



## Minutes of the Committee meeting held by Zoom on 1 November 2022

**Present:** Tessa Cox (in the Chair); Ian Smith, Siân Rees; Peter Snelling; Imogen Allen; Julia Dickens; David Roberts; Vanessa Skelton (minutes secretary)

### Action

#### 1. Apologies and welcome

Tessa welcomed members of the committee to the meeting. There were no apologies.

#### 2 Minutes of 6 September 2022 – approval and matters arising not covered elsewhere

2.1 The fire drill had been held successfully, although it was noted that members with mobility issues may need more help should a real emergency arise. Arrangements were agreed to provide such help.

All

2.2 Ian reported that he had searched St Andrew's Church but been unable to find any item from the lighting box the church had been loaned. **Vanessa** would ask Stuart Freake for more information about the missing item.

Vanessa

2.3 Tessa had asked Carol Yirrell to let her have her hard copy documents relating to the membership records. She reported that both Amanda Owen and Maria Seaton had come forward in answer to her plea for a membership secretary replacement. She had sent Amanda the original job description and would send it to Maria shortly. Peter noted that it might be possible to split the job. **Tessa** would shortly be talking to them both, giving them further details and hopefully finalising the position.

Tessa

2.4 The minutes were agreed as circulated.

2.5 Siân asked that the minutes of the Special trustees meeting held on 23 August 2022 should also be approved. Again these were agreed as had been circulated.

#### 3 Publicity and Marketing

3.1 **Tessa** had arranged a meeting via Zoom for this Friday, at which she, **Siân**, Jenni Ferrans, Hannah Dixon and Tim Haines would attend, to introduce Hannah and Tim to how our marketing and publicity strategy had been set up, and to discuss how it might be taken forward. Jenni had found a strategy that she had produced in 2016 (when she was Publicity Secretary), to help the discussion.

Tessa, Siân

3.2 Requests for the choir to sing at various events had been received, which might help with our profile for recruitment purposes.

3.3 East Anglian Air Ambulance Christmas Carol Service on 1 December. This had already been declined due to lack of rehearsal time., though Tessa had asked

the organiser to let us know by September should the request be repeated another year.

3.4 Frank Moran Centre – request for singers Friday 2 December 5:30-6:30pm (informal group). Tessa would ask if any members would volunteer for this. Tessa

3.5 Woburn Sands ‘decorate a Christmas tree’ – Friday 2-Sunday 4 December (not a singing event). No-one had responded to Tessa’s original request, but she would ask again. Tessa

3.6 Houghton Regis area Christmas market Saturday 3 December. This request was from Tim Haines. **Tessa** would ask for more details. Peter said that the Linsdale Singers’ Christmas concert was on that date, which would reduce possible volunteers. Tessa

3.7 An invitation to sing a piece at the MK Community Choir Festival concert on 17 June 2023 had been received. Imogen had attended the 2022 Festival, and reported that she did not think that participation would greatly enhance the choir’s profile. **Tessa** did not have full information as to what we might be expected to perform, and would make further enquiries. Tessa

3.8 Tessa reported that several of these organisations had asked if we had a fee structure. It was agreed that whether fees were charged, and if so how much, was very dependent on the circumstance of the request, and a fee structure would probably not help. For example, we would generally support a local community event for free.

#### 4. **Woburn Church bookings for 2023 and beyond**

Siân reported her concern that Woburn Church had said they were unable to take any bookings for the 2023/24 season until the new vicar was in place, as he would have to agree these. She was yet further concerned that they had now said they were unable to confirm the bookings she had already made for the 2023 concert dates. It was agreed that all should contact members of the Church who were known to us, and ask them to let the new vicar know that the Church had welcomed our bookings over many years. Peter said that he had been in touch with the Church Wardens, who were very helpful.

All with contacts at the church

#### 5 **Future scheduled events in this season**

5.1 12 November 2022 – Fauré Requiem & Cantique de Jean Racine and Cherubini Requiem

It was agreed that members should be told that those who wished to wear poppies during the concert could do so. Tessa

Beverly Thompson had expressed concern about the fact that no presentation would be made to the soloists after the concert. Ian said that he felt for this concert it would not be a problem, as the soloists, especially the soprano had very little to do.

