



## **Canterbury Cantata Trust**

### **AGM Minutes**

**11.00 am on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2021 via Zoom**

**Present: Grenville Hancox (GH) (Artistic Director), Roshna Ahmad (RA) (Chair), Jo Heath (JH) (Treasurer), Laurence Green (LG) (Trustee), Sarah Montgomery (SM) (Trustee), Wendy Le-Las (WLL) (Trustee), Andrea Hepworth (AH) (Administrator), Matt Shipton (MS) (STBP Programme Director)**

#### **1. Apologies/Declarations of Interest**

**Apologies were received from Julia Jones. There were no declarations of interest.**

#### **2. Minutes of the previous AGM (13<sup>th</sup> November 2019)**

**RA advised that these were available to read on the website. They were accepted as an accurate transcription of events. RA to sign a copy when we next meet in person.**

#### **3. Matters Arising**

**RA welcomed everyone to our first virtual AGM and then discussed the Matters Arising, as follows:**

- Gift aid is now underway.**
- The date of our Financial Year End is still to be changed. Current FYE creates accounting problems with needing to accrue income and costs being received in December relating to concerts held in November.**
- Legacy fundraising still to be set up (an ongoing project for 2021).**
- Give as You Live has been up and running since April 2020 and has been successful in raising a lot of money for CCT (c. £6K at the time of AGM).**

- Despite our best efforts, the new bank account set up to house restricted STB funds never materialised from HSBC. We are now using our Community Savings Account to hold these funds and keep them separate from core funds.
- 2019 accounts were late in being submitted. This was due to a full audit of CCT being requested by Oak Foundation (a major funder) and the accounts being with the auditors at the time. Audit process took longer than expected resulting in late submission of accounts to Companies House for which the auditing company, Kreston Reeves, admitted liability. The accounts have now been submitted.

**a) Chair's Report (RA)**

An electronic copy of the latest newsletter had been sent to everyone but RA is able to send a hard copy in the post to people not able to access this digitally. She advised all who would like one to let AH know.

Due to the pandemic, all face-to-face singing, rehearsals and concerts had ceased in March 2020. In their stead, various virtual projects had materialised. RA emphasised the positive outlook of what we had been able to achieve, as a charity, in this respect over the past year.

New singing and health partnerships had been formed (e.g. Sing to Beat Covid, still at the early stages). STBP online training had been received very well. Phil Self's Isolation Choir had been a huge success and was featured on BBC South East. This project is ongoing with a new one due to be launched this week. In addition, 'Breathing with Kerry' is a singing project for those recovering from Covid run by Kerry Boyle (CCT facilitator) and is open to all.

RA thanked people for continuing to donate to the Trust and enable the virtual meetings to continue. Give as You Live donations had been set up at the start of lockdown and had elicited a good response resulting in circa £6K of donations to date. She read out some of the heart-warming endorsements of our work that people had written online as part of their donation. In addition, cheque donations had been received from Monday Music and Skylarks members. Amazon Smile had also been set up – RA briefly outlined



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how this worked and encouraged people to set this up as it is an easy way to add to our funds at no additional cost to the donor.

**b) 2020 developments (GH)**

GH started by requesting that we all pause and remember those who have died in the past year. These are: Sarah Bryant, Anne Sellars, Patricia Goddard and Kate Davson.

GH thanked trustees for all their hard work, particularly RA who, as Chair, 'steers' and manages the Trust so well. He welcomed SM to her first AGM as a trustee of CCT.

**Cessation of F2F singing/Zoom meetings**

He echoed RA's comments about the cessation of face-to-face singing from March last year but reflected on the success of the virtual meetings in maintaining social connectivity particularly for Monday Music and Skylarks. Skylarks participation has even expanded during this time with weekly meetings taking place consistently throughout the last year (with only two weeks being missed in total). An average of 38-40 devices have been used to connect to the Skylarks weekly sessions, 60-65 for Monday Music. As a consequence, GH has collected data from both groups from before and after the pandemic and written a paper on the importance of singing via Zoom during a pandemic. He thanked Phil Self (facilitator for Monday Music and Skylarks) and emphasised what a wonderful asset he had been over the past year.



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**GH emphasised that Zoom is not a suitable platform for the singing of separate harmonic parts so it had not been possible for Amici to realise their repertoire in the same way. December 2019 was the last concert that Amici gave and it was disappointing that, after 16 months of hard work rehearsing St. John Passion – which would have been Amici’s greatest challenge to date – this had to be indefinitely postponed due to the pandemic.**

**He thanked Emily Renshaw-Kidd for keeping Canterbury Cantata going virtually during this time.**

**It is planned to re-start face-to-face singing for all groups in September 2021, all being well. It is hoped that Amici are able to put on a small scale performance in December 2021.**

