

## Setanta A.G.M.

Wednesday 27/5/2015 at 7.15pm

Conference room 3, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk

### Welcome and report on choir year.

Una welcomed everyone to this year's AGM; apologies were received and recorded from Pat Clinton, Joe McDonald, Betty Stewart, Uta Bingham, Jimmy Hollywood, Marian Mullen, Mary Mullen, Aine Mc Nally, Ann O'Reilly and Joan Murphy, circa 35 members attended.

Una acknowledged Joe's brother's recent death and expressed our condolences.

This was another very busy year for the choir which was not what we had planned for at our last AGM. To recap; there was Carlingford Festival in November 2014, Christmas Concert in December 2014 with the Réalt na Mara school choir which fulfilled our commitment under the Bursary, Carol singing in the Marshes during which we raised €703 for Simon Community Dundalk, in January 2015 some members travelled to New York to sing The Peacemakers in Carnegie Hall and we finished the choir year with our concert with St. Joseph's Senior choir on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Una thanked all for their continued hard work and support over the year, it is evident that the more we put in the more we get done and the more enjoyment there is for all. The benefits of choral singing week in week out certainly support this. Una has seen members coming to rehearsal tired but leaving with a "hop in their step". This proves choral singing is good for you; members support each other and can have "the craic" as well.

The AGM gives the opportunity to thank all those who help with the organisation of the choir. Thank you to the committee who meet once a month and carry out a range of duties.

Pat - official title is Administrator, which really covers all the jobs nobody else wants to do. As well as this each week Pat arrives early with the Keyboard etc and sets it up, he also arranges for the keyboard to be in place if we are singing at a different venue. He organises the tea/coffee and clears away after the break and removes the keyboard at the end of the night. This is true dedication and commitment and Una recognises this and paid tribute to Pat tonight for all this work.

Cathie - for all her work on the website, texting and work on posters, programmes etc.

Maura - for her unending patience in organising the sheet music for all choir members, this involves photocopy and recording the issue and return of original sheet music which is the property of the choir.

Our section representatives - Aisling, Carmel and Joe for their support and work on behalf of the members

Grace - who has stepped in and helped while learning on the job. Una is delighted to announce that Create Louth have given Grace a grant to 'up skill' in the area of choral singing accompaniment, which is very different to just playing the piano as Anne can testify.

Anne - who is an absolute marvel, for her commitment and dedication through a difficult year and who never let us down, we couldn't do without her. A presentation of flowers was made as a token of our appreciation.

Jim as Treasurer - Jim informed us last year of his intention to step down at the end of this choir year. However over the last 4/6 weeks he has agreed to stay on. This has come about as it has been agreed that the many duties that Jim had undertaken are now to be revised. Jim will look after the books, but the collection of money will be allocated to other choir members. Not only is Jim Treasurer but he organises the steps for all our concerts and is a vital part of this set up process, organises venues for after post concert refreshments and AGMs. Tonight we would like to recognise his contribution to Setanta and present him with a painting, our thanks to Michael for organising the presentation.

Fiona as Secretary - is stepping down and her decision cannot be changed. Una thanked Fiona who has been on the committee for over 10 years and worked as choir secretary for 6 years. Before tonight's meeting Una asked Fiona to list the duties, this ranges from minutes, members contact records, passwords to access the website, lists, thank you correspondence - the list goes on!. , Her support to and work on behalf of the choir and committee throughout her term is recognised and greatly appreciated. A floral presentation and a gift of a necklace were presented to Fiona. Fiona thanked the choir and the committee members, both past and present, for the last 10 years and for the beautiful presentations.

Brian Lennon who does a large amount of work with Jim

Joan Murphy for the fantastic job she does on ticket sales and management.

Madeleine, Betty, Bernie, Pauline, Dermot, Danny, Brian, Colm and BB a mix of choir members, ex choir members and husbands/wives of choir members who support the choir in

many ways preparing for and during our concerts. We recognise the work that all our helpers do. Please let Fiona know before the end of the night of any helpers who should be thanked individually.

