



Canterbury Cantata Trust

Annual General Meeting

Minutes

11.00 am on Saturday 26th February 2022 via Zoom

Present: Grenville Hancox (GH) (Artistic Director), Roshna Ahmad (RA) (Chair), Jo Heath (JH) (Treasurer), Laurence Green (LG) (Trustee), Julia Jones (JJ) (Trustee), Sarah Montgomery (SM) (Trustee), Andrea Hepworth (AH) (Administrator), Matt Shipton (MS) (STB Programme Director)

1. Apologies/Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Wendy Le Las, Lucy Markes and Emily Renshaw-Kidd. There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM (27th February 2021)

They were accepted as an accurate transcription of events. RA to sign a copy when we next meet in person.

3. Matters Arising

a) Chair's Report (RA)

- Newsletter summarises all the Trust's activities during the past year – this is available electronically as well as some hard copies to be distributed (to the choirs and singing groups and the 30th April anniversary event, etc.).**
- Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, there have been some exciting developments in the charity's work.**
- An audit of our 2020 accounts had been completed as this was needed in order to trigger the next tranche of our five-year rolling grant from Oak Foundation. It was once again a lengthy process but there were no major findings this time.**



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- **CCT's objects (clause 4 in our Articles of Association) have been changed to reflect the updated ethos and activities of CCT as well as to reference our research work. The change has been accepted by both Companies House and Charities Commission.**
 - **Now Covid restrictions have been eased – the charity is now beginning to return to normal as regards its operations.**
 - **During Lockdown, donations had continued to come in and Zoom sessions had continued in place of face-to-face meetings.**
 - **New associations formed with the new Parkinson's Centre (PCFIT).**
 - **CCT's work with Long Covid patients, now being rolled out after an initial trial.**
 - **CCT's 10 year anniversary fund-raising event in April (GH to speak further about this). Achievements of the last 10 years are testament to our volunteers, trustees and to GH's vision.**
 - **Vote of thanks to JH for her sterling work on running a marathon in December and raising £1,280 for the Trust.**

b) 2021 developments (GH)

- **Endorsed all that RA said regarding trustees' support over the last ten years.**
- **Thanked everyone who had sung in the choirs/singing group over the past ten years.**
- **Commissioned to write a book (launch date 23rd March 2022) called 'Singing' on the impact of arts on health. Shows our groups in context of making a difference to people's wellbeing.**
- **Singing had continued on Zoom and this had maintained social cohesion for Skylarks and Monday Music. More challenging for Amici and Cantata as the nature of Zoom means realising more complex works is more difficult.**

- **Face-to-face singing finally resumed in September 2021.**
- **STB Long Covid trials. Each trial was 6 sessions singing via Zoom, twice a week. Participants were mainly young and female. Aim was to alleviate symptoms such as shortness of breath, fatigue, feelings of isolation, etc. Latest trial was a cross-national project with a colleague just outside Dublin.**
- **Event on 30th April 2022 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of CCT and re-state our strapline – ‘Caring through Singing’. This will be a collaborative event with University of Kent (UoK) and Parkinson’s Centre for Integrated Therapy (PCFIT) involving people coming together to sing both collectively and as discrete groups. The event is free (including the venue being offered for free by UoK) but is intended as a fundraising event. GH will write to everybody concerned to encourage them to participate. Event will act as a springboard for the next ten years of activity. GH intends to slowly withdraw from direct participation in facilitating the groups but will maintain his artistic direction.**
- **GH thanked Alan Hollyer (Monday Music participant: present today) for his support. Alan had written to Saga asking them to financially support Monday Music which he attends. After initially declining, they then wrote back to say that CCT was exactly the sort of charity they like to support.**

c) 2021 STBP/STB developments (MS)

- **MS introduced himself to all present.**
- **The adapting and evolving ‘Sing to Beat Parkinson’s’ (STBP) had now ‘morphed’ into ‘Sing to Beat’ (STB) as a more generalised strapline given our singing groups don’t just embrace Parkinson’s but STB Long Covid as well.**
- **We have now trained over 300 facilitators in total, some are existing practitioners wanting to develop their skills, others are looking for an**

‘entry level’ introduction to singing and health. Training had continued throughout the pandemic – online. Circa 75 participants joined us in the Spring and Autumn, all new to the STB family. Zoom works better than face-to-face in terms of sharing links and information in real time and recording it all and sending it out to others. Yoon Irons and Trish Vella-Burrows helped deliver the online training.

