

South Norfolk Community Choir AGM 24th January 2019: Chair's Report

Welcome, everyone, and thank you for joining us for this, the first Annual General Meeting of South Norfolk Community Choir.

It has been an exciting and rewarding first year for the choir, which was conceived in 2017 by experienced group leader and singer Clare Pastorius. Clare had identified a need for affordable, open access singing workshops for people living in South Norfolk and hoped to start a group to answer that need. The aim was to promote a love of singing for anyone who wanted to join, learning by ear with no requirement to read music.

Clare enlisted volunteers to become trustees of the proposed new choir, and at an inaugural meeting on 6th December 2017 a formal constitution was discussed and adopted and the following were appointed as Trustees:

Liza Diaper, Liz Lenaghan (Secretary), Liz French (Chair), Jill Maidment, Julie Miles (Treasurer), Clare Pastorius and Michael Rooney.

To kickstart the project, South Norfolk District Council awarded a seed-funding "Go For It" grant which funded 3 taster sessions. The evidence gathered at the taster sessions helped ensure the success of an application for National Lottery and the subsequent award has funded the choir for a full year. While we waited for the outcome of the application, we ran 3 interim sessions funded by a generous donation from Wymondham Rotary Club. The choir meets regularly on Monday afternoons here at the Baptist Church.

Since the choir started, 64 people have come to at least one session (this includes the taster and interim sessions); 48 people have attended at least one of the 18 sessions we have had since the Lottery grant came in. 35 people regularly attend practice sessions; 16 people have come to 9 or more sessions. The average number of people at sessions is 18. We have already achieved our targets we submitted as part of the lottery application. Given that our philosophy is 'come when you can' this level of attendance represents a high level of participation and commitment.

The choir has tackled a wide variety of genres and has developed a good ensemble. At Christmas 2018 the choir was invited to sing during the carol concert at the Baptist Church and the rendition of *When A Child is Born* was a great success.

The trustees have met quarterly throughout the year to discuss and provide oversight relating to funding and costs, insurance, membership and the constitution. We have discussed and adopted policies in areas such as expenditure, equality and diversity and safeguarding and have established a complaints procedure (unused to date!)

Thank you...

We are hugely grateful to those trustees who have brought a wealth of diverse experience and common sense to the committee over the past year and are now standing down: Liza Diaper, Julie Miles, our efficient treasurer and Michael Rooney. We warmly welcome new trustees who have volunteered to take their place: Lynne Golds-Brown, Harriet Carter and Gillian Tyas.

I would like to add thanks also to Liz Lenaghan, for her thorough, prompt, professional and clear minuting of all meetings, and of course to Clare for the dedication, talent, inspiration, humour and enthusiasm she brings to the choir - and to our meetings.

Thanks also to Paul, the pastor here and everyone at the church who have welcomed and supported us with kindness and warmth.

Finally, thanks to all our members. Without you and your wonderful voices, there would be no choir! We hope that the coming year will see the choir continue to grow and flourish.

Liz French, Chair

24 January 2019