

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Registered as a Charity No. 1026337

President: Sir David Willcocks, CBE, MC.

Conductor: Jeremy Backhouse

Accompanist: Jeremy Filsell



Chairman: John Trigg, 13 Vicarage Gate, Onslow Village, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 7QJ. ☎ 01483 566341.

Secretary: Stephen Jepson, Clereholt, Felday Glade, Holmbury St Mary, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6PG. ☎ & 📠 01306 730385.

Treasurer: Bob Cowell, 1 Penhurst, Shores Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 4HP. ☎ & 📠 01483 770896.

Membership Sec: Noreen Ayton, 51 Garrick Close, Hersham, Walton on Thames, Surrey, KT12 5NZ. ☎ 01932 221918

NOTICE

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the CHOIR

will be held on Monday June 24th 2002 at Christchurch Hall, Waterden Road, Guildford,
immediately following a buffet meal with wine at 7.30pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Consideration of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Christchurch, Waterden Road, Guildford on Monday June 25th 2001, and, if agreed as a correct record, to adopt them.
3. Chairman's Report.
4. Conductor's Report
With programme of Concerts for the 2002-2003 Season and provisional dates for 2003-2004.
5. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts. If agreed, the adoption of the Accounts.
6. Election of Officers: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer & Membership Secretary.
The retiring officers are listed on the Choir's letterhead above. Nominations must be received in writing, duly proposed and seconded, including confirmation of the nominee's willingness to stand, by Monday, June 17th 2002. A suitable form has been posted on the Choir's Notice Board for this purpose. At his sole discretion, the Chairman may accept additional nominations up to the time of the election.
7. Election of Additional Committee Members: Not more than eight nor less than four additional committee members are to be elected.
The following are the retiring Committee Members: Jackie Alderton, Jo Andrews, Marion Arbuckle, Alan Batterbury, Margaret Dentskevich, Rachel Edmondson, Mandy Freeman, Carol Terry and Hilary Trigg. Underlined members are not standing for re-election. Nominations must be received in writing, duly proposed and seconded, including confirmation of the nominee's willingness to stand, by Monday, June 17th 2002. A suitable form has been posted on the Choir's Notice Board for this purpose. At his sole discretion, the Chairman may accept additional nominations up to the time of the election.
8. Appointment of Conductor
Jeremy Backhouse has indicated his willingness to continue.
9. Appointment of Accompanist
Jeremy Filsell has indicated his willingness to continue.
10. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts.
11. Any Other Business
Which must have been notified to, and accepted by, the Chairman, at least 48 hours prior to the Meeting.
12. Date of next AGM

Stephen Jepson, Hon Sec, June 8th 2002

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MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Held on Monday June 24th 2002 at Christchurch Hall, Waterden Road, Guildford at 7.30 pm

1. Seventy-one members attended the AGM. Apologies for absence: Jeremy Backhouse, Peter Andrews Marion Arbuckle, Iris Ball, Alan Batterbury, Iris Bennett, Sara Dann, Carolyn Edis, Mandy Freeman, Ingrid Hardiman, Les Harfield, Mike Jeffrey, Nick Manning, Gayle Mayson, Alison Palmer and Alison Blenkinsop.
2. **Minutes of the 2001 AGM** were signed as a true record and a copy placed on file.
3. **Conductor's Report:** in the absence of Jeremy Backhouse, a copy of the Conductor's Report was read by Stephen Jepson and a copy placed on file.
4. **Chairman's report:**
 - Orb & Sceptre concert – Jeremy Backhouse put a great deal of personal effort into this concert although it was a Guildford Borough Council event. After discussion with the Borough it was agreed that Jeremy would conduct the concert and choose the soloists. The concert was a very successful and well-attended event.
 - With reference to Jeremy Backhouse's comments that GPC is a match for the best of any choir in the country, the Chairman stated that his daughter, who is a professional musician, had commented that in her opinion the choir is of a similar standard to London Philharmonic. This is thanks to the effective leadership and excellent tuition of Jeremy B.
 - The Chairman thanked those who organised the meal earlier in the evening, and Bob Cowell who had brought the wine over from France. Thanks were also expressed to Jeremy Backhouse and Jeremy Filsell, who make a tremendous contribution to the work of the choir and to the enjoyment of Monday evening rehearsals; and to the committee for their hard work - most people are not aware of the amount of work they do to ensure the success of the concert organisation. Special mention to Gill Sharpe and Roger Penny for ticket sales, Christine

Medlow for doing such a good job as librarian, and Margaret Dentskevich for the newsletter which has taken up hours of her time. Margaret is leaving the committee but is willing to help her successor in this role, and we need a volunteer to do this job. Thanks to all other people who do so many other things to ensure the success of the choir.

