



# Minutes Wareham Choral Society AGM 2021

Monday  
10th Jan 2022  
9pm at LSM

## 1. Welcome

Welcome to Michael Alder, Pauline Alder, Eve Baker, Martin Baker, Brigid Barrett, Maureen Bayliss, Nancy Gibson, Margaret Harris, Jack Haworth, Jennifer Haworth, Yvonne Hunter, Janet Jones, Mark Lapper, Patricia Neimer, Bob Newnham, Judith Price, Teresa Rekowska, Angela Salter and Sarah Welton.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Ian Grocott, David Kemp, Christine Kemp, Hazel Ricketts and Brian Wilkins

## 3. Minutes of last year's AGM and matters arising

Last year's minutes were accepted as a true record. There were no matters arising

## 4. Chairman's Report

Judith Price reported as follows:

*Hazel suggested looking ahead to preparations for a motivational programme to attract members back as soon as Covid conditions allowed. She proposed the commissioning of a new work and suggested approaching a young composer Philip Singleton who produced an attractive package. Philip's Doctoral study was based on spectral music which uses tonal intervals within major and minor scales. Philip considering that the return to singing post Covid should be joyful suggested setting the words of the joyous Jubilate in celebration and asked the committee for suggestions for a suitable secular text.*

*The committee suggested two poems written by Thomas Hardy' Dorset's best loved famous poet. Hardy was an acclaimed atheist, who intimated his desire to 'believe' in the words of his famous poems The Darkling Thrush and The Oxen. This sentiment particularly suited the spectral tones with which Philip was familiar. The work would be scored for three choral movements and two solo arias with a trumpet and organ fanfare. The work evolved following many discussions with Philip Hazel and John Challenger and the soloists Lucy Braga and David Reece were engaged.*

*The Committee was inspired by the evolving project and realised that the commission offered interesting promotional opportunities. Excitement mounted as did concern regarding the number of members that would return in September. We contacted BpS and extended an invitation to join us, an offer which they gladly accepted.*

*As the Covid conditions relaxed the Committee approached the URC to discover what Covid precautions they would require when we resumed. Swabbing chairs post rehearsal was expected, and they also expressed concern regarding crowding since both WCS and the Purbeck Quire rehearsed on the same night in the building. I approached LSM church which presented a preferable alternative with a double entrance and a large lofty space for rising particles and is more comfortable since the building is heated continuously throughout the winter months. We informed the URC of our change in plans and made arrangements to collect and store our keyboard and bench etc. elsewhere. We accepted with alacrity a kind offer from David and Margaret Harris to use their capacious garage.*

*The Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July recorded our sadness at the loss of David Edgington and that a letter and card had been sent to Judy Edgington emphasising his admirable qualities and the support he had given WCS as a compassionate and passionate man who walked his talk. We have failed since then to replace David on the committee and it would be good to recruit a member to represent the Tenors and Basses on the Committee although Bob as the Secretary and a Tenor does the work of ten men.*

*The Committee became aware that the Jubilate with instrumental and vocal interest warranted a review of our approach to recruitment and publicity. It was decided to broaden our advertising by supplementing posters with articles in local magazines and newspapers whilst increasing our use of social media*

*including FB. In addition, when we knew Paul was not available and would be replaced by the celebrated young organist John Challenger we contacted the Dorset Organists association with news of our concert.. We also approached the Hardy Society regarding the setting of two of Hardy's poems in our newly commissioned work and they were delighted to inform their members.*

*At our meeting in September we met with members of BpS and formed a sub-committee to produce text that would highlight the first performance of the newly commissioned work emphasising the originality of Philip Singleton's use of spectral music and the inclusion of instrumental and solo items. This more imaginative and diverse approach to advertising which supplemented our large poster boards we believe contributed to our full house.*

*The Committee recommends the continued use of Lady St Mary Church for the foreseeable future and we hope to reduce the cost by using the keyboard and not the organ. As from now we look forward to the reinstated Spring Concert. A Summer Concert to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and an Autumn concert to mark Armistice Day by performing the Armed Man the Carol concert in December will be a mix of choir and audience carols and readings.*

*We need to market these concerts and should consider recruiting a member to explore sponsorship singly or with a small sub committee group. We must bear in mind that subscriptions should cover rehearsal costs and ticket sales fund concerts. Subscriptions should cover rehearsal costs and ticket sales fund concerts an adage that we are not meeting. So we hope to attract members to work alongside the committee to develop this source of income.*

*We can look forward to an exciting year of challenging but delightful concerts. I would like to thank all the committee members for their unstinting support and the hope that some members will come forward to ensure that whilst we continue to enjoy our choral singing we will remain solvent for the future.*

## 5. Music Director's Report

Hazel Rickett's report is as follows (presented by Judith Price in Hazel's absence).

