

**Liverpool Welsh Choral**  
**Annual General Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024**  
**(LWC's 124th AGM)**  
**Rotblat Theatre**



**Present:** As per attendance logged for 23/10/24 rehearsal

**Apologies:** As per attendance logged for 23/10/24 rehearsal

Advanced apologies received from Peter Barlow, Glyn Marsden, Kathy Anstey, Geraldine Boocock, Michael Pate, Janet Smith, Christine Bolton, Brenda Coffey, Patrick Hayes

Agenda Item		Discussion	Actions
1.	<b>Welcome by President (Huw Rees)</b>	<p>Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen</p> <p>It gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone to this 125th Annual General Meeting of the Liverpool Welsh Choral. It is particularly pleasing to provide a special welcome to all new members of the Choir, although you have not yet been able to enjoy the complete experience and friendship in the Choir.</p> <p>As we've said many times before, we cannot understate the enormous amount of work in running the Choir and staging concerts in such a professional manner. This is only possible through the hard work and dedication of all of you. We are truly grateful to all those who have taken on various positions – they are all essential for the continued functioning of the Choir. Unquestionably, the Choir can be proud of its recent achievements and standing.</p> <p>As usual, we are most grateful to Stephen Hargreaves, our accompanist, for his considerable commitment to the Choir and his enormous input into its success. We are extremely fortunate to have such an accomplished accompanist. As I've said many times before, he brings an organ to life. A sincere thank you Stephen.</p> <p>We all agree that we owe Keith Orrell an immense debt of gratitude for continually enhancing the standard of the Choir. This is clearly attested to by the ever-increasing varied repertoire of music the Choir has been able to tackle in the last few years. A sincere thank you Keith.</p> <p>There's no doubt that the appointment of Laura McGuffie as Administrative Assistant has eased the burden significantly on several individuals. Laura has really taken to numerous tasks most rapidly in a particularly efficient manner. We are truly grateful for this.</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions
	<p>Likewise, the recruitment of Caroline Manley as Musical Leader has been a great help to Keith in enhancing development of the Choir. We sincerely thank her for all her work and input.</p> <p>I know that everyone wishes to join me in expressing our sincere gratitude to the Committees and All Officers of the Welsh Choral for the enormous amount of work they continuously put in. Clearly, this gratitude extends to many others who cheerfully give of their time quietly in the background. Furthermore, I'm sure that you will all join me in paying special thanks to our Chair, Wena Evans, for all her work in keeping the ship afloat. I know that her duties never stop. A sincere thank you Wena. We are all most grateful to Wena for being prepared to help the Choir by taking up the Chair again so soon after the previous time.</p> <p>I know that Keith will comment in some detail on last season's concerts. Suffice it for me to congratulate the Choir on another incredibly successful season. No doubt, the highlight for the season was the performance of the Verdi Requiem at the Anglican Cathedral. Putting on such a successful performance , with some 300 voices, was no mean feat. The feedback from the audience was absolutely terrific. Thank you Keith. Of course, we have to commend Stephen for his considerable input throughout the season. Thank you Stephen.</p> <p>At this point, I wish to most sincerely thank outgoing Officers of the Choir, who are stepping down. They have done an incredible amount of excellent and invaluable work in the smooth running of the Choir. We are particularly grateful to Kevin Rigby for his considerable work as Treasurer over the past few years. Again, it seems so inadequate to just Thank you All.</p> <p>This season's complete concert schedule again looks exciting. Of course, the highlight will undoubtedly be the 125th Anniversary Concert in March. We certainly very much look forward to Keith Orrell's Commissioned work at this concert. For the Choir to flourish in the way it has over 125 years is absolutely remarkable. Undoubtedly, this is due to the dedication and hard work of successive members of the Choir and all its Officers over the years.</p> <p>Almost every year, we've had considerable problems in filling all the essential Officer positions within the Choir, as well as all the vacant Committee slots. You know from Wena and Laura which positions these are. I really do hope that some of you can step forward to participate in the running of the Choir. Do remember that there's much help available from members who have been involved before. You would certainly not be on your own.</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions
	<p>As you know, in recent AGMs, I've often highlighted my concern about the need to enhance our recruitment into the Choir in all voices, but particularly in the tenor and bass sections. Recently, Stella McGann has kindly updated me on</p> <p>the current situation regarding recruitment of new members. I'm pleased to say that the Choir has 104 members on roll, with just a few members on long term sickness leave. Recruitment since 2021 has been particularly successful. This successful recruitment of new members is due to the efforts of the whole choir, for which we are most grateful. The Membership Faculty has also worked productively with the Communications Faculty in advertising far and wide. Of course, we still need to continue to recruit vigorously. Again, can I ask members of the Choir to continue taking any opportunity that presents to try and secure new members. Clearly, obtaining new members through existing Choir members is the most effective way of recruitment.</p> <p>It is very clear now that gaining commercial, financial sponsorship for some of our concerts is extremely difficult. I have contacted many commercial organisations over the last few years to enquire about this possibility, but most don't even bother providing a reply. Unfortunately, this source of funding now appears largely impossible. We are truly grateful to Kellands of Altrincham for sponsoring us every season for many years.</p> <p>You are all aware that we need to continuously push ticket sales for our concerts. This is a major problem at present. Can I ask all members of the Choir to continue to try and sell tickets to their friends and colleagues. This is critical, particularly in view of rising costs, including the hire of appropriate performing venues.</p> <p>A sincere thank you to all of you for your invaluable contributions to the continued success of the Choir. All Best Wishes for this forthcoming season.</p> <p>Huw Rees,  President</p>	
2.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were noted as per attendance log for 23/10/24, and advanced apologies noted above.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Minutes of AGM held on 25/10/23</b></p> <p>The choir have had the opportunity to read the minutes of the previous AGM. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct and accurate record.</p>	<p><b>Proposed:</b> Julia Moore <b>Seconded:</b> Gareth Howells <b>Approved</b></p>