Ian would be rehearsing with her at 6:45, and it was noted that it would be helpful if the audience did not arrive before 7. No staging would be necessary, nor refreshments during the interval. He would be rehearsing with Paul Carr on the Friday evening – Peter reported that the Church Wardens had agreed to our

keeping the keys for the whole weekend – he would come over the Church to collect them from Ian, to be ready for the Saturday morning set up.

5.2 26 November 2022 – Woburn lights switch on

Peter reported that he had a reasonable number of singers, and that he may also ask some Linsdale singers if they would like to join. He would be leading the event, as Ian could not make the date. Imogen reported that her mother had had carol word sheets printed for members of the audience who wished to join in.

5.3 10 December 2022 – Christmas Carol Concert (Hockliffe Street)

**David** needed to view the church – he would then come up with a seating plan, to include provision for those who would not wish to stand.

David  
Siân

Jenny Harris had agreed to help **Siân** with refreshments. **Peter** would look for suitable bargains for the wine to be bought.

Peter  
Ian

**Ian** would send the programme to Paul Daggett.

5.4 20 December 2022 – Beds Fire & Rescue Christingle

**Ian** had discussed the programming with Thomas Warner. It was agreed that with adjustments to the Christmas concert programme, no rehearsal would be needed on 14 December.

Ian  
Siân

5.5 18 March 2023 – Dvorák Stabat Mater

**Ian** had finalised bookings with two of the soloists, and was hoping to finalise the other two shortly. He should be able to stay within budget (Peter Hoare having kindly agreed to do only charge the cost of his flight from Germany). The orchestra is booked. The possibility of a canapé reception prior to this concert as part of the Friends package was discussed. Local hotel function rooms would be sought for a capacity of up to 50 persons.

Ian  
Tessa

5.6 23 March 2023 Redborne School concert

Jonny Price had confirmed that in fact he only wished for a small contingent (3 or so voices) from each part. It was agreed that possible volunteers should be approached directly.

Ian

There will be a rehearsal on 19 March, 13:00-16:00.

5.7 24 June 2023 – (change of programme) Puccini *Messa di Gloria* + another work

The Programming sub-committee were meeting on Thursday to finalise this.

Programming  
sub-  
committee

## 6 Bring and sing fundraiser

6.1 Ian said that this should in fact be called a 'Come and Sing' event (Bring and sing had proved confusing, as singers did not in fact have to bring anything). Various dates were discussed. After discussion covering clashes with other choir's events it was agreed that 18 February 2023 should be selected. This had the advantage that it fell within the *Bedford Sings* week, and could be publicised that way. A venue needed to be sought. Vanessa said that she did not think that the Village Hall was available. [NB The Village Hall secretary has now confirmed this.]

All

6.2 The possibility of a fundraising concert given by a professional had been raised - it was decided that this idea should be saved until the next year, as the committee were in danger of over-committing at present.

## 7 Choral Conducting Scholarship possibility

The Chorale had received a grant from the Garrick Club Charitable Trust to enable them to appoint an apprentice conductor, and Ian reported that he understood that should we apply to do the same, there was a good possibility we too would be given such a grant. It was agreed that this should be beneficial in giving the choir new opportunities to explore, and would be beneficial for musicians generally, in helping to encourage student conductors and bring more publicity to the world of classical music. It was agreed to pursue the matter further.

Tessa

## 8. GDPR

8.1 Tessa reported that she had noticed that the GDPR consent forms from new members lacked a space for the member's name and **Sian** agreed that we had ended up with a mix of old and new forms from new members. With the lack of a membership secretary there was a need to ensure we had got the correct information from new members. **Tessa** would be speaking to Suzanne Minocha to make sure we had all the information she held relating to GDPR.

(Sian/New membership sec)

Tessa

8.2 Peter raised the issue of whether it would be helpful to have a members' WhatsApp group, to ensure that urgent information, such as cancellations, last minute information on road closures could be easily and quickly disseminated. The group would need to be 'opt-in', for GDPR reasons. His idea was that it should only be used for necessary information purposes, not for general chat or meme-sharing etc. It was agreed that he should take this forward.

