Chair's Report 2026

This has been a year of both change and consolidation for the Choir. David has now been leading the choir for a full year, and the progress among the younger singers is clear. The Choir as a whole continues to grow in strength, confidence and ability. We also marked a significant change in leadership as Claire stepped down as Chair. We are extremely grateful for her hard work and dedication, both during her four years as Chair and in her earlier service as a committee member.

Our first concert after the summer break was a joint performance with Polymnia on 18 October, titled *Haunting Harmonies*. The programme included music by Lotti, Verdi, Victoria, Mäntyjärvi, Michael Jackson, Britten, Annie Lennox, Taylor Swift, Schubert, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Stanford and Vaughan Williams.

We then gave our traditional carol-singing performance, this time at Westcroft Pavilion on 2 December. This helped to raise funds for the Choir while also entertaining attendees at the local Christmas fair. We will begin considering a venue for next year after the summer break.

This was followed by our annual Christmas concert on 7 December at St Mary and St Giles Church in Stony Stratford, which has become the Choir's traditional venue for this event. This year, we do not plan to hold a separate MKYC Christmas concert. Instead, we will join the MK Community Choir Christmas concert on 13 December.

On 8 March, we took part in the Covid Families Memorial Concert at Willen Lake. This annual ceremony commemorates the UK's National Day of Reflection and honours those who lost their lives during the pandemic.

We did not attend the Choir Festival at Campbell Park this year, as we usually do, but we plan to build towards taking part again next year. We are also looking forward to another collaboration with Polymnia on 6 February in Newport Pagnell, as well as a collaboration with the Open University Choir to perform John Rutter's *Mass of the Children* on 27 June.

We finished the year with an informal concert for parents, carers, family and friends. As well as raising much-appreciated funds for the Choir, the event gave attendees the opportunity to see how beautifully the singers have grown and developed over the year.

It was also a chance to say goodbye to some of our singers as they move on to the next stage of their musical journeys. In particular, May and Theodore will be focusing on their musical development, having received scholarships and/or places at other institutions. We wish them, and all our leavers, every success for the future.

Membership numbers have fallen this year as the Choir has gone through a period of transition. However, we have plans in place for a summer of background recruitment, including

the distribution of flyers and posters, followed by more targeted recruitment activity from September onwards.

The AGM will give the committee an opportunity to reflect on the Choir's needs, review our recruitment tactics and agree the next steps. This will also allow us to take into account any ideas David may have about the Choir's future direction.

I would like to thank the committee for all their support over the past year. Without their hard work and commitment, we would not be able to continue providing such a positive environment for the singers to develop and perform. In particular, thank you to Poppy, Chris, Anil and Elise.

I would also like to offer my sincere thanks to Penny for her accompaniment, encouragement and continued support in everything we do as a Choir. My thanks also go to David for the skill, care and hard work he brings to nurturing our singers, helping them develop both as individuals and as part of the Choir.

I wish you all a relaxing summer and look forward to seeing the singers back in September.

Stuart

MKYC Chair