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions
<p>4. <b>Cadeirydd Report (Wena Evans)</b></p>	<p>Croeso - Welcome.</p> <p>Diolch Huw; Thank you for all your help, work and support over the year. It is much appreciated.</p> <p>In my Cadeirydd's Report last year, I mentioned that the coming year was going to be very exciting. And it was! Our reputation has attracted quality choirs, orchestras and soloists to collaborate with us. These partnerships have enriched our experience, enlarged our friendships and it has been interesting to observe how other choirs perform, in more ways than one.</p> <p>I will let Keith talk about the individual concerts but I must first acknowledge his vision, expertise and patience with us. Thank you Keith.</p> <p>We all recognise that none of the events could have been carried out without the organisation and hard work of the Executive Committee. Each faculty has played its part, and in particular, the organisation of the Verdi project was a mammoth task for any organisation, so I thank you on our behalf - Thank You!</p> <p>Over this past year, The LWC has grown with several new members but I would like to thank those members who have been members for many years. You are the backbone of the choir and without your commitment over the last few years - especially the Covid years - our choir would not be as strong as it is today. We welcome the new members and hope that you enjoy the LWC experience of great friendship and family.</p> <p>For those who are new to the choir, 2025 is the 125th year since the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union, as it was original known, was founded. Therefore, you have joined at an exciting time as we have some amazing concerts and opportunities in store. I hope you will enjoy them all and, perhaps, encourage others to join us.</p> <p>Of course, we have other helpers who support our singing so I would like to thank Caroline who works with Keith to help us learn the music. Our Administrator, Laura, who makes all our work easy by her organisational skills and complete support - Thank you both.</p> <p>And where would be without the work and skills of Keith and Stephen? A good double act if ever there was one. We thank you both. Thank You.</p> <p>Wena Cadeirydd</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions
<p>5. <b>Treasurer Report and Approval of Accounts (Kevin Rigby)</b></p>	<p>Members have had the opportunity to view the accounts for the year. Overall income has increased, but a reduction of £24000 available to the choir at the end of the year was noted, largely due to the expenses of the Verdi concert.</p> <p>The choir is still compliant with its reserves policy which sets a figure of being able to sustain itself for a period of 12-18 months without an income.</p> <p>The faculties have worked hard over the last 12 months to ensure that costs are at the forefront to ensure greater efficiency and visibility.</p> <p>Income has risen over the last 12 months, with well over £3000 claimed last year alone from Gift Aid via HMRC.</p> <p>Bank interest rates are likely to drop over the next 12 months, and currently it is best to keep funds in the existing bank account, but this may need to be reviewed in the future.</p> <p>Extra fund raising for the choir is always welcomed for example the 100 club and the Christmas raffle (over £600 raised last Christmas alone), selling old choir goods etc.</p> <p>George (choir librarian) was recognised for all his hard work which is vital to the success of the choir. The Library has been organised in such a way that he knows exactly what scores we have, and due to his organisation he has brought in over £900 of income by hiring the scores to other organisations.</p>	<p>The accounts were accepted as the final accounts to be submitted.</p> <p><b>Proposed by:</b> Wena Evans</p> <p><b>Seconded by:</b> Chris Williamson</p> <p><b>Approved</b></p>
<p>6. <b>Music Director Report (Keith Orrell)</b></p>	<p>The 2023-24 Liverpool Welsh Choral season will be remembered in the folklore of the choir's history, kicking alongside the best in Liverpool's music scene, singing memorable performances of Verdi's monumental <i>Requiem</i> and Beethoven's demanding <i>Ninth Symphony</i>, and equally presenting interesting mixed programmes, teaming up with the Northop Silver Band at Christmas, and unusually with Liverpool's Pagoda Chinese Youth Orchestra earlier in the season. Indeed, collaboration has been the noticeable constant in 23-24, the choir joining with no less than three other choral groups for the Verdi (the Vivace Chorus, Guildford; Cantorion Menai from North Wales; and the University of Liverpool Chamber Choir) and by invitation with the Liverpool Mozart Orchestra for the Beethoven. In addition, we collaborated for a second performance of the Verdi with the Vivace Chorus in Guildford.</p> <p><i>A Celebration of Friendship</i> seemed an appropriate concert title when we teamed up with the Pagoda Chinese Youth Orchestra in October. Our friendship was felt in abundance, although musically one of the joint items was less successful than had happened in a previous collaboration in 2018. One could nevertheless not fail to admire the commitment</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions
	<p>and energy of the young Chinese musicians and the incredible dedication of their musical director, Zi Lan Liao. For our part, we delivered a very impressive and polished mixed programme in the first half: a Nigerian ‘highlife’ song, jazz music (Will Todd’s <i>Jazz Missa Brevis</i>), a Welsh hymn, some Welsh folk song arrangements, my version of ‘Jonny Todd’ and a strong ballad style finish with James Horner’s <i>Somewhere Out There</i>. We had an outstanding group of musicians to accompany us: the amazing saxophone player Kyran Matthews, returning musicians Chris McIntyre and Steve Berry on drums and double bass, together with our multi-talented Stephen Hargreaves on piano. Thanks also to May who once again helped (and saved) us as we struggled to learn some music in Mandarin! The only disappointment from my point of view was that we fielded a choir which was smaller than usual. A lot of genuine illness, singers falling foul of a stronger re-instatement of rehearsal qualification and, (hopefully not) concert cherry picking, made me realise how impressed I was with the confident singing of those who <i>were</i> there, and how fortunate we were to have chosen the more intimate venue of the Tung Auditorium, and not a larger venue like the Philharmonic Hall.</p> <p>Our <i>Christmas Fanfare</i> also worked well in the Tung Auditorium, as it had in the previous season. We were joined once more with our friends, the Northop Silver Band in a memorable Christmas concert. The choir this year sang a substantial choral programme which included several arrangements and original compositions by Michael Williams, most notably his <i>Christmas in Wales</i>, previously commissioned by the choir, together with first performances of the trilogy entitled <i>Day of Glory</i> and a piece <i>This is our story</i>. Some of the old favourites returned (like <i>Schneewalzer</i>, the medley <i>A very merry little Christmas</i>, a Gareth Glyn carol sung in Welsh, jazz carols arranged by Will Todd) but perhaps the choral highlight was the moving delivery of Morten Lauridsen’s <i>O magnum mysterium</i> which one doesn’t normally hear sung wonderfully by a large choir, in this age of specialist small choirs. The band’s contribution to the concert (conducted by Gareth Brindle) was, as always, spectacular and entertaining. One does not underestimate the fact that this band is always an audience-puller at our concerts.</p> <p>And so into the second half of our 23-24 season...this was dominated in April by probably the largest project which the choir has staged, certainly in the twenty years I have worked with the choir – the Verdi <i>Requiem</i>, performed by four choirs (over 350 singers), four international soloists (Claire Rutter, Jess Dandy, Gwyn Hughes Jones and James Cleverton), a significantly expanded orchestra (the larger than normal, and brilliant Manchester Camerata), staged in the largest of venues – Liverpool’s Anglican Cathedral. The audience was full, and the performance in that enormous space had an unrivalled atmosphere and buzz which will live for a long time in the memories of those present. Who could forget the vibrancy of so many singers almost screaming out the ‘Dies Irae’ cries while</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions
	<p>the bass drum played her prominent part <i>very</i> loud, despite the pleas for moderation by the orchestral leader? ..or the excitement caused by the off-stage trumpets performed from the cathedral's imposing bridge, which seemed possibly too far away for musical comfort, yet their fanfares were amazingly in time, like an aural flash of lightning? The soloists were exceptional (particularly noteworthy was the authoritative delivery from mezzo soprano Jess Dandy), and what a privilege it was for me to bring it all together as conductor, and to be involved in the musical preparation and positive collaboration with the other choir leaders: Jeremy Backhouse, Gwyn Williams and Louise Ellinson. The impact of this performance certainly didn't go unnoticed amongst prominent musicians in the wider Liverpool musical scene, and the friendships, both renewed and initiated, remain priceless. The Liverpool Welsh Choral made a very big statement that evening. None of this would have been possible without the total support and dedication from the whole team of selfless committee members, from chair to administrator, from the incredible concerts team to the amazing publicity and media team, our treasurer, the larger than normal work of our librarian, our membership team and management of every practical consideration at every rehearsal, and a whole plethora valued tasks undertaken by other committee and rank-and-file singers, their efforts all 'over and above' what may be expected by an amateur society. And who could forget the memorable cold afternoon in March singing excerpts of Verdi and Handel outside in Liverpool 1? - all part of our extraordinary advertisement of this concert. And how lucky we were to perform the work again a few weeks later in May, in Guildford, in what seemed like more modest but nevertheless equally satisfying circumstances! What great planning and collaboration went into that as well!</p> <p>I've mentioned the whole committee (and hopefully have not missed anyone), but, as always, we are all indebted to the ongoing professionalism of our accompanist Stephen Hargreaves. Stephen has had less of a role to play in concerts this last season, but his high level of musicianship is always valued, and more prominent concert roles on the organ will be rightly offered once more in the coming season. Thanks also to Huw, like Stephen an ever-present 'rock' in the LWC fabric, and mover and shaker behind the scenes, so highly valued by us all. I must also mention the ongoing and highly valued and selfless dedicated sectional work of Caroline Manley, who not only knows what needs rehearsing, but also knows how to rehearse it.</p> <p>As if we hadn't then finished the season after the Verdi, the choir's greatest musical achievement was yet to come: a performance of the vocally challenging Ninth Symphony by Beethoven. On this occasion our choral role did not involve a collaboration with another choir, nor was the learning of it for the faint hearted. What made our achievement even greater was that (unlike in the performance of the Verdi) not all singers participated. Yet, not to be beaten, the concentration and determination in rehearsal was quite exceptional, new</p>	



Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions
	<p>musical levels were achieved, and the exhilaration experienced by those who participated in such a marvellous performance with the impressive Liverpool Mozart Orchestra, under their inspiring conductor Robin Wallington, was one to be especially savoured.</p> <p>We move now impressively into our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary season – it is an achievement in itself that any choir can live that long and positively thrive, when many large choirs of our type don't. During the season we look forward to singing old favourites, like the Fauré Requiem, as well as Christmas favourites, but equally we will be stretched next year with new and less familiar music by William Walton, Constant Lambert, Karl Jenkins, and by myself, with an orchestra nearly as large as that of the Verdi. We will perform with Liverpool's famous mezzo soprano Kathryn Rudge, international pianist (and my piano teacher of old) Martin Roscoe, and <i>your</i> challenge will be to remain open-minded to want to learn and perform less familiar music (not just to like what you already 'know', but equally love to discover what's new). Then you will also have the chance to sing one of the great choral classics, Elgar's <i>The Dream of Gerontius</i>, in Bangor with our friends Cantorion Menai. Involvement with other projects is also encouraged, such as singing 'Mass in Blue' with composer Will Todd; and, on the strength of our reputation for quality music-making, the ladies of the choir have recently been invited to sing the challenging off-stage chorus in Holst's <i>The Planets</i> at the Philharmonic Hall at the end of June. Much to look forward to and to discover!</p> <p>I continue to be heartened by our togetherness, our friendliness, our great work ethic and adaptability, and willingness to aim for a high standard of choral singing. We must continue to find ways to grow our membership. This aspect has been encouraging in recent years, and we welcome a few new and returning members this season already, but as we have an overall ageing membership, together with a valued smaller younger and upwardly mobile group of singers, a potential precipice is not far away without introducing even more new and talented blood into our ranks. What we do and have done is a strong selling point for prospective new members. We rightly can be proud of this, and it is our collective responsibility to unashamedly trumpet out to the world again and again what a great thing it is to be singing with this wonderful choir.</p> <p>Keith Orrell MD Liverpool Welsh Choral</p>	
<p>7. Long Service Awards (Stella McGann)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 years</li> </ul>	<p><b>10 years:</b> Phillippa Pennefather</p> <p><b>20 years:</b> Margaret Anwyl Williams</p>	



