

# **Minutes of Global Harmony Annual General Meeting**

**16th March 2009**

Held at Sandy Lane Methodist Church

## **Present:**

Tina Atkinson, Jean Bakewell, Annelise Bunch, Irena Bursnell, Karen Chandler, Helen Clarke, Carole Clohesy, Barbara Coitino, Sheila Cooper, Shirley Cornfield, Jenny Cronin, Hilary Davies, Ann Garton, Alan Goddard, Eileen Goldie, Steve Johnson, Tony Maher, Val Maher, Pam Matthews, Maisie Nussey, Marian Oakhill, Jackie Patrick, Kate Pike, Isabelle Taylor, Rosalind Heatlie, Dave Perry, Vera Pooley, Pattie Samuel, Stephanie Snaith, Jane Stanley, Janet Tomaszewski, Frances Waite, Mary Ward, Helen Clegg, Cherry Wessel, David Wheeler, Hazel Collier, Kate Rathbone, Claire Statham, Jane Statham, Mandy Stevens, Ruth Wood, Julie Cragg, Maxine Beck, Jules Richards, Anne-Marie Gresley-Jones, Sue Bateman, Alison Stuart, Duncan Manderson, Karen Gove, Helen Clegg, Margaret Leftley

## **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Were accepted as a fair record.

## **REPORT OF TREASURER**

The increase in subscriptions has ensured that income from members has matched the main costs of room hire and the Musical Director's (MD's) fees. Current balance is £7800. Coach hire costs of £1000 were mitigated by income of £923 from the Olympic Launch ceremony. Fund raising for the French Exchange was very successful. Two workshops made a small profit. Choir finances are strong. (Accounts sheet attached)

## **REPORT OF CHAIRPERSON**

2008-2009 has witnessed some very exciting developments for us as a choir for which we can be very proud. We have continued to attract new members and grow in quality of sound, under the inspiring leadership of Liz Underhill. Liz has improved

our performance to the extent that each new concert surpasses the previous in quality, with cries of "Our best performance yet!" from both members of the choir and seasoned supporters. New audiences are impressed and often generate new members. Liz's lively, cheerful and inclusive approach is irrepressible, whatever the circumstances! Thank you Liz, for being such an encouragement to us all!

We have integrated newcomers who have shown great commitment and enthusiasm to learning our existing repertoire as well as the current songs. Longer standing members have also been adaptable in learning other parts for known songs to maintain balance, sometimes at short notice. There is a spirit of cooperation and mutual support which makes this a very friendly, affirming group.

As for songs, we have succeeded in learning "N'kosi Sikelele Afrika" in five different languages! Who will forget the moving moment when we sang this to unsuspecting passers-by at the statue of Nelson Mandela on the South Bank in London!

We have extended our reach, both nationally and internationally, with our excursions to London and Warwick and our link with the French choir Canta Koume. We are anticipating our return trip to the Loire Valley this coming summer with many thanks to Jan Collins and the FREX team for all their hard work in preparation for this.

Now a step-by step review of the year:

Soon after the start of the Summer term 2008, a number of us enjoyed the very stimulating Community Choirs Festival at Warwick Arts Centre. We were taught en masse by four different choir leaders simultaneously -no mean feat! We later took turns with the other choirs to perform one song each to the appreciative audience. We are looking forward to returning to Warwick next term.

2008 saw strenuous efforts on behalf of the choir to raise funds for FREX.

There were 3 main fundraising opportunities during the summer: A cake and produce stall on the market in April, a Clarins evening at Ragdale and The Big Raffle. Thanks to the FREX committee, and all who participated, these opportunities were maximised to great effect. Ragdale proved so popular that another evening is planned this year.

The focus of Summer 2008 was, of course, the visit by Canta Koume. The itinerary, put together by the FREX committee, was splendid! On perhaps the chilliest weekend in July, we were warmed by our visitors, who took us by storm from the word go, dancing enthusiastically at the Friday welcome event to the jazz band. The

farewell barn dance led by New St. George Morris was a roaring success and our visitors had a taste of English culture, through this and the excellent buffet from choir members. It was disappointing to not have been able to sing at Belvoir Castle as planned, but the replacement Belton House seemed to take our visitors' interest all the same, and members of the public were treated to a short outdoor concert. ...And each meeting or journey was punctuated with their quirky "terant terant tererro" action song! Who can remember it now?

We were impressed by Canta Koume's high standard as a choir and the speed with which we could learn together in the workshop. Our performances at Melton Theatre on the Saturday night were very well received and it was fabulous to join together to form a choir of perhaps 70 strong for part of the performance. Friendships were forged with the hosts and these will be strengthened in the Summer of 2009 as we return. Everyone had a part to play in the success of this venture: the FREX committee, the hosts, suppliers of cakes, buffet food and raffle prizes, those with the Clarins shine, every ticket sold, and of course Liz in leading us all musically.