### **Ongoing developments in singing and health**

**A network of researchers and practitioners has been launched in Scotland following a virtual conference held in Glasgow in May 2020. In the last week, the National Network for Singing and Health has been launched which encapsulates research and practice going hand-in-hand. A new centre for Parkinson’s support and care is going to be established at the University of Kent based on measuring wellbeing from a non-pharmacological basis under the direction of David Wilkinson. This is in tandem with Parkinson’s charity ‘Parkinson’s Care and Support’. Neil Banik (Folkestone GP and respiratory director for activities across the health authorities of Kent) has approached CCT regarding the implementation of singing groups for people recovering from Covid/Long Covid. This has the potential for at least three groups in Kent and Medway and is in parallel with the ENO initiative.**

## **Daily singing experiment!**

**7 members of Amici meet with GH every morning from 9.45-10.00 to conduct an experiment surrounding singing on a daily basis. This involves moving from the speaking voice to the singing voice and maintaining both an aural and a social contact using Zoom as a platform. The ideas taken from this will be transferred to the Sing to Beat Covid project in due course.**

### **c) Sing to Beat Parkinson's (MS)**

#### **Overview of the year**

**MS introduced himself then spoke about the re-calibration of the 'Sing to Beat (STB) brand'. The STB website (separate from the main CCT website), has Parkinson's as its main thrust but will eventually expand to include STB mental health, STB Covid etc., all of which will have their own logo. The Monday Music concept will also fall under the 'STB' umbrella. He also echoed GH's sentiments regarding the circumstances caused by the pandemic creating the ideal scenario in which Zoom became a successful and easy to use platform in which to continue our activities and became a lifeline to many people – reinforced by interviews and case studies carried out last year. The numbers using the service never really dropped off which is a testament to how important the sessions were in bringing people together.**

**Training programmes – there are 5 a year at various locations (Morley College, University of Derby, etc., flagship location at Snape Maltings in Suffolk). In the past four years, a total of 400 participants have attended our training programmes. These have now moved online due to the pandemic but continue to be a great success with 40 participants attending in the**



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**Autumn run. Next online session is in March and takes place over two weekends. 12 have already signed up to this; 20 expected in total. There is a wide geographical spread – including someone from New Zealand!**

**Mentoring programme in place – 4 successful ‘graduates’ from our Autumn online training sessions are being mentored by Nicola Wydenbach (our Director of Training), GH, Phil Self (one of our facilitators) and Debra Skeen. The process involves shadowing experienced facilitators over a ten week period. Following this, it is hoped ‘graduates’ have enough confidence to start their own group. For quality control purposes, it gives us confidence to ‘refer’ people to groups across the country who are facilitated by practitioners who have completed our training programmes.**

#### **STB Future developments**

**MS reiterated GH’s comments on our partnership with charity ‘Parkinson’s Care and Support’ whose ethos is focussed on quality of life and wellbeing. We are in talks with them to become their official ‘singing for Parkinson’s’ partner. A pilot is to start soon whereby they refer their members to participate in our online singing groups. This is an exciting development as it will enable many more people with Parkinson’s to have access to our singing groups.**

**CCT is collaborating with English National Opera on a singing project for people recovering from Covid or those with ‘Long Covid’. Still at the planning stage currently. The Trust was initially approached by the NHS about this which has never happened before. It is exciting that the health professionals are beginning to acknowledge the importance and value of CCT’s work.**

## **Audit**

**MS thanked RA, JH and AH for their time and commitment to this particularly given a lot of it was last minute and involved late nights. It is hoped it won't be required every year. He made the point that we are a small but growing charity and the challenge is to manage this growth effectively from a financial and governance perspective in order to be attractive to future funders.**

## **Website security**

**The problems with the SSL certificate had been solved and the website is secure again. MS encouraged everyone to continue to donate with confidence.**

## **4. Financial Summary (JH)**

### **Audit**

**JH reiterated everything RA and MS had said and commented that it had been a time-consuming and invasive process but had produced positive outcomes in terms of implementing changes to internal control systems in line with CCT's organic growth.**

**Our Accountant, Jennie Sherwood, who is very experienced in preparing charity accounts, echoed MS's comments above regarding the need to ensure our rapid growth is matched by appropriate and effective internal control systems.**

**Positives from audit – audit report indicated that no systems were causing any serious errors and our internal control systems were appropriate for the charity's needs based on the nature and complexity of activities and were working effectively.**

### **Recommendations of audit**

- **A clearer and more accurate record of monies collected for subscriptions etc. to be implemented.**
- **Intention is to move to a ‘cashless’ system as much as possible. This enables easier identification of who is paying what and for what purpose. It also makes claiming for gift aid easier.**
- **Sue Davies is to take on the task of managing this for Amici going forward (vast numbers of membership in Amici make this a particular issue). JH thanked Anthea Daniels for all her hard work doing this over the years and emphasised that we will all be working together to ensure the new system is effective and efficient.**
- **Accruals – transactions that straddle the year end (i.e. cash received or payments made in December that related to concerts held in November) should have been accrued for in the accounts. The change in financial year end will help to ensure this is not an issue going forward.**
- **Authorisations – the only criticism which came from the audit was that authorisations were distributed over a number of email addresses rather than a centralised email address being used which made them difficult to locate subsequently. This is easily resolved going forward.**
- **Employment status of freelance CCT staff. The need for CCT to be able to verify the ‘self-employed’ status of freelance staff (mainly facilitators) who regularly invoice in for their services was highlighted. This is to ensure that a) CCT is not liable for any unpaid tax or b) that these freelance staff could not be construed as CCT employees. Trustees with the necessary skills and expertise are currently working on checking this and establishing compliance.**