Agenda Item		Discussion			Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 years</li> <li>• 40 years</li> </ul>	Margaret Heap Sheila Hamilton  <b>30 years:</b> Malcolm Pembridge Ann Blundell Jean Bray Tony Leigh			
8.	Election of President	<b>NOMINEE</b>	<b>PROPOSED BY</b>	<b>SECONDED BY</b>	Approved
		Huw Rees	Sheila Hamilton	Peter Lewis	
9.	Election of Vice President	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10.	Election of Officers Executive Officers:	<b>NOMINEE</b>	<b>PROPOSED BY</b>	<b>SECONDED BY</b>	
	Chair	Wena Evans	Jonathan Harris	Ioan Wardhough	Approved
	Vice Chair	Susy Ejuoneatse	Caroline Manley	Wendy Charlton	Approved
	Honorary Secretary	Stella McGann	Sheila Hamilton	Gareth Howells	Approved
	Finance Faculty Lead (Treasurer)	David McCaffrey	Ioan Wardhough	Hazel Davies	Approved
	Performance Faculty Lead	Clare Orrell	Jonathan Harris	Sue Donovan	Approved
	Communications Faculty Lead	Wendy Charlton	Sheila Hamilton	Clare Orrell	Approved
	Membership Faculty Lead	Stella McGann	Alison Shead	Clare Orrell	Approved
	Election of Officers Ordinary Members:	<b>NOMINEE</b>	<b>PROPOSED BY</b>	<b>SECONDED BY</b>	
	YEAR 1 (0 vacancies)	1. Anne Williams 2. Gareth Edwards 3. Geraldine Boocock	1. Alison Shead 2. Sheila Hamilton 3. Wendy Charlton	1. Stella McGann 2. Eileen Sheron 3. Tony Leigh	1. Approved 2. Approved 3. Approved