*Normally the report from the MD is a review of our rehearsals and concerts in the preceding year. Given that this report is to the year ending August 2021, and that we only started to meet again in September 2021 there is little in the way of direct music making activity to report upon!*

*However we were not idle during this time. I never supposed that as MD of any group I would end up reading as many "government guidelines" documents as I have during this time, nor following with great interest research into aerosols emitted by singing, or other research connected with the spread of a virus! However, this is how much time was spent in this period, along with reading advice and guidance from Incorporated Society of Musicians, Making Music and other similar organisations on risk assessments and the safest way to resume rehearsing, and following various online forums where discussions were taking place about such things as 'singers masks', ventilation, spacing, length of rehearsals, and many other related issues.*

*Within this time too the question of what to sing next and how to boost the choir's morale and have something 'interesting' to come back to, and to attract attention both within Wareham and beyond. As you are obviously aware the "Dorset Jubilate" was the eventual answer to this, and the committee officially commissioned this from Phil Singleton in March 2021. However there was a lot of 'behind the scenes' work both in terms of general discussion with Phil and the committee so both understood what we wanted and needed before the commissioning, and many (happy) hours in discussion with Phil on the phone and via zoom, discussing texts, looking at drafts sent and giving feedback, and even a couple of 'in person' meet ups to see the progress of this work. We received the completed work on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021 in time for rehearsals to start.*

*Finding the right professional musicians for this work required a lot of care. Lucy Braga who has sung several times with us before approached me when she heard a concert was planned. It is lovely when soloists are keen to work with us again! David Reece I knew several years ago through another choir and he spent some time with the score before deciding that he felt he could do it justice - which proved to be the case. We were unfortunate that Paul, our excellent and very capable organist/accompanist was unavailable due to another concert on the same day. I actually spent a lot of the summer seeking advice about who to approach to play as the organ part is such a prominent part of the piece and in a style removed from the standard organist's repertoire, as well as technically not completely straightforward. It would also seem that organists able to play this, and come in and do so on the day were both very few and far between and already committed to other things! We were very fortunate that John Challenger, who already had a taste of the work having been consulted about the organ writing by Phil, unexpectedly found*

*our concert date available in his diary. With Phil himself on board for trumpet playing our 'team' of professional musicians was complete. I was then able to turn my attention to putting a programme together which would not only showcase Dorset Jubilate, but give variety with plenty of well known Christmas music all ready to start term in September!*

*So my report this year is one to document 'work behind the scenes' and to thank the committee for their support and hard work in the preparation which enabled the music making to start again in September.*

## 6. Treasurer's Report

Since the Society had been inactive for the whole year, there was no expenditure except for our annual subscription to Making Music. It should be noted that we had made extensive use of MM resources during the pandemic.

## 7. Election of Officers

All current officers are prepared to stand again. There were no other nominations. Current officers were re-elected on a show of hands.

## 8. Election of Committee Members

Sarah Welton is prepared to stand again. Maureen Bayliss has offered to join the committee. Both were elected on a show of hands.

## 10. A.O.B.

Comments from members initiated helpful discussions on several topics as follows:

We may hold a summer concert if Arts Council funding is obtained. The wisdom of holding a summer concert on Jun 4<sup>th</sup> was questioned. This is the Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend, when our concert might have to compete for audience with other events being held locally, or indeed, with the televised gala concerts etc. Another weekend in June might be a better choice.

There was some discussion about the Christmas concert. This had been a success, and we had done well under the circumstances, and had attracted a large audience – about 100 people. Members had found that the rehearsal which Philip Singleton had attended and explained his approach to creating Dorset Jubilate, had been very helpful in understanding the piece. It would have been better if this had occurred earlier in the rehearsal schedule. It was also felt that the audience would have benefited from a short explanation from PS during the concert, rather than just programme notes.

There was also discussion about the financial situation of the choir, and the need to increase membership numbers, both to improve finances and to strengthen our ability to sing. We need to find out why numbers have dropped. Is this because of Covid, or are there other reasons? Teresa noted that her previous choir had a policy of writing to members who had stopped coming to ask them why, and WCS should adopt this policy.

It was also felt that we could improve finances by asking for sponsorship from local firms, and the committee should progress this with the help of members who might have contacts with likely sponsors.

We briefly discussed the feasibility of performing at least some concerts without soloists, or with soloists who were choir members, as we had done in the (somewhat distant) past.

Should we also plan future joint concerts with BpS?

There was some discussion, and acceptance, of the fact that subscriptions will have to rise soon if membership does not increase, At the current level, 45 members is the break-even point for rehearsals.

Finally, members thanked the committee for their hard work in what had been a difficult period.