

CCS AGM 2019-20, 6 October 2020

Chairman's Report

The AGM is the occasion to review the Society's activity over the preceding season ending in May, but this year it seems appropriate to extend that remit and focus on the way we have dealt with the unprecedented circumstances from March up to the present.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought an abrupt and early end to our singing season in mid-March. Compared with some, we were fortunate that the decision to cancel the May concert could be taken prior to the sale of tickets and early enough to avoid much of the usual concert expenditure. As Fiona has explained, our finances have not suffered, at least in the short term, and we have been able to compensate Carleton and Jenny in some measure for their ongoing loss of income due to the suspension of our activities.

Our Membership Secretary perceived early on that, without regular rehearsals, members would benefit socially from weekly communication. The 'Handwashers' Newsletter' was born carrying musical and topical contributions from members and a regular column by Carleton. A special thank you to Tim and all contributors for maintaining this initiative throughout the past six months.

As early thoughts of rescheduling the Handel/Linley May concert for the autumn receded, the Committee, at its July meeting, adopted a phased approach to coming out of lockdown, deciding to cancel September and October rehearsals as well as the December 2020 concert. It was agreed that next steps would be decided in October following an AGM by videoconference and employing e-mail voting. Existing membership status was extended into the 2020-21 season until such time as a programme of activity and a budget could be determined.

Responses to the recent survey of members' views will feed into the October review, alongside prevailing practical and legal considerations, to help decide whether, and if so when, any of various forms of a resumption of our activities might take place. With 'The Rule of 6' destined to be in place for some time, immediate prospects are not encouraging, but we will continue to keep all relevant matters under review and maintain our regular communication with you.

Until Covid intervened, CCS had enjoyed a successful season, performing Faure and Rutter Requiems with organ and ensemble in November and raising substantial funds for The Churn Project at the December charity concert. On your behalf I want to record thanks to all members of the committee and the many other members who contribute to putting on our concerts and help make our weekly rehearsals enjoyable and smooth-running. I particularly want to thank Gill Hornby, who is leaving the Committee after her term of office, and Anne Rickard, our retiring Communications Co-ordinator, for nurturing our local press relations and keeping the Society in the public eye. We wish Anne and Geoff well as they relocate to Cambridgeshire. Finally we convey our thanks and good wishes to Carleton and Jenny for whom, for obvious reasons, the pandemic has been so much more worrying than for most of us. We all look forward to meeting again in person when circumstances finally permit.