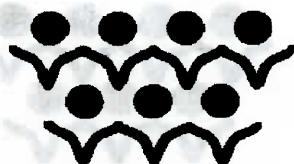
- This has been another successful year – the Chairman and his wife Hilary sat in the audience for the Orb & Sceptre concert and it was of a very high standard.
- We do need to increase our audience size, not least from the financial point of view. We can be more adventurous with the works we do if we are financially successful. The policy of the Choir is that if we decide to do an expensive concert like the Mahler we budget for it appropriately. If we fill the cathedral and still lose £5k as per budget this is acceptable, but if we have a much smaller audience than budgeted for we are then under budget and risk getting into financial difficulties. It is also better for the choir to perform to a full audience.
- Not all members are in attendance at this AGM and many of those who are have been with the choir for a long time. We do, however, have a significant turnover of members (about 40%) each year.
- Five years ago we were part of the GPS but we now have to be self-sufficient. When this new status first materialised, everyone made a big effort and nearly filled the Civic Hall for our first “independent” concert. It is Choir policy to make up a financial reserve so that the choir can continue to function as it has done in the past. We now have such a reserve, but have reached a plateau, and when we did Belshazzar’s Feast we sung to an audience of only approximately 350 people. We lost money on that concert, and we have had a number of instances since then when the audience figures have been lower than budgeted. We cannot allow this to continue and we need everyone to publicise all our concerts and make a commitment to the choir to sell as many tickets as they can. Rehearsals are fun and Jeremy Backhouse gets the best out of us, Jeremy Filsell is a wonderful accompanist and the choir does sing and perform to a high standard, but we must try harder to increase our support and decrease our losses so that we can continue to perform to the same standard.
- Dvorak Requiem - this has been chosen by the Freiburg choir and will be sung with them in Freiburg, as well as at our concert on 26 October. It is a wonderful piece of music, although it is not well-known. We have arranged to play the Bruch Violin Concerto, soloist is Chloe Hanslip aged 14, a local girl who is currently releasing a CD and has been featured many times on Classic FM, she is playing at this

year's proms, and this should attract a good audience. Hopefully this will make it easier for everyone to sell tickets.

- We are saying goodbye to some members. June Windle is leaving for two years, going to America for business purposes, and we hope she will be back. Thanks were expressed to her for help with obtaining recordings of the music we perform. Ingrid Hardiman is moving to Devon and will be leaving us. Joy Hunter is retiring from the choir. Joy has been with the choir since 1964, and has done a lot for the choir. She was presented with a bouquet of flowers to thank her for her dedication and commitment over the years. She thanked everyone and told us that being a member had meant a great deal to her in her life.
5. **Treasurer's Report.** A copy of the accounts was circulated and a copy was placed on file.
- Bob Cowell outlined what was involved in concert planning: Stephen Jepson has to book the cathedral two years ahead; Jeremy Backhouse helps to prepare a programme of music, hire orchestra and soloists; the orchestra and soloists have to be paid (VAT is not paid because we give them a personal cheque). Sometimes these costs are as much as £7,500. Publicity is sometimes £1000, venue is £800-£1000, and staging costs £360. We pay for programmes to be printed, although we do get income from sales and advertising. Concerts cost in excess of £10,000. Our next concert will cost £14,000, which means selling 900 tickets to meet the budget. Selling tickets through the Choir is beneficial as there is no 10% handling charge nor VAT, which is payable when tickets are sold through the Civic Box Office.
 - John Britten asked why income is shown as £25157 for concerts this year as opposed to £9940 last year. This was because there were more concerts, so the income and expenditure are greater by proportion.
 - A question was asked as to the Borough concert last year where there was no expenditure, but this year there was a cost. This was the cost of floral button holes which was not passed on to the Borough.
 - Laurie James proposed accounts and Joy Hunter seconded, carried unanimously.
6. **Election of Officers**
- At this point John Trigg stepped down and Stephen Jepson conducted the election of the Chairman. John Trigg had agreed that he would continue as Chairman (proposed by Bob Cowell and seconded by Stephen Jepson). This was carried unanimously.
 - JT continued at this point with the following elections:
 - Honorary Secretary - one nomination, Stephen Jepson, proposed by Marion Arbuckle, seconded by Marion Adderley