The report of last year's A.G.M. was available on the website for members to read, some items will be coming up again tonight. No matters arising so the report was taken as read.

**Treasurer's report** (copy attached), Jim went through the report and the finances for the May concert, some items were mentioned in more detail

- Annual Subscriptions: there is difficulty in getting these paid in time, last Wednesday of the choir year there were 3 outstanding, tonight there is 1 outstanding. There are over 60 members, there are a few members who do not pay the sub as they carry out vital work for the choir, others paid for a half year as they did not attend the full year.
- The amount paid to the school from the concert proceeds was €1,200
- Every year we have a shortfall in payments for tea/coffee, however this year the amount is €500 which is way too high and unsustainable. The outside caterers who supply this changed during the year and Jim is trying to contact them to discuss the amount owed. We have to pay for a set number of cups each week and the money collected does not cover this. Pat collects the money each week and gives it to Jim once a month. There is no suggestion that members are not paying their €2 however the loss this year is not acceptable and cannot continue.
- The website was renewed by Cathie at a cost of €2,500; €1,000 was paid last year and the balance of €1,500 this year.
- Training with Alan - the School Bursary was agreed as a 50/50 payment. Louth Co. Council paid €1050, and the choir paid the balance of €1,130
- Repairs to the keyboard which is 10/12 years old amounted to €315, this is the first significant payment for repairs
- It was noted that we have raised/paid out €6891 between our fundraising and bursary payments during the choir year which is a very significant and generous figure
- The proceeds of the May concert amounted to €3,398, this will be paid when Jim receives a new cheque book on the choir account. The amount is small relevant to the overall cost of the restoration
- No matters arose and the accounts were proposed by Jim Conlon and seconded by Peter Boyle

On a personal note Jim thanked the members for the fantastic present, he mentioned that he enjoys when things are organised well. He is involved in three choirs and Setanta is the best as it is extremely well organised.

## Election of Officers and Committee

Tonight we remember Gerry who this time last year returned as tenor representative, may he rest in peace. At the committee meeting on Monday Una, Pat, Jim, Carmel, Cathie, Maura and Joe advised that they are available to stay on in their respective positions. There are vacancies for alto and tenor representatives and a secretary. The secretarial role covers a wide range of duties; these will need to be reviewed as it is felt that the task has become very onerous of late. Some of the duties could be carried out by other members of the committee. This will be looked at over the summer break.

This was opened to the floor and the following were duly proposed, seconded and deemed elected

Alto Representative	Mary Murphy
Tenor Representative	Michael McCabe
Secretary	Jean Gilson

## Annual Subscription

As Jim mentioned in his financial report payment of the choir subscription of €100, the collection of these has become very time consuming and difficult as some members do not pay when asked to do so. This was discussed in detail.

It was proposed and agreed that like all other organisations the annual subscription be paid in full at the beginning of the year. While one payment of €100 would be preferable, to facilitate members 2 payments of €50 will be accepted, 1<sup>st</sup> payment due no later than 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2<sup>nd</sup> payment due no later than 1<sup>st</sup> February. As access to the members' website and sheet music is based on having paid your subscription, access/music will not be available to members who have not paid up. Members who know they are not available for one of the terms may pay a half payment of €50.

Payments can be made electronically via the choir website through PayPal or using online banking. Bernie and Pauline, Betty and Uta, Michael and Joe will collect cash/cheque payments during September at choir rehearsals, receipts will be issued. Payments are never to be paid directly into the choir bank account as there is no record available. Jim is hoping to set up banking on line which will give easier access to the bank account and also make it easier to reconcile payments.