Peter

## 9. Treasurer's report

9.1 Peter reported that, regretfully, some 20 subs had not as yet been received. However, ticket sales were reasonable, some 160 of the 200 budgeted for having been sold (including all the £15 tickets). Choir membership stood at 81 – his budget needed 85. However, there were a few more possibilities in the pipeline. He confirmed that we needed to recruit members at every opportunity – new members could join for concerts later in the season.

9.2 Imogen reported that she had received gift aid forms back from all those she believed were current choir members. Sadly some 25% proved not to be eligible for gift aid, which meant we would receive some £1000 less in gift aid than budgeted for. She asked whether the committee felt it would be worthwhile to see if there was some way of asking for a lower sub from non-tax paying members in return for their obtaining donations making up the amount from other people from whom gift aid could be obtained. It was agreed that, providing such a scheme would be legal, she should pursue this. She would start by looking at the Making Music website.

9.3 Imogen also said that if Peter had any discrete section of his job he could pass over, she would be happy to take this on, to alleviate some of his burden.

Imogen

## 10 Recruitment of new Committee members and replacement Chair

- 10.1 Tessa would by the end of the season, have completed her fifth year as Chair. Vanessa pointed out that, as we were now a new charity, it would be possible on a technicality for her to serve a further term, and asked if she wished to do so. Tessa declined, saying she felt that it would be better to appoint a new Chairperson. It was agreed that any new Chair would benefit from having served as a committee member for at least a year. Some discussion took place as to a possible replacement. **Tessa** agreed to speak to the member suggested, and invite them on to the committee as a co-opted member if they wished to join. Tessa
- 10.2 There was a vacancy for a further co-opted member. It was agreed that committee members should consider anyone they felt might be suitable. All

## 11 Future meeting dates

These were confirmed as 10 January, 9 May, 5 September, 11 October (AGM)

## 12 Any other business

- 12.1 David said that it was time to enquire whether Neville's would renew their sponsorship arrangements. **Tessa** agreed to do this. Tessa
- 12.2 Peter pointed out that it would soon be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the choir, and we needed to consider what, if anything, should be done to celebrate the occasion. Several possibilities were put forward, including an anniversary dinner, or a push for sponsorships, in the form, for example, of sponsoring a soloist for an anniversary concert. It was agreed that this should be put on the agenda for further consideration
- The possibility of a joint concert where the choirs shared the costs was discussed. This should be noted for further discussion. Tessa
- 12.3 Vanessa reported that the Choir collection of scores had now been sorted through and catalogued. The store was neat and tidy, and scores could readily be found. Julia asked committee members to consider what more information might be needed on the catalogue, and how it should best be kept. It was agreed that whatever system was adopted, editing rights should be limited. Imogen would discuss possibilities with Julia. Imogen, Julia
- 12.4 Siân had sent round the Membership secretary job description shortly prior to the meeting. There were no suggestions for amendment.
- 12.5 Peter reported that Peter Wolfendale's generous legacy was now in the Choir's bank account. It was recorded under the 'Friends and legacies' category, which he had used to purchase the choir's card reader and associated mobile phone. It was agreed that the next concert should be dedicated to Peter Wolfendale's memory. **Peter** would inform his family and offer them four free tickets for the concert. **Tessa** would inform the choir of the decision. Peter, Tessa
- 12.6 At the next rehearsal, **Tessa** would remind the choir of the need for organised parking. Tessa

12.7 Tessa said she was currently looking after the choir's FaceBook page, and she had attended a workshop on how FaceBook algorithms worked. She had learnt the need of having two types of content – one informative (concert plugs etc) and one for engagement purposes (discussions, memes, etc), to ensure people would frequently visit the page. She would talk to Kate Atalay about her relinquishing her admin role on FB, though she felt it was helpful to have reciprocal arrangements with other choirs in order that they would publicise our concerts on their pages.

Tessa

Final