- **New film been created which tells the story in ten minutes of how our training moved online, how this worked and the response. Video is available on our STBP YouTube channel.**
- **Website being developed to reflect the geographical spread of our singing groups. To date, activities have been London/SE centric but this year it is hoped to spread wider geographically.**
- **A 2 day residential training course will take place in Derby in October.**
- **A one-day course will take place in London (Morley College) in June this year in lieu of the cancelled (due to Covid) Snape residency in January.**
- **2 levels of training course now being offered; introductory and a more advanced course. Aim to move towards an accreditation model of our training – which will be different levels, e.g. ‘Bachelors’ and ‘Master’s’.**
- **Closed Facebook page for practitioners where ideas and best practice are shared.**
- **Coffee ‘Zooms’ every couple of months to enable regular contact with practitioners.**
- **Mentoring scheme. Inexperienced practitioners were able to spend 10 sessions ‘shadowing’ an experienced facilitator. This has been done both face-to-face and online. Thanks to our experienced facilitators for nurturing the next generation of singing and health practitioners.**
- **STB Covid. Two pilots undertaken last year. Been an exciting and rewarding development. 8-10 people in each group. Overwhelming response from participants was that it was the first time they had had a**

voice to express how debilitating the condition is. Being able to meet others with the same condition and share stories of their struggles was also important given how much scepticism still exists around Long Covid. Substantial demand for us to continue this work. Managing capacity is crucial. Need to keep groups small (10-12 participants) – latest group is up to 16; so may need to split.

- **Parkinson’s Centre in Canterbury (PCFIT) – launching on 1st May, possible this may be in Nackington Road (where the MS centre is) which is a better location for Parkinson’s patients. First centre of its kind in the country. Exciting to be the singing delivery partner for this.**
- **Post-pandemic, slowly getting back to normal. A lot of groups embracing the ‘mixed-model’ approach, where they meet one week on Zoom and the next face-to-face.**
- **App: for people with Parkinson’s to access the same material they get in face-to-face sessions, practise warm-ups etc. – prototype being developed. Arts Council funding sadly turned down, Nicola Wydenbach now crowdfunding. Hoping to be live across Apple and Android platforms towards the Autumn of this year.**

d) Covid response and guidance given (SM)

- **It has been difficult for us all to accept that singing undoubtedly increases the risk of catching and transmitting Covid-19.**
- **CCT has a duty of care to facilitators, choir directors and all participants.**
- **Each individual has a different perspective on the risk which they are prepared to take and different individuals have different clinical vulnerabilities to the virus.**
- **Approach throughout has been to follow all legal restrictions and requirements.**
- **She paid tribute to the participants of each of the groups for their ability to adapt during this time, maintaining the benefit of the groups.**

- The real challenge started once restrictions were relaxed with the waxing and waning of infection levels.
- There are now greater levels of knowledge about virus transmission which helps assess potential risk.
- She acknowledged the impact of vaccinations and their role in reducing disease severity and reduction of risk of hospitalisation and death but not so on infection rates and the, as yet, unknown impact of Long Covid. Although research does suggest that 3 doses of a vaccine reduces this risk by about 50%.
- Robust risk assessments were put in place for the groups – informed by public health – with sample templates adapted from Making Music (a charity championing amateur music groups).
- There have been regular formal reports to the trustees on the changing risk throughout the two years of the pandemic.
- She emphasised that the risk is still very real and the pandemic is not over.
- Going forward, it's important to monitor the risks and the impact of relaxing the restrictions. Particularly important for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable for whom these singing groups are a lifeline. Our responsibility is to all; the participants and those who lead the groups.

4. Financial Summary (JH)

- JH screen-shared a copy of a summary of 2020 Accounts which is the most recent completed set. The full accounts can be viewed on both Companies House and Charities Commission's website.
- She acknowledged that the Accounts being presented today (2020's) were a while ago now. The production of 2021's accounts (which will be a short – nine month – financial year) will start very soon. Our financial year-end had been changed recently from 30th November to 31st August.