## Tea/Coffee!

The shortfall as outlined in the accounts was discussed. While it was agreed this cannot continue, the social aspect of the break is very important. It was suggested that we get a water boiler, however for health and safety reasons this would not be allowed. It was proposed that the choir buy flasks and a choir member/s take responsibility for providing tea/coffee and biscuits each Wednesday. They would fill the flasks with hot water and have coffee and tea available for members to make their own. The charge of €2 still applies and if there is a profit the member can retain this, if a loss the choir will look at this again. Jim proposed having a special trolley unit for all the items needed to make the task as easy as possible. Pauline agreed to take this on for a trial period to see how things work out. By getting someone else involved this would also give Pat less work to do on a choir night. Jim will be in contact with the caterers but we will not be using them again.

## Report on School's Bursary

Una has prepared a full report for Create Louth on the Bursary; this will be available on the choir's website. Una gave a brief outline of the bursary and how it evolved. In 2013 in recognition of Setanta's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary it was decided to mark this by giving something back to the community. The idea was to get involved with a school and encourage choral singing from a young age; these children will be the voices of choirs in the future. A vocal coach would be engaged to work with the school and prepare them to take part in an end of year (May 2014) concert with Setanta. Create Louth came on board; a bursary of €2000 was agreed with €1000 payment from them and €1000 from the choir.

Alan Leech was engaged as the vocal coach however the process of choosing the school took slightly longer than anticipated. Also a number of things happened that were out of our control and could not have been anticipated namely:

1. Alan's circumstances changed he would now be based in California, it was agreed that he would continue and go to the school when he was in Ireland.
2. Alan had a heart attack
3. The person looking after the schools end was made Assistant Principal

None of this could have been envisaged and could not be disclosed at the time. The original plan was to have the school sing at our end of year concert May 2015. However, Alan's availability for a concert in May 2015 was now looking less likely due to other commitments. The school were also anxious of the time needed at this time as they would be heavily involved with other school commitments such as Confirmation etc. It was then agreed that we would do a lighter concert with the school joining us for our Christmas concert 2014, and as outlined earlier by Una after 2 very busy years this was more in line with what was agreed for Setanta at the AGM 2014.

The Bursary itself proved very beneficial to the school and from Alan's perspective he could see the potential of taking a whole school approach, working with each class and the teachers, not only the school choir. The school were absolutely thrilled with Alan and what they gained from the whole Bursary and will use this in the years to come.

Una and Alan have prepared their reports as Create Louth want to submit them together with photos to the Arts Council in Dublin as they see the Bursary as a wonderful initiative and such a success.

Comments from the floor:

- ❖ It was the 1<sup>st</sup> time for something like this and there was goodwill from the school and a terrific feeling in the audience of cross community involvement
- ❖ One of the pupils when at a secondary school open night asked "Do you have a choir?"
- ❖ Cannot judge, it will be 20 years really before you can quantify the results
- ❖ Some of our audience were not happy with the concert "not up to Setanta's usual standard"
- ❖ Some of our 1<sup>st</sup> time audience from the Christmas concert loved it and came back to hear us in May 2015
- ❖ Why not do it again and work with secondary schools. It was pointed out at this stage that when the application process went out there was a work to rule in the secondary schools and this was why they did not apply.
- ❖ We were extremely lucky to get to work with Realt Na Mara; they were totally committed to Bursary. There was a huge commitment and collaboration between the choir and the school. For the ordinary member of Setanta they did not realise all this was happening and our thanks to the committee.

## **Review of May 2015 Concert**

Una has received thank you cards from the Redemptorists and Fionuala Quinn; these will be put up on the website. Fr Cusack is looking for photos for the parish records.

The concert was very successful and there have been good reports from both choirs and our audience. Una has prepared a slide show for tonight however the connection to the screen is not correct; it can be seen on the laptop later. The attendance was not as good as previous years; this could have been due to the bad weather. The audience profile was older with not many young people. 310 tickets in total sold, 199 by Setanta, 91 by the

Redemptorists and 20 in the office. Jim mentioned the fantastic job that Joan Murphy did organising the tickets sales, our thanks to her.

Jim also provided a breakdown of the concert finances detailed below. Jim is waiting for a new cheque book, when received he will be in touch with Fiona so that our final thank you cards, acknowledgements etc can be sent with the proceeds from the concert (€3398). The decision to run a raffle was made by the Redemptorists, nobody in Setanta knew about it until it had been finalised, it raised €1060. For future concerts Setanta are not in favour of running raffles at concerts.

