

Upbeat! and Offbeat! Choirs
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
28 August 2025, 7.30pm
Grundisburgh Village Hall

Present: Graham Boshier (Chair), Sarah Ray (Vice Chair), Carol McConnell-Theobald (Musical Director), Julie Vowles (Treasurer), Helen Gosling (Secretary), Anna Greenwood (Events Secretary) and 35 members

Apologies: Sara Brook (PR & Publicity Officer), Lynda Biggs, Chris Davidson, Lindsay Daws, Jo Eley, Mike Harris, Davina Marshall, Sue Simpson, Jayne Vaughan, Richard Vaughan, Gill Twissell

Graham Boshier opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and briefly outlining the format for the AGM. As this was our first formal AGM there were no previous minutes and Graham explained that it had been decided to formalise the choirs and reminded members that our Constitution is available on the Upbeat! website. He also stated that plans were afoot to extend the website to incorporate an Offbeat! section.

Musical Director's Report

Carol McConnell-Theobald then gave her Musical Directors report. She gave a brief summary of the events that the choirs had taken part in over the last year which included, recording a song for the Red Trousers Day charity, composing and recording songs for Pip Hare during her Vendee Globe Challenge. We trialled three Christmas Concerts in 2024 which did give choir members flexibility but Carol and others found it exhausting and therefore we will only perform two concerts for Christmas 2025. Charities supported for our Christmas concert were Brave Futures and POTS, and this year we plan to support a local Prostate Cancer charity and a Menopause charity.

A new development this year, was our online ticketing and payments platform. Carol thanked Phil Bailey for all his help setting this up.

Carol also thanked Adrian Shield for the article he produced for Grundisburgh News and his general help with Offbeat! recruitment.

Carol then spoke about the Summer concerts, which were held earlier than usual this year. For the first time the second concert was not a sell-out – but it did clash with various other local events. We were delighted to support Brain Cancer and Breast Friends.

Carol thanked Sarah Petts for leading Journey's Home. She also commented on our brilliant band members and Pearl who stepped in to play the drums at the last minute. She also thanked Sarah Petts and Graham Seabrook for their support at rehearsals all year round.

Carol confirmed that when we resume next week, we will be working towards the Christmas Concerts. She had hoped that we would be ahead, but numbers attending rehearsals dropped off after the Summer Concerts so we will have to work hard to be concert ready. She also said that she would like to work on our presentation, i.e. walking on and off the stage and also where the choir members stand to give the best sound and appearance.

Carol spoke briefly about the musical scores that the choirs use which she believes adds professionalism, but asked members to spend time between rehearsals looking at the scores and listening to the tracks that she produces.

Carol mentioned the importance of the registers, and commented that we never have all members present and therefore she doesn't feel it necessary to hold a waiting list and welcomes new members at any time. She also knows that people join the choirs for many reasons so feels it important to not turn people away.

Carol is still keen to increase Offbeat! numbers and plans a leaflet drop soon. There is more competition out there with local choirs, but as we are well established no threat is felt.

Carol said she is still thinking about starting a smaller group to do more serious pieces of music and will give this more thought.

Carol concluded her report by thanking the other members of the Committee for all their hard work in the smooth running of both the choirs. She also said she is always happy to take on new ideas.

Secretary's Report

Helen Gosling then gave her Secretary's Report. She confirmed that currently we have 79 ladies in Upbeat! comprising 42 sopranos and 37 altos, and 23 men in Offbeat! with 13 tenors and 10 basses.

Helen then spoke about the organisation of the music and what a massive task it is to keep it under control. Last winter she took all the music home, reorganised it, sourced new storage boxes and it is now back in the cupboard clearly labelled. It is an ongoing project as new music is added. Helen put out a plea to request that members return their music as soon as possible after a concert.

Helen also reminded members that email is our main form of communication so asked that choir members keep her up to date with email addresses and to read the emails we send out. She highlighted the fact that Anna sends out a brilliant termly newsletter, which includes lots of information.

Helen concluded by asking members to ensure that they tick their names off on the registers when they attend Choir each week. This is particularly important in the event of an emergency.

Treasurer's Report

Julie Vowles then gave an overview of the income and expenditure for the choirs. Total income for the year was £29,236.74. Total expenditure was £26,358.54. Due to increased costs and greater charitable donations, this year's surplus is £2878.20. Julie reported that the end of year bank balance is £11,542.89.

Julie confirmed that the cost of subs at £60 per term is to remain unchanged. Julie concluded her report saying that it is hoped to equal or see further increases to the charitable donations at 31/07/2026.

Membership Fees

Graham confirmed as Julie had just mentioned, that subs would remain at £60 per term going forward.

Election of Committee

Graham asked Helen whether she had received any nominations for the Committee Posts. Helen reported that there had been no nominations. Graham therefore asked the floor whether they were happy for the current Committee to be re-elected en bloc. This motion was proposed by Adrian Shield and seconded by Helen Ellerby. The motion was unanimously passed by the AGM.

Matters Sent to the Secretary

Helen had received one question/suggestion prior to the AGM which was:

Could we do another musicals concert?

Could we learn a slightly longer piece, perhaps more classical in nature?

Carol responded to this question, by highlighting that she was still thinking of setting up a smaller group to tackle classical pieces. As far as another Musicals Concert, Carol likes to keep things fresh so felt it important not to repeat that type of concert too soon after our Summer 2024 Musical themed concerts. But she would bear those suggestions in mind.

Graham then thanked everyone for attending our first AGM and declared the meeting closed.

Following the AGM, the members were invited to give any feedback or raise issues with the Committee. This open session was not minuted.

Helen Gosling
Secretary
29.08.2025