- **Grants: normally in the region of £64K; however, in 2020 this was only £5K. Reason for this is because there were some timing issues with regards to the receipt of grants from major funders. Circa £49K was expected from Oak Foundation, (major funder) in c. November 2020 but an audit was needed first which pushed back the receipt of these funds to February 2021 (i.e. into the next financial year).**
- **Due to these timing issues, the Trust sustained a loss of £25.1K. However, a healthy surplus on last year of £48.5K leaves the Trust in surplus by £23.4K for 2020. This means this can be absorbed for the time being and the problem should resolve for the next set of accounts once the funds are received.**
- **Total income for 2020 is £36.7K whereas previous financial year it was £108K.**
- **Document shows split of income and facilitator fees broken down for each choir/singing group. The receipt of members' subscriptions were all lower due to the Pandemic and no face-to-face meetings taking place.**
- **£22.6K of professional charges is Matthew Shipton's fee as Programme Director of STB. These were all covered by Oak Foundation's five-year rolling grant (see above).**
- **Support costs, at £15.2K, (insurance etc.) remain high even though normal income stream reduced due to Covid.**
- **Total support costs and governance for 2020 was £61.9K which is c.£20K less than 2019's accounts.**

5. Future Plans (GH, RA and MS)

- **RA said our immediate plans were to reintroduce face-to-face singing for all groups and to perform more concerts. As confidence increases, for those who may be more vulnerable to re-join face-to-face singing too.**
- **Hope to introduce a scheme whereby a volunteer for each group is responsible for keeping copy for the website up-to-date.**

- Website will be improved to make it more user-friendly, useful and up-to-date. This will include more 'tabs' to include governance.
- A grant application has been made to Kent Community Foundation to cover our core administration costs.
- Someone is doing a sponsored skydive in aid of CCT which MS has already publicised on Twitter and we should also publicise on our website.

GH added:

- PCFIT to open which is an exciting development. It is an extraordinary connection for the next ten years of CCT's history. With this operating, we stand a better chance of influencing health care commissioners (HCC) than we have to date. Application alongside research seems the best approach, as oppose to research alongside application; easier for HCC to embed into their systems. Hope is that the PCFIT concept can be rolled out nationwide in the next ten years.
- The ten year anniversary event on 30th April 2022, an important collaboration between UoK, PCFIT and CCT.
- We now have 40 STB groups affiliated to CCT from a standing start of Canterbury Skylarks.
- Centre for Singing and Health in Scotland mirroring our approach.

6. Director Rotation

No director rotation necessary as Blair Gulland, who was a trustee for 7 years, resigned in Autumn 2021.

Wendy Le Las will also resign as a trustee as soon as we can find a replacement for her.

7. AOB and short question session

No questions were emailed in prior to the AGM.

Hugh Carson (HG) was concerned about the Trust losing its local focus and suggested that an individual from each of the main singing groups could sit on the Board of Trustees to help unify them. Patricia Papa (PP) echoed these

sentiments and added that she would like to see a named representative from each group on the Board. She also said there did not seem to be an easy way to contact somebody from the Trust.

RA responded to say that the website and newsletter communicates events and keeps everyone up-to-date. WLL (a trustee) is also an Amici member and RA and JH have been involved with GH's work for years and are both members of Cantata. And we are now asking for a volunteer from each group/choir to be responsible for collating new copy for the website. Board does not deal with the day-to-day running of each of the choirs. Minutes from trustee meetings will now be uploaded to the website.

GH: said he will consider HG's points carefully. GH stressed that the local aspect of CCT was paramount and the ten year celebration in April will highlight this.

SM: endorsed having a 'link' person from the Board for each choir/group to improve channels of communication but stressed that the prime function of the Board is governance and to guide the strategic direction of the Trust, not representation. GH endorsed this.

RA: acknowledged that skills audit needed. The trustees have spent the last year or so fire-fighting various issues: Covid, change of objects, two audits and we are currently short on manpower. Possibly a re-evaluation is now needed. She asked that groups communicate with CCT Board via their own separate choir committees for the time being.

Tim Carlyle – Amici member (TC): very impressed with all that is happening. Would like to see the performance aspect come back into focus. RA: aim is to have all the choirs/groups performing again soon. Trust is still trying to rebuild its finances following the pandemic in order to do this.

RA wound up the AGM with a vote of thanks to all who contribute to and support Canterbury Cantata Trust.

Those attending:



Sue Davies
Patricia Papa
Janet Pitt
Nick Wells
Debbie Sayer
Alan Hollyer
Joanna Lebon
Tim Carlyle
Diane Billam
Hugh Carson
Christopher Gower

Minutes taken and transcribed by Andrea Hepworth.