



Minutes of the Committee meeting held at 3 Ackroyd Place MK5 7PA on 10 May 2022

Attending: Tessa Cox (in the Chair); David Roberts; Carol Yirrell; Siân Rees; Jeremy Hopkinson; Imogen Allen (by Zoom); Julia Dickens; Vanessa Skelton (minutes secretary)

Action

1 Apologies and welcome

Tessa welcomed members to the meeting, and passed on Ian Smith's apologies.

2 Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2022 were approved.

David reported that the arrangement with Nevilles had been finalised. Their much-appreciated sponsorship had been transferred to the present calendar year.

Carol confirmed that she was keeping track of who attended rehearsals by Zoom.

3 Risk assessments

Julia suggested that the 'manual handling' risk, present in the rehearsal risk assessment, should also be dealt with in the concert risk assessment, and that the risk of members falling from the staging should also be added to this. These points were agreed.

Siân

Siân agreed to be designated as 'in charge of fire procedures' in rehearsals. It was noted that we should perform a fire drill and that the lighter warmer evenings in the summer months made for an ideal time.

Siân

There was a need to check that the first aid kit was adequate. Siân agreed to check this, and purchase a new one if necessary.

Siân

Tessa would ask if there were any first aiders in the choir.

Tessa

The concert risk assessment should be altered so that PAT testing should occur 'regularly' rather than every two years. A PAT test would need doing prior to the November concert especially as the lights had been out on loan.

Siân

4 Future scheduled events

2 July 2022

FJ Haydn *Maria Theresa Mass* and M Haydn *Mass in C minor*. No outstanding items to discuss.

10 December 2022 Christmas concert (Date change)

There had been difficulties with both the date and the venue for this concert due to clashes with other choirs and with other bookings of our usual venue.

10 December seemed the best option, and it was agreed that, in the circumstances, the Baptist Church in Hockliffe Street, Leighton Buzzard was the best available venue, having good parking and a hall that could be used for refreshments. Difficulties with ticket sales would be inevitable, as fewer of our members, and thus of our audience, now came from the Leighton Buzzard area. **Peter** would confirm the booking as soon as possible.

Peter

12 November 2022 (Date change)

The programme had been discussed at the sub-committee in February. Works which could be performed without an orchestra were needed, due to budgetary limitations. The Fauré *Requiem* and *Cantique de Jean Racine*, together with the Mozart *Solemn Vespers* had originally been suggested, for which organ transcriptions were available. The Fauré *Requiem* required two soloists, while the *Solemn Vespers* required four, and a later suggestion had been made of replacing the Mozart with the Cherubini *Requiem in C minor*, for which no soloists were required. There was the possibility of a new organ transcription for the Cherubini, although the existing piano transcription could be used – Paul Carr had been booked as organist, and he would be capable of using the piano transcription if necessary. The Fauré and Cherubini suggestion were approved, subject to Ian being happy with the programme. *[NB Ian has now been contacted and his approval has been obtained]*

18 March 2023

Dvorák *Stabat Mater* with reduced orchestration or possibly an organ accompaniment. Peter was waiting for the quote for the orchestra.

Ian

24 June 2023

Bach *Magnificat* and either Handel *Dettingen Te Deum* or Scarlatti *St Cecilia Mass*. Again, Peter was waiting for the quote for the orchestra. It was noted that we need five soloists for this work.

Ian

Finally, David reported that a new member for the Programming Committee was needed, in view of Kate Atalay having left the choir. It was agreed that **Tessa** would ask the choir for volunteers.

Tessa

5 Request to sing at Redbourne Community Concert

A request had been received from Jonny Price for two or three singers from each voice part to volunteer to sing at the Redbourne School Community Concert, on or around 16 March 2023.

Ian had expressed some reservations as the likely date is two days before our concert but it was felt that as so few members were required, and such concerts were likely to help secure the future of choral singing in the UK, that we should support this event. Members would be asked nearer the time. Jonny would be doing the preparation work for the concert. **Tessa** would communicate with Jonny.

Tessa

6 Recruitment

Tessa had looked at local Facebook groups to endeavour to see if any would be suitable to advertise our concerts and membership – however, this had proved to be a more difficult job than perhaps anticipated, as an application to join had to be made for most such groups. She had spoken to Sarah Price, and sadly Sarah had said that she was not very keen as a user, and would rather the job were taken on by somebody else if possible. Kate was probably the biggest user of the page, and tended to use it for advertising other concerts. It was agreed that this was not the purpose of the page, and she should be discouraged, especially now she had left the

choir. Siân confirmed that she tweeted on behalf of the choir, and had raised recruitment on twitter.

