

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 2024 Annual General Meeting

Held at 13:00 on Saturday 15th June 2024 in the Chapter Room in Cathedral House.

Attendance in St Albans

Paolo Baroni, Malcolm Bury, Nick Coleman, Moira Dean, David Ireson, Trevor Jarvis, Richard Lilley (Chair), Jeremy Meager, Andrew Parnell, Tony Price, Barry Rose, Geoff Ward.

Attendance via Teleconferencing

Mike Hurford, Simon Trott (minutes).

Welcome and Reflection

The meeting was chaired by Richard Lilley, ECA Chair. The Dean of St Albans, Very Rev. Jo Kelley-Moore welcomed us and thanked the Association for our ongoing support of the music in the Cathedral. She reflected that this day has been planned to mark the retirement of Andrew Lucas as Master of the Music, and that the attendees of this meeting would be joined later on by many more 'alumni' from many generations of choristers to enjoy the special evensong. In her opening prayer we were reminded of the centuries long heritage of music making as part of the worship in this Holy place, and to quote, for our meeting: "*We pray that when we speak there is light and life, and when we act there is justice and love*".

Apologies

Apologies for this meeting had been received from:

David Broad, Nick Clark, Stephen Darlington, Nic Gibbon, Nigel Hunt, Peter Jeffs, John Marvin, Michael Milbourn, Bernard Moseley, Andrew Shepstone, Ian Woods.

Our President, Stephen Darlington had asked ST to advise the meeting that today was his final service as Interim DoM at Christ Church Cathedral, clearly an important occasion.

RL passed round a special 'photo book' which had been prepared as a gift to Andrew Lucas from the ECA to be presented after evensong, together with a greeting card for which all were asked to sign.

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The file location of the 2023 minutes had been published with the invitation to the AGM. RL asked those present if there were considered to be inaccuracies or omissions. No comments were forthcoming, so were by implication adopted as a true record.

Chairman's Report

I welcome members today, both those here in Cathedral House (formerly known as the Deanery) and those who are joining our AGM via the internet. Your ECA committee now routinely meet in person, be it as a full committee, or smaller management meetings, whilst providing an on-line link for those to join in without having to travel great distances. Recently Tony, Malcolm and I met in a local pub to discuss business with Simon joining us on-line from the south-west. That said, the benefits of meeting in person in this place, the very heart of our organisation, cannot be understated, particularly when we sing with the choir where we once did all those years ago.

The last 12 months seem to have passed very quickly and, as before I am particularly grateful to our Honorary Life Members for their support and all committee members but particularly to Simon, for his tireless administrative support, Tony for his technical abilities and time and Malcom for his wise counsel. We have met several times and use WhatsApp often to share thoughts, comments quicker than even e-mail allows.

Alban Notes continues to flourish with further publications this year. I'm grateful to all contributors and those who have shared ideas as we want to ensure Alban Notes remains current and of interest to you, the reader. I am particularly grateful to Andrew Lucas, for his regular feature, keeping us up to date with highlights involving the Cathedral Choirs.

We welcomed newly valedicted choristers from the Cathedral choirs as members last summer and look forward to adding to our membership next month. The current organ scholar was pleased to remain for his second year.

As I reported last year, I met with our Patron and Dean of St. Albans, The Very Reverend Jo Kelly-Moore when we decided to host a retirement event for Andrew Lucas and hold our AGM today.

I am delighted so many are able to join us later this afternoon for Choral Evensong at 5pm. The numbers and voice parts to be assembled is heart warming, and I look forward to joining many of you later, singing once more in the Quire. There will be a reception in the North Transept after the service when we shall reflect over Andrew's 26 years as Master of Music.

I'm very grateful to those who have contributed to the detailed planning of today's events, as these things don't happen on their own. Simon Trott and Tony Price have been fundamental in pulling this together and have my personal thanks as they have both committed more than their fair share of the work. Simon is on-line today, from his holiday in France. I hope you feel included today Simon and am grateful to you for your dedication to the role of Honorary Secretary.

I would like to draw this report to a close with, once more, my personal thanks to your committee, our Honorary Life Members and the Music department for your support of this wonderful association and look forward to continued support as we move forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen that concludes my Chairmans report which I propose as suitable for inclusion in the minutes.

Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement

JM said how pleased he was to be able to attend this year's AGM in person; travelling from home in Malvern is not easy.