Our sincere thanks to Trevor for all his work and commitment to both choirs in preparing for the concert and for his playing and accompaniment on the night, this is greatly appreciated by us.

Our thanks to Fionuala for her wonderful performance, this will be acknowledged. Eugene's contribution to the soloists and to the concert was very much appreciated.

## **Prague**

There are 70+ travelling to Prague. The final payment must be paid by 30<sup>th</sup> September. Part payments can be made electronically via the choir website through PayPal or using online banking.

Prague is an Advent Choral Festival and the suggestion was made to change our year and do the classical pieces for Prague and finish with a cabaret of light pieces in May 2016. However it was felt that the festival repertoire should be a light one, including some Irish pieces and Christmas music, we need to have a fair selection. The audience will be the other choirs at the festival. There are 1 or 2 pieces to be learnt for the combined choir concert. We have the option to sing at 2/3 concerts (30 minutes approx) and a Sunday morning mass. It was agreed to sing at the concerts but not at a mass. The question was asked do we have anything for the members who are not travelling. As most of the choir will be travelling this did not seem to be an issue.

Music suggestions: Wexford Carol, Celtic Prayer, With or Without you Skyfall, Dúlamán, the pieces we sang on the choir visit to the Czech Republic.

## **Proposals for the coming year**

As a group of people who come together to sing and perform, do we please ourselves or do we please our audience. We have traditionally kept the Christmas concert light and the

May concert classical in this way we cater for all members and audiences. We have to be careful not to do what someone else does e.g. there are other groups in Dundalk who sing from the musicals etc, we are not that type of choir. We also have to take into account the balance in the choir, different pieces suit different make-up of choirs. It is not possible to please all of the members all of the time, we aim to do something that most will enjoy.

It was agreed that we would take part again in the Carlingford Choral Festival which will be on the weekend after Prague.

We will not do our traditional Christmas Concert, if any member knows of a Church that do not have a choir and would be interested in some music at Christmas please let Una or your section representative know. The Holy Family church was suggested, they have a Carol Service with the Dundalk Brass Band but it is very hard to sing over/with a brass band. St Oliver's was also suggested, also having something in January 2016, this would depend on the availability of members.

The choir would like to sing in The Marshes again as there is no other venue with the same volume of footfall. This year we will talk in advance about where we will be positioned, preferably in the centre as had been the case in previous years. This is an opportunity for the choir to fundraise for a charity while also performing to a wide number of people. We usually sing on the Thursday before Christmas which this year will be 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015. A booking and discussion will have to take place.

#### Proposals and comments

- ❖ May 2016, a cabaret style of evening
- ❖ Music from Frozen or similar
- ❖ Great/popular Choruses like the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of our May concert, this can be limited without an orchestra
- ❖ Commemorate 1916, Mise Eiré, Sean O'Riada Mass, Patrick Cassidy Children of Lir
- ❖ So many good Requiems and Masses out there but people can be put off by the word Requiem. The need for an orchestra is also a factor as this is costly
- ❖ Choirs are in vogue now, pieces heard for the 1<sup>st</sup> time may not appeal however when listened to often people get to like the music
- ❖ We have a role in educating our audience
- ❖ Choir have to push ourselves as well, we need a challenge
- ❖ For pieces like a requiem there is a set way to perform it
- ❖ Eric Whitaker pieces

- ❖ Karl Jenkins - The Armed Man was very successful however his new piece based on Dillon Thomas did not appeal to some who travelled to Carnegie Hall
- ❖ John Reutter - Gloria, Mass, Requiem, these are solid pieces
- ❖ Look at doing something Irish
- ❖ Re do The Setanta Piece - again the comments were that it wasn't really very nice from an audience point of view

When choosing a piece/work you have to think of the finance, in May we had no fees to pay for the venue or for the organist, the organ was hired from Jeffers for €863, a professional orchestra can cost in the region of €15000, while hiring individual musicians ranges from €350 per musician upwards to get the quality required, especially if we are working with a professional conductor. This will be left with the committee as no majority decision was made.

