

Derbyshire Singers

Chairman's Report Season 2020-2021

The Covid-19 pandemic continued throughout this season and as a result we were not able to meet due to Government rules. By May 2021 there were signs that restrictions would be relaxed allowing choral singing to resume albeit with caution. The Trustees and Musical Directors followed guidance from Making Music, ABCD and other experts regarding the resumption of non-professional singing, although progress was slow and it was not until July 19th with the introduction of Step 4 that more than six singers were able to meet again indoors. It was decided that we would aim for a gradual return, initially from September 2021, later extended to November, due to ongoing uncertainties including the lack of a suitable rehearsal venue.

As in early 2020 the Committee met regularly on Zoom and updated members at every stage. Our secretary Chris Baker continued to engage and delight us with Friday Musical Escapes until May 2021 when stay at home restrictions were beginning to ease and people were able to move around more freely. Many thanks to Chris for curating the Escapes and also thanks to those members who sent in a total of 98 emails from 29th March 2020 to May 2021 with suggestions for inclusion.

Lynne ran a Musicianship course comprising a series of ten Zoom education sessions aimed at building musical skills, which was particularly welcome. The first two groups were held from September 2020 with a third beginning just after the New Year. In addition, Lynne gave three very interesting Zoom presentations, one on English Folk Music in April and two in July, the first on John Tavener, focusing on Song for Athene and The Lamb and the second on Ave Maris Stella. These sessions were key in maintaining the spirit and connectivity of the choir and I am sure you all join me in thanking Lynne for these first-class presentations.

Due to the precarious situation pre vaccination in October 2020 the choir Choral Day comprising the Sonoro choral workshops Choral Inspirations was postponed. In part due to the lack of sufficient preparation time in 2021 the workshops have again been postponed and will hopefully take place in 2022. There was, however, the opportunity to join Sonoro "Sing with Sonoro" workshops online with Neil Ferris.

In April we were sorry to hear that Stephen Allen our excellent accompanist had decided to step down with immediate effect. I'm sure we all extend our thanks to Stephen for all his hard work and skill in supporting our rehearsals. We have been happy to welcome Amanda Kornas as our rehearsal accompanist for season 2021-2022.

This year we are once again holding our AGM in person on the 8th February 2022 at Matlock Methodist Church. The online AGM on 19th January 2021 was well attended and favourably received by members.

As you can see from the Treasurer's Report the choir's finances remained stable over the season with very little movement of funds. The Trustees decided to suspend subscriptions for the season and members will have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have at the AGM.

Two Trustees have resigned namely Dave Jackson our Trustee with responsibility for Publicity, who together with wife Julia contributed enormously to our quest for audiences. Dave and Julia both worked on our GDPR policy and the Trustees thank them for all their work on the Committee. Terence Libby is also resigning, Terence served a three year term, almost two of which were during the pandemic. He brought a wealth of knowledge and whilst he does not wish to remain a Trustee he will continue to support the choir wherever he can.

The Trustees have decided to increase their number to nine and I am pleased to report that we have three candidates for the resulting vacant Trustee positions as follows:

Angela Read: Proposed by Beth Richardson Seconded by Dorothy Smith

Helen Greer: Proposed by Jenny Andrews Seconded by Linda Fussey

Jonathan Francis: Proposed by Shelley Towe Seconded by Paul Thompson

There is a great deal of work to be done to move the choir through and beyond the pandemic and I am sure that the new Trustees together with those already in post and the Musical Directors will combine in working towards that goal.

The Committee were happy to welcome so many members back to choir rehearsals in November 2021. Some members remain absent for various reasons and others have retired or moved and we wish them all the very best. We now hope that we will be able to move forward and resume some form of normality in the present and coming season.