ECA funds at the previous AGM (June 2023) stood at £1,409.64. Our only expenditure in the year was £20 for our annual subscription to Once a Chorister (formerly the FCOCA). Income of £0.98 was from a 'test' credit via our new SumUp device which has been purchased to enable card payments from contributors.

JM noted that we have not received an invoice from TP for our web hosting (nor for the cost of the SumUp device).

The closing balance is stated as £1,390.62.

No provision has been made for costs for refreshments today, nor for Andrew Lucas's presentation. Such transactions, plus hoped-for donations from today's events will be recorded for the following financial year.

JM proposed this statement for adoption, seconded by NC.

Election of Committee Members

RL stated that he had hoped that he could attract a female member to the position of Vice Chair, as per the Constitution. This has not been achieved for five years, so now feels justified in making this post available to a male member of the Association. Keen to act on this in order to stabilise the metaphorical 'three legged stool' of our management group, the meeting was invited to propose someone to accept this role. Nick Coleman put himself forward for the post of Vice-Chair. Therefore, Nick was proposed alongside existing committee members for re-election 'en bloc'. Formal proposal was given for this by TJ, seconded by BR.

The committee is therefore now made up as follows:

Richard Lilley	Chairman
Nick Coleman	Vice-Chair , and 1970s representative
Jeremy Meager	Honorary Treasurer
Simon Trott	Honorary Secretary
Tony Price	IT and Communications Manager
Trevor Jarvis	Representative for the Cathedral Choir 1950s
Nic Gibbon	Representative for the Cathedral Choir 1960s
Paolo Baroni	Representative for the Cathedral Choir 1990s
Helen Charlston	Representative for the Cathedral Girls Choir
Laura Johnston (nee Hicks)	Representative for the Cathedral Girls Choir
Nina Vinther	Representative for the Cathedral Girls Choir

RL thanked the meeting, and commented that his intention for the coming year is to strengthen the committee with younger members as well as representatives from the Girl's choir, to continue issuing Alban Notes, and plan more events, especially choral events.

FCOCA

RL reported that the FCOCA (Federation of Old Choristers' Associations) has rebranded itself as "Once a Chorister". The Federation has been struggling to maintain its membership in recent years, with the 'Old Boys' club implication in the former name not helping. RL quoted a drop from 52 local associations to the current 28. He considers St Albans to be in the top 10 strongest associations.

This year's festival is being hosted by Llandaff Cathedral with events from Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd September. All St Albans ECA members are welcome to attend; booking is now open. Ed: There is an excellent festival brochure available on the federation website: see https://www.fcoca.org.uk/uploads/1/5/0/1/15016958/oac_brochure_2024_email.pdf

AOB

- 1) RL enlarged on activities to follow the AGM today: About 30 ex-choristers have volunteered to join the Cathedral choir for today's evensong. They will join forces for the Mag & Nunc (Walmisley in d minor) and the anthem (Balfour Gardiner Evening Hymn). Following evensong, members and choir will assemble in the North Transept for refreshments and a presentation by RL of the photo book and card to Andrew Lucas. About 20 members and lay clerks will then join Andrew for a meal at Cote Restaurant.
- 2) RL emphasised that no charges have been made for the day's events, though contributions to costs will be gratefully received. These can be made by card using our new SumUp reader, using the QR code in the ECA website and AGM invitation, or by cash.
- 3) ST stated that, during planning for today's evensong, the number of volunteer singers fell short of what Andrew Lucas had expected. This was considered due to the poor response over recent years from parents of valedicted choristers for contact details to be saved on our member database. RL agreed that this needs to be a focus for our activity, in particular to involve the cathedral's music department, and through engagement with Andrew Lucas's successor.
- 4) MB reported that he has a stock of c.200 copies of his excellent book 'Alban Notes' which he intends to give away free of charge to anyone attending evensong today (donations welcome!). On ST's request, MB would leave a handful of copes for discretionary donation, and in particular to Nigel Hunt who has submitted an interesting cutting from the Herts Ad' in 1964 for our archive.
- 5) BR noted that Andrew Lucas has been very recently appointed as Interim MoM at Winchester Cathedral, as from September. We wish him well.
- 6) RL observed that Barry has recently celebrated his 90th birthday. All wished him many happy returns!

The meeting closed at 13:40 pm.