

## Chair's Report 2024

I can scarcely believe that another year has passed already and the AGM is almost upon us, time certainly does fly as you get older!

After last year's AGM we had our summer concert, which went very well, with some 'lighter' numbers for us to perform on a very hot day in a stifling hall – the refreshments afterwards were very welcome, I seem to remember.... Hopefully we won't suffer this year at Fairford, which is a much nicer singing environment.

We have been lucky this year to be able to move our rehearsals to Fairford, as well as the summer and Christmas concerts. It is a better environment to sing in and, not to be sniffed at, cheaper for us to hire than BJS. We have considered it for our main concerts, but the parking there is just not good enough so we are having to stick with the Methodist Church, although we are open to suggestions for alternative venues as parking there is also tricky. Thank you to everybody for making the move to Fairford so straightforward, I know that it has made some people's journeys to the rehearsals more difficult and your willingness to travel is much appreciated.

I will echo Nick's remarks about our concerts this past year – some challenging stuff for us to learn and Nick's confidence in our ability to live up to his high standards is hopefully not misplaced! One of the things that distinguishes us from other Choral groups is the variety of music we perform – I know that it is not always to everybody's tastes, but I take the view that it is good for me to learn things that I wouldn't necessarily choose myself and I hope you think the same.

Nick is correct in his report to assume that I will also echo his comments about the need to recruit more singers if we want to keep going – perhaps we could start giving prizes to anyone who successfully persuades someone to join our ranks, especially men! It is a serious issue, however, so if we could all rack our brains to think of ways in which we could introduce potential new members to AFC, we will all benefit. Perhaps you're a member of a Church, or other group, where you could put out feelers. It's always worth asking.

I will also repeat remarks made in the past about ticket sales and the need to up the numbers coming to our concerts, for financial reasons if nothing else. We must all feel disappointed when we have worked really hard on our pieces and have relatively few people there to listen to us. One thought that has been mooted and which you might like to think about is the timing of our concerts – you will know that Nick's other choir(s) have concerts that start much earlier than our main concerts and this could be something we need to seriously consider.

We have had some very generous donations this year, without which we would be struggling. My thanks to all those who have so kindly given us money in order for us to keep doing something we all love.

Huge thanks as always to Nick for all the hard work he puts into AFC, and to Rowena for tackling everything that he throws at her – we are fortunate indeed to have them both.

Last but never least – thanks to the Committee and to Frankie, we would certainly not be able to keep going without the time they willingly give in order to keep the show on the road.

Kate Atherton