Agenda Item		Discussion			Actions
	YEAR 2 (1 vacancy)	1. Ioan Wardhough 2. Susy Ejuoneatse 3. VACANT	1. Clare Orrell 2. Sheila Hamilton 3. N/A	1. Julia Moore 2. Gareth Howells 3. N/A	1. <b>Approved</b> 2. <b>Approved</b> 3. <b>N/A</b>
	YEAR 3 (0 vacancies)	1. Alison Shead 2. Sheila Hamilton 3. Stella McGann	1. Stella McGann 2. Wendy Charlton 3. Sue Donovan	1. Jonathan Harris 2. Hazel Davies 3. Peter Lewis	1. <b>Approved</b> 2. <b>Approved</b> 3. <b>Approved</b>
	<b>Election of Officers Non Executive Officers: (Non-Voting)</b>	<b>NOMINEE</b>	<b>PROPOSED BY</b>	<b>SECONDED BY</b>	
	Librarian	George Jones	Jonathan Harris	Sheila Hamilton	<b>Approved</b>
	Recruitment Officer	Stella McGann	Sheila Hamilton	Alison Shead	<b>Approved</b>
	Registrar	Gareth Howell	Peter Lewis	Gareth Howells	<b>Approved</b>
	Stage Manager	Angela Case	Romey Lowe	Alison Hollings	<b>Approved</b>
	Archivist	David Chamberlain	Tony Leigh	Eileen Sheron	<b>Approved</b>
	Membership Secretary	Stella McGann	Jonathan Harris	Ioan Wardhaugh	<b>Approved</b>
	Publications Officer	Hazel Davies	Susy Ejuoneatse	Jonathan Harris	<b>Approved</b>
	Publicity Officer	Wendy Charlton	Sheila Hamilton	Stella McGann	<b>Approved</b>
	Health and Safety/ Safeguarding Officer	Jonathan Harris	Ioan Wardhaugh	Alison Hollings	<b>Approved</b>
	Uniform	Sheila Hamilton	Clare Orrell	Wendy Charlton	<b>Approved</b>
	Community Liaison	Margaret Heap	Gareth Howell	Eileen Sheron	<b>Approved</b>
	Data Management	Stella McGann	Jonathan Harris	Peter Lewis	<b>Approved</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	None raised.			

<b>Agenda Item</b>		<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Adjournment</b>	All retiring officers and committee members were sincerely thanked for their hard work. Those stepping up to undertake posts this year were also thanked. The meeting was concluded at 9.05pm	