- Honorary Treasurer - one nomination, Bob Cowell, proposed by Stephen Jepson and seconded by Daniel Adderley
 - Membership Secretary – one nomination, Noreen Ayton, proposed by Sheila Hodson and seconded by Stephen Jepson
 - All carried unanimously
 - Election of committee – Margaret Dentskevich, Mandy Freeman, Marion Arbuckle and Jo Andrews were standing down. Others have agreed to continue (Carol Terry, Rachel Edmondson, Alan Batterbury, Jackie Alderton, Hilary Trigg). No other members wished to be considered for the Committee at this stage.
7. **Appointment of conductor** - Jeremy Backhouse was unanimously elected.
 8. **Appointment of accompanist** – Jeremy Filsell was unanimously elected.
 9. **Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts:** Brian Reed - proposed Stephen Jepson, seconded John Trigg, carried unanimously.
 10. **Any Other Business**
 - The new ladies uniform appears to be successful. The scarf will be added in due course when this becomes available.
 - Russell Watson concerts were challenging in that the music was not straightforward and the choir had to think on its feet during the performance, which was sometimes unpredictable ! Everyone who participated enjoyed the experience and many thanks were given to Noreen Ayton for all her help in organising these events. The choir would like to continue to be involved this sort of performance alongside our normal concerts. There was great support from the floor for this.
 - Mary Clayton mentioned that on the subject of publicity the GPC website is out of date. It was last updated in February 2002 and Lionel Moon is now responsible for its maintenance unless anyone else in the choir who would like to take on this responsibility. If any member finds an out-of-date link they should report the details to Stephen Jepson who will take steps to get the link deleted.
 - A request was made for anyone who has a connection with Surrey County Radio or Classic FM or any marketing ideas, as Alan Batterbury would be very pleased to hear from them
 - The gold rose was well accepted at the Jubilee concert and there was a suggestion that the gentlemen might wear a gold lapel pin, which would cost £2 each. This suggestion was not taken up.
 - There is now a timetable for the Freiburg visit. Rehearsal is Friday evening, most of Saturday and most of Sunday and the concert is at 7 p.m. on Sunday evening. Stephen Jepson will get details to all those planning to attend.

- There is also a rehearsal schedule for next year. A venue for about 300 singers for 14 February 2003 is required. The University Sports Hall was suggested. Jeremy Backhouse has suggested that we could perhaps rehearse in the cathedral. This will be investigated.
 - The question of other venues was raised – some people do not like coming to the cathedral because it is too far and the acoustic is not good. Woking is very expensive. Civic Hall costs more than the Cathedral. Petworth House - National Trust charges a lot of money for these venues. The Choir cannot afford to take a chance on an expensive venue and risk making a loss. If we sing for a charity we do need to ensure that the charity has its own team to do the organising and get sponsorship.
 - Judy Smith asked why we have not been getting press reviews for our concerts. Surrey Advertiser now has a new editor and they seem to have changed their style and do not seem to be interested. They will not even publish reviews if we write them ourselves. It is hoped that the Surrey Ad will be interested in Chloe Hanslip who is playing at the next concert.
 - It was suggested that members do a leaflet drop in their local areas and tell people that they can buy tickets from a designated choir member. Another suggestion was to pay for newsagents/Post Office to display posters advertising concerts.
 - One member asked if the choir's e-mailing system is secure. Anyone can get a virus but all files are cleansed before being sent to members and members must run their virus checkers regularly.
 - Rehearsals start again on 2 September 2002. Members will be informed of any changes to these arrangements.
11. **Date of next AGM** - Monday 23 June 2003 at Christchurch, Guildford.



