

**Minutes of the St Mary's Music Association (SMMA) Annual General Meeting  
held on Sunday 3 March 2019  
in the Parish Rooms**

Attendees: David Tomlinson (President), Bron Ferland (Chair), Oli King (Director of Music), Steve Cass (Treasurer), Karen Goddard (Secretary), Jim Butler (Publicity Secretary), Jeremy Allen (Assistant Organist).  
Other SMMA Committee Members: Peter De Vile, Alison Lawrence, Otilie Sefton, Gill Gibson.  
Other SMMA Members: Cecilia Tudo, Hannah Razzell, Jeremy Allen, Mo Pullen, Kate Beare, Ellie Beare, Anna Martin, Caroline Goulder, Patrick Li, Simon Potter, Rosemary Gibbon and Margaret Jacobs.

- 1 The Chair confirmed that the meeting had been properly advertised.
- 2 **Apologies for absence** had been received from Anne Cass, Karin Fischer-Buder, Noel Star, David and Diane Hoy. There were 22 people present.
- 3 **Adoption of the Minutes of the previous AGM**, held on 18 March 2018. The Minutes were adopted and signed by the President.
- 4 **Matters arising:** None.
- 5 **Correspondence:** None reported.
- 6 **Chair's report:**  
Bron began her report by reminding members that the SMMA exists to support the work of the Director of Music and to seek to encourage the development of musical potential. The year had included the launch of the new organ scholarship scheme, which was a major financial commitment and hopefully would continue for many years to come. The SMMA had continued to fund vocal training for Choral Scholars; awarded the annual music scholarship this year to Eleanor Game; funded Joyful Noise sessions; paid for new music; paid for training materials and awards for the RSCM Voice for Life scheme; and usually subsidises travel on trips for U18s. She further explained that in future if there were more Choral Scholar bursaries than the PCC have agreed to fund, then that shortfall would be paid by the SMMA.

She reported that the AGM is an opportunity to express public thanks to people who have worked so hard to deliver the year's programme of events. The list of thanks is long, reflecting the scope of everything that goes on. Between the Chair and Director of Music report, hopefully no-one is missed out and duplication is minimised.

The full programme of eight lunchtime concerts and four organ recitals were reasonably well attended. She thanked Gill Gibson for her work in coordinating the arrangements for refreshments and making sure that the rota of sandwich and cake makers is completed. She thanked Peter De Vile for organizing the organ recitals and to Caroline Goulder and Peter for organizing the trip to Guildford Cathedral.

Additional events in the year included a Duruflé Come and Sing afternoon in early June, organized by Jim Butler and Sue Sylvester-Bradley. The preacher at the June annual SMMA evensong was David Shepherd. September was a particularly busy month with the Patronal Festival at the start and the Choral Scholars' informal concert, supported by Kate Beare and Patrick Li; the wedding of Tim Hardingham and Nell Bacon in the middle of the month; and the ordination service at the end of September.

The SMMA has enjoyed recent contributions by Philip Sunderland, who is a Junior Choir parent and has played the organ for several services and also composed a carol for the choir, performed at Christmas. Bron commented that the online ticklist, devised and maintained by Rowan Sylvester-Bradley, provides Oli with crucial attendance information that he needs for planning, including arranging reinforcements occasionally when necessary. She commented, that despite occasional technical/security difficulties, the system is light years better than the previous handwritten version.

Bron thanked Alison Lawrence, co-opted member of the committee, who organises the Junior Choir social calendar, including a recent trip to the Polar Institute in Cambridge followed by visit to King's College. Bron expressed special thanks to all Responsible Adults for Joyful Noise, Junior Choir and Choral Scholars. She explained that to meet legal safeguarding requirements on ratios, a large number of volunteers are needed to deliver the programme for children and young people – and more volunteers are always needed! She explained that most RAs do 3, 4 or 5 sessions over a term, but there are some who do far more than that. In particular, she mentioned Becky Auty, Alison Lawrence who covers the Friday break almost every single week of the year and Karen Goddard who continues to RA for Junior Choir twice a month.

Bron explained that as Chair she continues to need and be grateful for the support of all the members of the SMMA Committee: Steve, Karen, Jim, Peter, Otilie, Nell, Alison and Gill. She thanked Kate, who was on the committee last year - as leader of Joyful Noise - and thanked Anne Cass, who has taken this over. She explained that the committee want to co-opt Alison to the committee again and also James Marsh, to represent the Brass Group and the Choral Scholars. She explained that Jeremy is an honorary member of the committee, not required to attend, but his thoughtful advice is always appreciated, alongside his skills and experience as accompanist and assistant organist, which we value highly.

On behalf of the SMMA, Bron expressed grateful thanks to Oli, who is the linchpin for the SMMA, encourages us and always works hard to ensure that we always give of our best. Long may that continue.

Finally, to David, our President, Bron commented that this might be his last SMMA AGM. Bron said how grateful we are for his support for the music at St Mary's, including over the years his support for all the new innovations, including the organ scholarship, the choral scholars and residential visits. If the musical life at St Mary's is flourishing, it is due in no small part to David's prayerful support and encouragement.

#### **7 Treasurer's report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2018:**

The summary of the 2018 accounts had been circulated in advance with the meeting papers. The treasurer confirmed that these were prepared on a receipts and payments basis. He also reported that the accounting records and accounts had been examined by David Birchall; and as usual would be audited along with the PCC accounts.