Carol said that she was concerned that some new members did not make it as far as the audition stage, and she worried that they were put off by the audition, although she did all she could to encourage them, including singing along with them if she felt they wanted this. She suggested asking Ian whether he felt that we could do away with auditions for the time being, until the choir's numbers had been built up. A suggestion was made that the auditions might be delayed by a couple of weeks to let new members establish themselves more with fellow singers before the audition was undertaken.

Ian

David reported that the recruitment poster was now available in different formats, and so could be used by local publications.

7 The Store

David, Julia Peter and Imogen had met at the store, to discuss next steps. A good cull of items held there had been made, and a decision had been made as to what shelving would be needed, and how the music would be stored (numbered wine boxes) and catalogued – to include information about editions, etc. David would be purchasing the shelving (sadly Covid had caused a delay in this). At the same time he would purchase new dust sheets for use in Woburn Church.

David

8 Treasurer's report

Management accounts

Peter had previously circulated management accounts for the current year. Despite a better than budgeted outcome from the November concert, with a surplus of over £600, he was forecasting a deficit for the year of £6348. There were several reasons for this – eg an increase in the venue fee occasioned by increased costs of heating, and numbers of members being down, leading to a loss of both subscriptions and ticket sales. The increase in costs would continue, and perhaps be exacerbated in future years, and there was now the rent for the store to take into account. Unless changes were made there was likely to a deficit of at least £6000 per year in future, and our reserves would thus be wiped out in five years' time. It would be necessary to meet and discuss how this might be resolved soon – for example, should further cuts in costs for concerts be made, or should subs be increased? He noted that his brother's choir in Oxford were now charging £300 by way of subscription per year.

New CIO bank account

With regard to the new bank account, while this was up and running, there had been and still were numerous problems – for example, Peter was being asked to sign something that described the choir as a limited company, which of course it was not, and the deposit account had not been set up. He was in the process of making a second formal complaint to the bank in two years.

Gift Aid update

Peter and Imogen had had a session with Eric Benson concerning handover of the gift aid process. There had been some login problems with HMRC but Imogen was resolving these. Imogen had circulated a new Gift Aid form to the committee, which was approved, subject to the name of the choir being corrected (the 'new' Charity was called 'Danesborough Chorus' rather than 'The Danesborough Chorus').

Contactless payment update

Peter lastly reported that the contactless payment system had been progressing well, up until today – he had ordered the Zettle handset, and had been told it had

been delivered earlier today - however, he had not received it, and DPD informed him it had been left on a neighbour's drive, though it was not in fact there. *[Update 11 May – the handset had been delivered to Peter today.]* One problem with the system was that a record of ticket sales made via the handset would have to be kept by whoever was using it, as payments from a particular day were made direct to our bank account the following day, but in one lump sum, with no indication of each individual payment being kept by the system. Peter would need breakdowns of sales at a concert, as some payments would be for tickets of differing prices and some for programmes. He would shortly be purchasing a phone as needed by the handset – he would use O2, as this was the only phone that worked in Woburn.

Weddings

A variable scale of charges depending on the service provided (eg only leading hymns vs singing anthem) was discussed. No decision was made.

It was agreed that, for Pauline Naylor's daughter's wedding, we would just ask for a donation.

9 **Publicity Officer vacancy & strategy for publicity in absence**

Helen Richards was arranging the displays in local libraries, and was distributing posters, and Siân had sent concert information to the various publications on Sheila's list. Sarah Gammon had said she would be happy to help with the administrative side of the role, but she did not want to take on the job of writing copy. Tessa would ask for a member's help with this.

Tessa

10 **Health and Safety Policy Review**

Siân had compared the current policy with that suggested by Making Music. She reported that there were no issues that needed attention.

11 **Safeguarding policy review**

Following changes in terminology made in the Care Act, some rewording was necessary, which Siân had undertaken. She asked the Committee to consider whether the 'safeguarding ground rules and ways of working' template suggested by Making Music should be included in our policy. After considerable discussion it was agreed that it should be. Any queries or concerns raised by members on this topic should be referred to Siân.

Siân

12 **Future meeting dates**

6 September; 5 October (AGM); 8 November.

13 **Any other business**

The piano had last been tuned in 2019. Peter was trying to organise for the tuner to come, but was having difficulty contacting him. He would persevere, and use another tuner if necessary, though this would involve sorting out access to the hall, which the old tuner appeared to know how to do. Siân said that she had contact details for a piano tuner and also holds hall keys and was happy to arrange access if Peter's enquiries don't come to anything.

Peter

Jenny Harris had asked the committee to acknowledge to her any emails she had forwarded, so that she knew they were being dealt with.

All

Carol asked that sub-committee decisions should be made by all members of the individual sub-committee, rather than by a sub-set. This was agreed.

Carol also suggested that meetings of the Committee should be located at venues that were as central to all members as possible.

Final