The summer events didn't end there however, as we had extra practices in preparation for August's Olympic Handover Event to be celebrated in Walthamstow, the nearest site to the next Olympic village. We were anticipating performing nationwide on the live TV link. To see our name on banners on the perimeter fence was quite something. It was very sad, but wholly understandable, that this site's event could not go ahead due to tragic circumstances with the murder of a young man at the site earlier that day. Instead, we were honoured to perform at the Shoreditch Festival, which was also running that day and Liz cheerfully adapted our repertoire to accommodate this. We were all singing, all dancing "up for anything", as Liz would say, pleased to have been able to perform in the end.

The Autumn term got off at a cracking pace, with preparations for the October 12th South Bank Centre Concert which arose from the Summer Sunday scheme in which choirs could put themselves forward for a performance, be vetted and in our case accepted. We followed Chantage, a very prestigious choir, which was daunting. However it was our performance, which had the audience on their feet, singing and dancing along! We also paid our respects in song to Nelson Mandela as mentioned earlier. In the autumn, we had several new members to the choir, who worked very hard indeed to get up to speed with old and new repertoire and gave excellent account of themselves at the Christmas Concert held in the Baptist Church.

We have run two workshops: Chris Rowbury's Beach Boys Bonanza was moved from its intended Spring term spot and consequently supported by fewer than we hoped,

probably because it was too soon after being run elsewhere locally. It was enjoyed by those who attended and there are other opportunities to catch this one if you missed it. Una May Olomolaiye stepped into the breach for our Spring workshop at short notice. This one had unprecedented support in advance tickets sold and was worth every penny. It was a remarkably uplifting day with joyful songs. Una May was impressed by the standard of singing from those who came.

We also braved freezing fog to have a skittles evening in Stathern, which was very jolly! Alan and Dave F. also performed an amusing ditty written in honour of Liz.

Close Harmony had its first full evening's performance at Waltham in December, which was a success and felt like the choir could stand alone. This choir is adjusting to changes in membership this year and working on a challenging repertoire. The ensemble's first paid gig at Twyford in March was appreciated by the audience. A further two gigs are planned in the near future.

Our events are publicised very effectively through the website, which has been kept up-to-date since its inception, by Steve Johnson. We are indebted to Steve for all he has done to facilitate this. Sadly, Steve has decided to leave the committee this time. He has been involved in so many levels, as Secretary, Vice-Chair, Website coordinator and writer, and CD and MP3 recordings. Steve has also had to deal with the updating of the choir's Constitution and production of a Safeguarding Policy, to meet our hiring requirements. We have held two extraordinary meetings to implement these. Thank you, Steve, for putting in so much time and energy on our behalf. You will be missed.

I should like to thank the whole committee for all their effective hard work and support this year. At this point, I wish to give notice that I shall stand down from the committee at next Spring's AGM 2010. Having served for several years, I think it is time to move over and let other ideas in. I remain totally committed to the choir's success all the same. The coming year has exciting challenges and it is a privilege to be part of a team, which takes us forward.

### **COMMITTEE FOR 2009/2010**

Steve Johnson stood down and his role of Secretary was taken over by Dave Farrow. Julie Cragg joined the committee. Other roles remain unchanged. Tina will stand

down from the role of Chairperson at the end of this year and as part of the handover process Val Maher will help with bookings.

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT** by Jenny Cronin, membership secretary

### **Attendance**

April –July 2008	Sept – Dec 2008	Jan –April 2009	Notes
48	44	45	There are usually just over 60 names on the register at the beginning of each term. Jan-Apr 09 there are 59. It is difficult to judge whether we are losing more members term by term as we have tended to keep names on the register "just in case" they come back. We tend to get 3or 4 new members each term.
49	53	50	
51	49	49	
52	46	Cancelled	
43	44	Cancelled	
45	46	38	
46	43	44	
42	49	46	
46	42	47	
43	50	49	
40	48	16 March	
45	51	23 March	
49			
<b>Mean: 46</b>	<b>Mean: 47</b>	<b>Mean: 46</b>	
13 meetings	12 meetings	Based on 8 out of 10 meetings	

### **New members**

New members provide their contact details on a Welcome Sheet. This also tells them contact details for GH secretary, membership rep, GH website and email. These details are emailed to the secretary to go on the GH database, on which the register and telephone tree is then based. New members are given a file containing: About Global Harmony – a sheet including information on GH, the Natural Voice philosophy and Liz's role; GH constitution; GH Safeguarding Policy; most recent AGM minutes; telephone tree; name badge; GH collection of song/words; MP3 disc; teach CDs. Latterly a small charge has been made for some discs.

### **Information and resources for all members**

The updated songs/words collection (December 2008) has been a very valuable addition to the material for new members (established members too) as well as the discs. It would be worth re-considering the idea of putting some of this material on an area of the GH website which only members can access so that we can each take more responsibility for keeping ourselves up to date). The same could be said for most of the material listed above. Perhaps the committee could return to this. The committee has already noted that the telephone tree needs updating termly and a new way of both notifying all members of an updated version identified, plus re-thinking the way in which we try to make sure that all members are contacted on certain occasions eg session cancellation due to bad weather.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None