The treasurer outlined some details. He explained that a £778 donation to the Help the Heroes charity, raised from the devotional offering had not yet gone out. He reported that the accounts showed a small surplus (£2874), compared with a very tiny loss the previous year. He explained that the lunchtime recitals, organ recitals and other singing events brought in significantly more income than the previous year, along with gift aid receipts. He reported that all other items were similar to the previous year. He also reported that the organ scholarship fund (Community donations fund) contained healthy funds to support this share of the scholarship scheme for several years.

There were no questions for the treasurer on the accounts. The accounts were received. The President expressed thanks to the treasurer for his work.

#### **8 Director of Music's report:**

Oli commented that he has read quite a few choir director handbooks and textbooks, which state the need for a strong structure, discipline and motivation for the healthy running of a choir. In many ways choir teaching is similar to class teaching and having aims and objectives is important. He was really pleased that St Mary's continues to provide a home for so many different musical activities. The choirs and brass group come together to enable God's work.

As the choirs are completely non-auditioned, singers are working at different levels and being aware of the pace of learning is crucial for him, as Director of Music. He expressed huge thanks to all the singers and performers for their commitment.

Oli reported that numbers in the adult choir remains very healthy with a very small waiting list, but still slightly short on the adult bass department. He reported we are sad to lose Christine and Lesley from the adult choir; but pleased to welcome back Hannah, Ellie and Susie, former Choral Scholars.

The Junior Choir is completely full, running slightly above capacity, with a small waiting list. He expressed thanks to Alison for her support with Junior Choir activities and trips. He also thanked Kate, the founder of Joyful Noise, for all the progress during her tenure and was pleased that Anne Cass was taking over the group for the next chapter. Due to the changes in the slot, numbers had currently dropped, but were expected to recover gradually as the new arrangements become established.

The Brass Group has remained stable, occasionally bringing in extra players as required for particular occasions. He thanked Graham Cotton for his work with the group, who have done lots of events this year, including the Debden garden party, Easter, Christmas and Fete de la Musique.

Oli reported that Elliott, the organ scholar has made an incredible start. The committee unanimously agreed to invite him to stay for a second year. He is a very experienced musician (pianist and clarinetist), but was a beginner organist and has demonstrated great progress.

Oli reported that the Choral Scholars are doing extremely well; they are currently a modest number, but this changes as children move up from Junior Choir. One Choral Scholar chose to leave during the previous year.

Musically speaking, Oli felt it had been a terrific year. The highlights including the devotional offering, the Fauré Requiem and the Rheinberg Stabat Mater, which was a very powerful evening. He felt the Guildford Cathedral trip was an awesome event. The year also included a second devotional offering, in a year with serious time pressures leading into the usual busy Advent, Christmas and Epiphany period. Oli thanked Philip Sunderland for his profound composition.

Oli reported on the support structure for music making at St Mary's. He thanked everyone from the sandwich queen to the organ builder and all who work tirelessly hard to enable the music programme to continue. He thanked Hilary and Margaret for their tireless music librarian work organising and keeping track of the sheet music. Oli thanked Peter for his organ building and maintaining skills. Oli thanked Jeremy for his reading list and his support as a fantastic musician, wise friend and colleague.

Finally, Oli gave enormous thanks to Bron for all that she does to keep the SMMA a strong and stable structure. He also thanked David for being a legend to work with and a wise colleague, keeping him on the straight and narrow.

- 9 Elections:** The positions to be elected were: Chair (3-year term); Publicity Officer (3-year term); one ordinary Committee Member (3-year term). Bronwen Ferland was re-elected Chair (proposed: Oliver King, seconded: Jim Butler). Jim Butler was re-elected Publicity Officer (proposed Nell Bacon, seconded Noel Starr). Hannah Razzell was elected Committee Member (proposed: Patrick Li, seconded Jim Butler).

**10 President's remarks:**

The President thanked the entire SMMA for all they do to enrich the worship and musical life of the church. He also thanked those who support the work, including the committee and particularly to Bron for her leadership, skill, sheer hard work and dedication to the role.

The President reported that when he was interviewed by Radio Essex, they asked for the USP of each church and he responded that his church choir was brilliant: one of the crown jewels of St Mary's. He explained that the quality of the music is hugely impressive and the activities are popular, with numbers bursting at the seams. Musical life in the church is flourishing. The President praised the recent new development of the organ scholarship, which has already proved so beneficial for the current scholar, for St Mary's and also for the wider church, as he will move on in future and serve through music elsewhere.

The President thanked Oli for his humour and inspirational leadership, he is a great colleague to work with. He thanked Jeremy, for his diligent, relaxed, hard work. The President also thanked Kate Beare for her work with Joyful Noise. He commented that many of the children awarded surplices and ribbon awards the previous Sunday had originally come through to Junior Choir from Joyful Noise. He was pleased that the work of Joyful Noise was continuing under the leadership of Anne Cass.

The President closed by reminding the choir that love is our motivation and our goal, as he preached on in that morning's service (1 Cor 13) and as outlined in his book *Leading a Church to Maturity in Love*. He stated that worship is about expressing and deepening our love for God and we are called together to love each other. He commented how notable it is that so many children find their faith deepening through being part of the choir, through love and nurturing. He recognised the huge commitment it is to belong to the choir: faithful, committed practical loving. As Christians, it is about learning to depend more upon God, who is the source and the spring of the love that we show for each other. We pray before services and at the end to acknowledge God and his blessings. He closed by saying we should pray that in the coming year all continue to know God's presence and love each other.

#### **11 Any Other Business**

There was no AOB.