## New Members

We are doing very well with the members we have and the recording from the concert overall all are very good. However, there are areas that need some attention. Some new young members would be very welcome and we need to be proactive in recruiting them. We have a strong alto line but need sopranos, tenors and basses. The invitation to join the choir was mentioned in the programme and will be included on the website in a more prominent page. It was also suggested that we put an ad or article in the local papers middle to end of August to encourage new members; the article could be written around the known benefits of choral singing. Members are encouraged to make personal contact with perspective new members and encourage them to come along.

The other area that needs to be looked at is rebalancing the choir, there are altos who perhaps should be in sopranos, not necessarily top sopranos but 2<sup>nd</sup> sopranos, and there are perhaps sopranos who should be in the alto line. When and if you struggle to reach a high note you can go flat, this could be a sign that you are not in the correct place! To check this we would have to audition everyone and check their range! Christopher Bell who worked with us in 1996 took over a choir in Belfast and threw half the choir out; we do not anticipate this course of action but would ask people to consider if they are comfortable with the range they are singing in and perhaps consider a move!

## Website

The website is a credit to Cathie and there is so much information available on it. There are lots of photos up and more to go up. If members have photos from the past please get them to Cathie for inclusion. All paid up members will have access to the member's area where they can read reports from the committee meetings and keep up to date with what is being discussed and agreed. Details about Prague are available and Una will put up any new details over the summer. The year's schedule when finalised and sheet music where

applicable will be accessible. Members are encouraged to visit the website so that they can keep themselves up to date and to like our Facebook page postings. Individual passwords were issued this year to protect the choir information. Previously when a member left the choir they could still access member's area as the password was the same for all.

### **A.O.B**

- Betty is hoping to organise a table quiz late September/early October in McGeoughs pub in town, this should attract more quizzers.
- It was agreed that the Tain walk would take place the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week in September

Finally our sincere thanks to Una who dedicates so much time to Setanta, Wednesday after Wednesday she is there, organising and preparing so much in the background, sending texts to members, getting section parts up on the website, the list goes on. On behalf of the choir Carmel made a floral presentation to Una.

This concluded our AGM 2015 and those in attendance were invited to adjourn to the bar for tea or coffee, or a glass of wine.

**SETANTA CHOIR ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**  
**1 JUNE 2014 TO 31 MAY 2015**

		2013-14	2014-15
INCOME		€	€
Members subscriptions	includes €100 ex 2013/2014	5850	5900
Louth Co Council grant		1100	
Surplus Christmas concert		44	

**6994**

EXPENDITURE			
AGM Fairways hotel May 2014		407	
Secretarial expenses		102	
committee meetings		185	
Music		520	
Tea/Coffee shortfall		506	
AOIC subscription		60	
Hosting Domain		377	
Revamping website	final payments	1500	
Donations	N Louth ho & SDVP	70	
Training with Alan Leech		1130	
BHP Insurance		110	
Apres Christmas concert Mc Geoghs		500	
Apres May concert Mc Geoghs		600	
Rate of exchange cost New York		307	
Music rental		248	
Entry fee Carlingford choral festival		75	
Bus to Carlingford ( shortfall)		130	
Keyboard repair	plus new leads (€40)	315	
Sundries		110	
Bank Fees		107	

**7359**

BANK	€
Opening Balance	2024
Add Income	6994
New Balance	9018
Less Expenditure	7259
Closing balance	1759

NOTE	€
Proceeds from Christmas concert to Realt Na Mara school	1200
Setanta bursary to Realt na Mara school	1130
Proceeds of May concert to Redemptorist organ fu fund	3398
Plus Raffle	1060
Carol singing at Marshes for SVDP	c 600 (703 actual)
<b>Total</b>	<b>6788 - 6891</b>