Minutes Book

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th APRIL 2002

	2000/2001	2001/2002
INCOME	£	
Borough Grant	3000.00	3000.00
Concerts: GBC	555.00	515.00
Choir	9940.45	25147.06
Donations	188.90	10.30
Friends	155.00	82.82
100 Subscriptions	1178.00	1200.00
General fund raising	1162.21	946.76
Sale of goods	99.00	269.64
Gross Interest received	1996.59	1356.30
Miscellaneous receipts	15.65	3039.80
Music sub-account contributions	304.10	1227.41
Patrons	900.00	1100.00
Social events	658.80	341.40
Subscriptions	10722.56	10503.00
Tax refunds on covenants	3089.87	3128.23
TOTAL INCOME	33966.13	51867.72
EXPENDITURE		
Direct charitable expenditure		
Choir concerts	16795.00	23166.49
Borough concert		331.05
Music sub-account hire charges	253.10	1076.83
Rehearsal fees	6561.40	6743.00
Rehearsal room hire	3140.00	3185.00
Sub-total	26749.50	34502.37
Fund raising costs		
100 Club prizes	650.00	650.00
Cost of stock sold	22.24	11.00
Social event costs	233.51	103.05
Write-off of Notelets	740.56	
Write-off of old folders		77.14
Other fundraising costs	169.06	166.29
Sub-total	1815.37	1007.48
Administration costs		
Bank charges	4.50	12.00
Miscellaneous	451.62	548.46
Presentations	59.23	2.60
Publicity	1413.38	3548.32
Subscriptions	229.56	275.50
Sub-total	2158.29	4386.88
Donations		729.48
Miscellaneous Expense		1150.80
Bradbeer Legacy	422.82	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	31145.98	41777.01
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	2820.15	10090.71
Plus surplus attributable to previous year	2.45	
Total this year	2822.60	10090.71

Minute Book

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

AGM – 24 JUNE 2002

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I intend keeping this short!

Our season began with the familiar territory of the Messiah – uncut – on 3 November. I was very keen with this concert to put a strong case for the legitimacy of performing this work with a large choir and orchestra, given the competition from the 'authentic' movement (small choir, small orchestra) both in Guildford and on a broader perspective. Also I was aware that to sing this work in the cathedral would require a highly disciplined approach. I felt that we acquitted ourselves extremely well and proved beyond doubt that large-scale performances of the Baroque repertoire are just as valid as the small-scale. Despite my fast tempos and the fireworks outside, the many semiquaver passages came across very cleanly indeed and the dance-like effect that I was seeking certainly communicated itself. This was aided in no small way by the fine playing of the Brandenburg Sinfonia. Special mention should be made of the four fine soloists, especially Charles Humphries the counter-tenor who was on fine form.

We then moved on to the Christmas show in the Guildford Civic which we again shared with the Guildford Symphony Orchestra with Darrel Davison and which followed the usual format. I tried to pick some less familiar carols to sit alongside the old chestnuts and I think this worked quite well, though I think some felt a little under-rehearsed.

The New Year saw us tackling Mozart (the Solemn Vespers) and Haydn (the Nelson Mass) for a concert on 2 February with the Surrey Mozart Players. The programme also included the 5th Symphony of Mendelssohn. Both the choral works are glorious pieces and I think that our joy in singing them shone through to the audience. Certainly there was a tremendous panache and confidence to the choral singing that evening. Helen Neeves' singing of the gorgeous Laudate in the Mozart was a highlight.

When Nicola Goold adopted the Golden Jubilee programme that I had put together for her subscription series, she said that if the Queen Mother died before it we would surely have to change the repertoire to something less celebratory. When she did die on Easter Saturday I was fearful that wholesale changes would be imposed. Fortunately though the mood of the country was such that a celebration of her life seemed entirely appropriate and in the end our concert on 6 April became a fitting tribute to the QM. When I decided to open the concert with the Britten *National Anthem* I could never have imagined just how powerful and moving a moment it would prove. The whole evening then became a glorious celebration with some brilliant singing – powerful and robust and delivered with great conviction. And for once I felt that the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra were playing with real commitment for us.

Then to our most recent concert: Mendelssohn's *Elijah* on 25 May. It is incredible to think that this is the first time that the choir has performed this piece, so a performance was long overdue. I was absolutely delighted with this concert and felt it was really very fine indeed. I had decided to perform the work uncut so as to give the drama the opportunity to be conveyed to its fullest extent. And dramatic it was. Our *Elijah*, Mike Bundy, was deeply impressive – really fabulous and all the other soloists gave strong performances. It was especially good to see and hear Eugene Ginty again. I was very happy to welcome back the Forest Philharmonic Orchestra who, as ever, played with great assurance. I mentioned at the time that one player in the bar afterwards said that it was "a joy and privilege" to play for us. He was very impressed with our singing – and so he should be because it was of the finest order that evening. The many different moods of each chorus – whether baying for blood, bawling to a false god or simply being angelic – were portrayed with enormous passion and sincerity. The ladies' "Lift thine eyes" was particularly fine. I honestly don't think that this performance as a whole could have been bettered by any choir in the country and it really showed what a fine work it is and how its recent neglect is undeserved. This was the highlight of the season for me.

