, Tony de Rivas, Alan Herbert, Laura Hicks, Alice Knight, Simon Lindley, Bernard Moseley, Andrew Parnell, Rhodri Pazzi-Axworthy, Tom Pazzi-Axworthy, Nina Vinther, Dr Peter Ward, Tom Winpenny and Ian Woods.

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2017

There were no actions arising. The Chairman moved that they were an accurate reflection of the meeting and be accepted. The minutes were accepted and signed.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman presented his report.

I have now been Chairman of the St. Albans Cathedral Ex-Choristers' Association for eleven years and have greatly enjoyed leading its success. However, as you all will know, the time has come for me to make way for a new and younger person with a new leadership team.

My report, therefore, this year is in two parts; the first covering our activities during the year ended 31st March 2018; the second being a brief look at the main achievements, and occasional set-backs, since the inception of the ECA in 2007.

The last year has been one of ups and downs. Sadly we continue to see the decline in the health of our President, Peter Hurford and, with great sadness, we marked the passing of Honorary Life Member, Pat Hurford. Once again, I commend the Hurford family and all those who care for Peter. It is quite amazing how he has been sustained since 2012 when he first entered care.

In June 2017 ExQuire once again sang a Service of Choral Eucharist under the direction of former Assistant Master of the Music and Founder-Director of the Abbey Girls Choir, Andrew Parnell, and last month ExQuire & Friends sang Choral Eucharist for the Feast of Corpus Christi. The choir was brilliantly conducted by Marie Price with Chris Muhley playing the organ for us so a very big 'thank you' to them both.

Also last year some of our intrepid adventurers spent a very wet and windy weekend at Luccombe and we were grateful to Richard Lilley and Tony de Rivaz for the caravan and 'community tent.' We (well some) did manage a walk to the top of Dunkery Beacon for the Chairman's Lunch and a few of us sang Choral Evensong to a packed church on Sunday afternoon. Thanks to David Ireson for conducting us and to Rogers Covey-Crump for playing the organ. We were quite astonished at the effort made by the villagers to have flower festival that weekend with St Alban and the Cathedral as its theme.

On the social side, we had a "Pub Nite" in London a few weeks back ably organised by Nic Gibbon and in the coming months there may well be a "Curry Night" – always a favourite with lay clerks and former choristers.

Earlier this month I had the pleasure of inviting Moira Dean to become an Honorary Life Member of the ECA, which she kindly accepted. Honorary Life Members act as advisors and trustees; they attend our committee meeting and over the years, as a co-founder and elected Honorary Member, Moira has provided some very valuable advice and guidance.

The 2018 Members' Year Book again features some of our members, young and not quite so young, and hopefully, funds permitting, this will continue in the future. A copy is available, free of charge to all those attending today.

Internet technology has driven our communications. To date we have published 43 editions of Alban Notes with over 300 copies distributed by email. Our finances are now managed through online banking, and our website, vital for cost-effective communications with our members, continues to draw around 20 hits per week. On the issue of finance please be aware that there will be a 'receptacle' in the bar area for contributions towards today's expenses and one of my favourite sounds is the rustle of paper.

Facebook has proved a useful tool, both for advertising our activities and also for contacting those members who, perhaps, are now using email less frequently.

However, we do recognise that email and Facebook are now being overtaken by other social media, for example, Twitter and Instagram, so the ECA now has its own Twitter account. We are also aware of the need to comply with new legislation and specifically GDPR and we will hear a little more on this topic from our IT & Communications Manager, Tony Price.

Looking back on my time as Chairman as you can imagine I have very mixed feelings. There have been some tremendous successes with many enjoyable events, including two major

concerts in the Abbey, the formation of ExQuire, visits to Luccombe and, of course our biennial reunions where we sing along side the Cathedral Choir.

In addition to managing the Association, two major projects have taken much of my time; firstly the publication and sale of my book 'The Choirs and Musicians of St Albans Cathedral' – over 300 copies - and I have been able to give two Gift Aided donations to the Cathedral Choirs which were earmarked for the fund to purchase new surplices for the Cathedral Choir and also to replace some of the recital folders. I do have a few copies with me today (and also some order forms) if anyone has not yet purchased one – price £12.99.

The second major project has been to initiate and maintain the Cathedral Choirs' Archives. Over the last eleven years I have amassed a considerable amount of documentation, including photographs (formal and social), concert programmes and special service sheets, sound recordings going back as far as the 60s and other papers that should be retained for future interest and posterity. Last Saturday, four young 'Sherpas carried several plastic crates up to the triforium for storage and future access. There is still a significant amount of work to do to catalogue and index these archives and of course we will continue to retain relevant items in future.

Looking to the future, our main challenges will continue to be maintaining the interest of our members and encouraging their participation in ECA events, especially our reunions and choral events, and to do this we need a strong management committee with the necessary skills base. It is therefore a concern that the position of Honorary Secretary has remained vacant for several years. The role is not arduous or time consuming so if you believe you could help us in this role please do contact the Chairman via the ECA website or speak to any member of the committee.

