

ANNUAL REPORT

01/09/2019 - 31/08/2020

ELTHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

Charity number: 1023904

Trustee names

Fiona Gardiner, David Williams, Martin North, Valerie Seaton, Sue Quirk, Sheila Thompson, David Brining, Carole Homan, Andrew McGechie

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is governed by its constitution which was adopted in April 1997. It is an unincorporated association. Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting which is convened within twelve weeks of the end of the financial year. The management of The Society shall be in the hands of a committee consisting of a minimum of eight and maximum of 12 members elected by and out of the members of The Society at the AGM. Members of the committee shall serve for a period not exceeding three years, one third in number of the members of the committee retiring at each AGM by rotation, and being eligible for re-election for a further term.

The following officers shall be elected by, and out of, the committee: -
Honorary Chair, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer. A quorum for a Committee meeting shall consist of four members of the committee. Any member of the Committee may resign at any time on presentation of at least 21 days' notice to the committee. All arrangements for concerts and other events and the control of finance and other ancillary matters shall be in the hands of the

committee. A meeting of the committee shall be convened, when deemed necessary, with a minimum of one per academic term.

The Committee shall have the power to:- (a) Co-opt members when necessary, to serve until the next AGM, (b) Remove or replace any member of the committee where the majority of the members considers such action to be in the best interests of the society as a whole, (c) Inspect, after reasonable notice has been given, any of the records of The Society and to check and verify independently the existence and value of any cash or other assets being maintained for and on behalf of The Society, (d) Appoint a professional Musical Director, who is not eligible to be a member of The Society, to advise on musical matters and oversee musical activities. The Musical Director may be required to attend committee meetings in an advisory capacity, (e) Deal with any matter not otherwise referred to in this Constitution in the best interests of The Society.

Activities and Objectives

The object of the Society shall be to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of choral music in all its aspects by the presentation of public choral concerts and recitals and by such other ways as the Society, through its committee, shall determine from time to time.

Report by the Chair

Since I took over as Chair of ECS in November 2019 it has certainly been an interesting challenge. As it turned out, the last concert the choir was able to sing in was in December 2019 and was an enjoyable (and challenging!) combination of Vaughan Williams and Ramirez, together with – always a joy – Christmas carols. The following Saturday we gathered for our usual carol singing at Passey Place in Eltham and raised a significant sum for Demelza.

At the beginning of 2020 the choir enjoyed rehearsing for our planned performance of the Bach St John Passion at Blackheath Halls, and in February we held an afternoon workshop at the Halls to rehearse together with the Blackheath Halls Chorus. Sadly we had to cancel our planned concert but we

very much hope that, particularly as so much work has been done in planning and rehearsing, we may be able to bring our work to fruition in 2021.

Since the Covid lockdown from March this year we have had to put a halt to our rehearsals at Eltham Park Methodist Church and move to Zoom rehearsals. This has been a challenge for many of us, and we have certainly developed new IT skills. It is sad that some members are not able to join in our Zoom rehearsals, and some of course choose not to. However, we have kept good numbers for each rehearsal and are able to provide a focus for choir members in these difficult times.

One of the other negative outcomes of the Covid pandemic was the cancellation of the choir tour to Prague in May this year. In past years we have been fortunate to have had a great sub-committee which has organised tours to many European destinations. A very sad event this year was the sudden death of Tony Crowe, which was a massive blow. Tony was an important part of the tour committee with Rod Tutt, until they decided to stand down last year. Their commitment over the years is much appreciated.

The new tour committee worked hard to organise the Prague tour, including enjoyable social fundraising events, and it was devastating to have to cancel it. I'd like to thank all the tour committee for their commitment and effort.

My thanks go to all the current ECS committee members who have put in so much hard work to keep the choir active and dynamic. I'd also like to thank Rod, who stood down at the last AGM, for his work for the choir over so many years. Thanks also go to Maggie Watson, who stood down in August last year, for her work as Treasurer and continuing commitment. Other committee members who have stood down are Jill Pollock and Chris Savage, and I extend my thanks to them both for their contributions.

As I write this note Val Seaton has indicated that she is standing down from the committee with immediate effect, and I would like to record the thanks of all choir members, and of the committee, for the work she has done over more than 20 years as Librarian.

My thanks also go to all those who contribute to the choir in so many ways, including the Section Representatives, our auditor John King, Clodagh Woodall who is the safeguarding representative, Diane Bell who runs our interval rehearsal refreshments, and all those who help us when we put on concerts.

As the year draws to a close we also remember choir members, and past members, who have died and we celebrate their contribution over the years.

Finally I would like to give my particular thanks to Max and Andrew, our Musical Director and Accompanist. Their commitment to ECS over the years has contributed to our stability as a choir and to our musical development. We greatly value their support for ECS musically and socially.

Financial review

We started the year with reserves of £15,304.46 and, because expenditure exceeded income, finished the year with £14,461.01. The COVID pandemic has had a negative impact on our finances as we have had limited income from ticket sales and subscriptions. However a Gift Aid refund of £2,182.14 which was delayed during the pandemic has now been paid and will appear in next year's accounts, which will put the choir in a reasonable state to cope with whatever the new year brings.

We do not own any property which could be subject to damage and we hold insurance to protect us from unforeseen claims upon our organisation. Our current policy is that we aim to hold £10,000 in reserve, which we comfortably exceed at the moment.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "FM Gardiner". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Fiona Gardiner – Chair

November 2020