## **2019 Accounts**

- **Total income was £107,900 with total expenditure of £81,498 leaving surplus funds (@ end November 2019) of £48,597. This figure included £22,195 of surplus funds carried forward from end November 2018.**
- **Grants totalled £63,978 (all ring-fenced for STB). Unrestricted subscriptions and donations collected from choirs contribute towards the overall running of the charity’s core expenses etc.**

- **Total income contributions from each choir (events, subscriptions, donations etc.) totalled £19,302 from Amici, £5,638 from Cantata, £9,272 from Monday Music and £1,393 from Skylarks and £70,517 from STB. Total costs for each of these choirs are as follows: £12,253 for Amici, £4,251 for Cantata, £4,290 for Monday Music, £1,520 for Skylarks and £37,862 for STB. Total contributions towards overall surplus funds from each choir is as follows: £7,049 from Amici, £1,387 from Cantata, £4,982 from Monday Music and £26,640 from STB. Canterbury Skylarks show a small deficit, they were supported by a £1K grant from Bernard Sunley in this period.**
- **Support costs (concerned with the running and upkeep of the Trust as a whole) – these total £14,490 for CCT and £3,015 for STB. Costs for CCT are higher than usual as an accrual had been added for the cost of the audit (NB: although this cost will be absorbed by STB ring-fenced funds). This will hopefully not be an annual cost going forward. Our accountant’s costs (for preparation and independent examination of our finances) are normally in the region of £1K but this includes several face-to-face meetings and discussions, which has obviously not taken place this year.**
- **General comments – accounts show CCT is in a sound financial position. JH acknowledges these accounts reflect our finances as they were almost 18 months ago and all pre-Covid. 2020 accounts will probably look significantly different.**
- **As soon as the new financial year end has been established, preparation of 2020 accounts will get underway.**
- **Question from a member regarding FYE change. The 2020 year-end will stand (as 30 November 2020). It is logical that we change our year end to end of July or August as there is a natural break in our activities during this period. So we will either have a shorter FY (i.e. December 2020-July/August 2021) or a longer one (i.e. December 2020-July/August 2022).**
- **JH asked that any further questions are emailed to her.**

## **5. Future Plans (RA and GH)**

- To build upon the success we have had this year in extending and developing our partnerships with other charities, health authorities and the medical profession.
- To develop a legacy fundraising policy.
- To continue to work on tightening up our internal processes and controls as per the audit recommendations.
- Re-structuring of Amici management committee.
- In respect of the value the Trust assigns to singing as a successful non-medical intervention in health and wellbeing, GH mentioned CCT being 'ahead of the curve' and the curve is now beginning to catch us up! NHS engagement is exciting and we should not be self-effacing in terms of the Trust's impact in this regard. He used the examples of Skylarks' move to Simon Langton Boys Grammar School in September 2019 to illustrate this. This emphasises the importance of singing from within a school setting and demonstrates that by working with young people there, the generation gap could be 'closed' by mutual understanding and young people able to observe and learn about the condition of Parkinson's first hand. To the best of GH's knowledge, this is the only example of a Parkinson's singing group within a school setting in the world.
- RA finished with a personal vote of thanks to all trustees and to JH and AH for their work on the audit. Thanks too went to:
  - Anthea Daniels and Steph Brunton for their help with the newsletter.
  - Sue Davies for taking over responsibility for Amici subscription administration.
  - Emily Renshaw-Kidd, Phil Self and all facilitators.

## 6. Director Rotation

**Our Articles of Association state that one-third of all directors (trustees) must stand down (and either retire or be re-elected) at each AGM.**

RA and JH stood down at the meeting and left the room during which time they were unanimously re-elected as Chair and Treasurer respectively by all attending trustees (SM, LG and WLL).

WLL spoke out in support of RA and JH stating that the bulk of the work in managing CCT falls to them with little support from other trustees. Going forward and in view of CCT's rapid expansion as a Trust, there needs to be a much fairer distribution of labour and responsibilities.

## 7. AOB and short question session

There were no questions from those attending today.

The next AGM is provisionally scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021. It is hoped that face-to-face singing will be taking place by then.

RA finished by thanking everyone again for attending today, that she is looking forward to re-commencing singing together again and hoped all stayed well in the meantime.

## Attending members:

Diane Billam  
Janet Pitt  
Anthea Daniels  
Huw Kyffin  
Liz Gregory  
Mike Brain  
Suzanne Davies  
Sue Davies  
Sylvia Gower  
Christine Hutchings  
Jayne Cohen  
Brian Cohen  
Anne Hancox  
Emily Renshaw-Kidd



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**Stephanie Brunton**  
**Deborah Broadbridge**

**Minutes taken and transcribed by Andrea Hepworth.**