I should like to thank all those who have served on the committee over the last two years, and indeed the last eleven years, and have attended our meetings, and in particular Honorary Life Members David Ireson and Moira Dean. Excellent support has also been provided by Jeremy Meager, who has taken over as Honorary Treasurer from his father John, Tony Price, our IT & Communications Manager, Laura Hicks and Helen Charlston, Abbey Girls Choir Representatives; Trevor Jarvis, Nic Gibbon, Peter Jeffs, Richard Lilley representing the Cathedral Choir and also Nick Coleman and Paolo Baroni who were co-opted earlier in the year and are standing for election today; all have done a superb job.

Finally I should also like to thank Dean Jeffrey for his tremendous encouragement, Andrew Lucas, Vice-President and Master of the Music, Tom Winpenny, Assistant Master of the Music and Director of the Abbey Girls' Choir and Lizzie Smyth, Secretary to the Music Department, for their continuing guidance and support and last but not least my wife Luanda for her encouragement to continue to sing and put up with the hours spent over the years in my study.

I look to the future with confidence that the events and activities planned by the newly elected leadership team will be enjoyable and well supported by members.

Thank you.

Malcolm Bury - Chairman

A question was asked with regard to the biennial reunion and whether a fixed date should be set in the Cathedral diary. This was accepted and similarly the date of the AGM was also expected to be set.

*Moved: Trevor Jarvis
Seconded: Michael Milburn*

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented his report.

The ECA current account was successfully transferred to NatWest Bank in October 2017 with an opening balance of £2,634.40.

The only amount paid since then was a credit of £20 on 22nd January 2018 from Peter Pearson.

A payment of £165.98 was made to the Chairman on 15th November 2017 reimbursing him for the following expenditure incurred in the previous year to 31st March 2017:

- 4th June, £64.95 to Paul and Moira Dean for AGM refreshments*
- 25th May, £64.81 to DoxDirect Ltd for Exquire Eucharist music packs*
- 18th July, £2.60 postage for Alban Notes*
- 29th July, £33.62 for general provisions at the Luccombe Camp*

The closing balance at 31st March 2018 was £2,488.42.

Jeremy Meager – Honorary Treasurer

It was noted that the move to a new bank has meant more efficient management of the ECA funds as online banking facilities are available.

*Moved: Treasurer
Seconded: Nic Gibbon*

IT & Communications Manager Report on Data Protection

Tony Price presented a report on the ECA Privacy Policy with regard to the nature, use and protection of members' personal information. Copies of the Privacy Policy were distributed to attendees.

TP mentioned a recent request for an entry in a 2014 newsletter to be removed for personal reasons and that this had been done. Michael Milburn asked whether previous editions of the newsletter (that are published to the website) might be archived and removed from the website to minimise the impact of requests to be forgotten.

Election of the Chairman

The Chairman proposed Richard Lilley to be the new Chairman. This was accepted with no objections.

*Moved: Malcolm Bury
Seconded: David Ireson*

Richard Lilley accepted and assumed the chair.

He expressed personal thanks, and gratitude on behalf of all members to Malcolm, for his dedication, commitment and leadership of the ECA over the past 11 years, stating:

"It was clear that without his unwavering commitment, the ECA would not be flourishing as it is today."

Election of the Committee

The new Chairman reported that all the current committee members have agreed to continue in post and proposed that they be re-elected en bloc. Nick Coleman and Paolo Baroni were confirmed in their respective committee positions.

The committee is therefore as follows:

Richard Lilley	Chairman
Jeremy Meager	Honorary Treasurer
** Vacant **	Honorary Secretary
Tony Price	IT and Communications Manager
Trevor Jarvis	Representative for the Cathedral Choir 1950s
Nicolas Gibbon	Representative for the Cathedral Choir 1960s
Peter Jeffs	Representative for the Cathedral Choir 1960s
Nick Coleman	Representative for the Cathedral Choir 1970s
Paolo Baroni	Representative for the Cathedral Choir 1990s
Helen Charlston	Representative for the Abbey Girls Choir
Laura Hicks	Representative for the Abbey Girls Choir

*Moved: Chairman
Seconded: John Tourney*

Any Other Business

The Chairman outlined the details of the FCOCA Festival in Peterborough during the weekend of 14th to 16th September and gave information on the arrangements for the retirement of Stephen Darlington from Christchurch, Oxford on Saturday 7th July.

The Chairman reminded those present of the ECA social media presence on Twitter (@StAlbansECA) and Facebook (StAlbansECA) and asked that members follow the ECA on these platforms to enable more efficient sharing of ECA news and information.

The Chairman also confirmed the 60th Anniversary visit to Luccombe from the 27th to the 29th July was going ahead and that the villagers were looking forward to the ex-choristers singing Evensong for them once more.

It was also announced that the Cathedral had asked the Ex-Choristers choir to sing at the Choral Eucharist on All Souls day (Friday 2nd November 2018 at 8pm). The Chairman stressed the importance of a balanced choir and asked members to commit to this date as soon as possible.

Moira Dean informed the meeting that the current edition of the Cathedral Music Trust Newsletter included an article on the ECA and recommended it to members and friends.

With no further business, the meeting closed at 2.15pm.