Before I leave the review I should mention a couple of other dates that came our way. Back on 30 June last year a smaller group of us travelled to London to St Martin-in-the-Fields to sing the Vivaldi *Gloria* as part of a concert given by the Brandenburg Sinfonia. It made a great day out and it was good to be asked by the orchestra to be involved. Let's hope we are invited to sing more such dates.

And then there were the two Russell Watson shows – one last October, the other this April. I'm not going to air my views on Mr Watson here – you've probably gathered that I'm not a fan. I have to say that I don't think that doing these shows broadens the choir's exposure in any really positive or serious way – for example, the type of audience member at one of his shows is unlikely to travel to Guildford to hear us sing very different repertoire. And I'm not sure that it makes us any more versatile in our repertoire: I have great difficulty in getting excited about the sort of arrangements that we are asked to prepare. But I suppose it is a good way of bringing in money and I think it's generally considered to be a good day out.

OK – looking ahead then ...

Saturday 26 October
Bruch: Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor (Chloë Hanslip)
Dvořák: Requiem
Patrizia Kwella/Catherine Denley/???/???
GPC/Brandenburg Sinfonia/Jeremy Backhouse
Guildford Cathedral
GPC promotion

Sunday 10 November 2002
Dvořák: Requiem
GPC/Freiburger Bachchor/Hans Michael Beuerle
Freiburg Konzerthaus

Sunday 15 December 2002 at 2.30pm. (*time tbc*)
Mayor of Guildford's Christmas Concert
GPC/GSO/Jeremy Backhouse/Darrell Davison
Guildford Civic
Guildford Rotary/GPC promotion

Saturday 15 February 2003 at 7.30pm.
Verdi: Requiem
GPC/Wokingham Choral Society/GPO/Edward Gardner
GBC promotion

Saturday 17 May 2003 at 7.30pm.
Mahler: Symphony No.8 ("Symphony of a Thousand")
GPC/SW Essex Choral Society/Lewisham Choral Society/
Forest Philharmonic Orchestra/Jeremy Backhouse
GPC promotion

Saturday 29 November 2003: to include Berlioz' *Te Deum* & Saint-Saëns' *Organ Symphony*
Sunday 14 December 2003: Carol Concert

When you receive your rehearsal schedules for the next season you will see that I have re-introduced the concept of a minimum requirement for rehearsal attendance. I've done this because I have been concerned that attendance has been falling off in some areas recently. This really mustn't be allowed happen. If we are aiming to maintain the very high standards that we are presently achieving, then I need all these rehearsals. I don't just schedule loads of rehearsals in order to increase my pay packet! Of course, I will cancel Extra rehearsals if I think they are surplus to requirements. And please remember that the Friday evening Final Piano Rehearsals are obligatory. Noreen will be monitoring this so beware!

As ever I would like to thank all the committee, but especially the principal officers, for their support of me and for all the hard work they put in behind the scenes to make this choir run so smoothly. I would also personally like to thank Christine Medlow for the quietly efficient way she organises the music – and a word of thanks to the team who compile the concert programmes so professionally. Additional thanks to Prue for playing at the dreaded auditions and of course to Mr "Fingers" Filsell for his constantly brilliant playing and his loyalty to the choir.

It's been another very good year for us musically with some singing of the very highest order. There is no doubt in my mind that when on form, as we very much have been this year, we are the equal of most major choruses in the country. I said last year that there was an added confidence in the singing and this is all the more true this year. What is particularly satisfying is not just that we can now do all the necessary choral techniques (when reminded!) but that we can sing musically with phrasing and colour – we get beyond the notes and make music. There is a flexibility that one might expect from a chamber choir. So, we should be proud of what we are achieving and active in letting everyone know about it. Thanks for all your hard work over the past year – I hope you've enjoyed it as much as I have and let's hope next year is as happy and successful.

Thank you.