



Minutes of the Committee meeting held at 3 Ackroyd Place, Shenley Lodge, MK5 7PA on 6 September 2022

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

Action

1 Apologies and welcome

Tessa welcomed members to the meeting, and passed on Imogen Allen's and Jeremy Hopkinson's apologies.

2 Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022 were approved, Peter Snelling's name having been added to the list of attendees.

Tessa reported that Chris Chamberlain had said he was about to complete a training course as a first aider. Alison Heywood had said she was trained, as also was Ian.

Siân reported that she had checked the first aid kit and all was in order.

Ian said he was not comfortable with the idea mooted at the last meeting that auditioning should be postponed for the time being. It was agreed that auditions should take place as usual.

Further work had been done at the store following David's purchase of the shelves. It was now in a much more usable state, although cataloguing still needed to be completed. Julia, David, Ian and Vanessa were thanked for their hard work on this project, with particular thanks going to Julia's husband Paul for his sterling help. Julia and Vanessa would arrange a date to work on the cataloguing.

**Julia,
Vanessa**

Imogen had offered to join the Programming sub-committee

3 Membership secretary

Tessa reported that following Carol's resignation as Membership secretary, she had said she would get her papers ready to hand over to a new secretary.

Peter said that he had dealt with the enquiries received on the web from the potential new members.

Siân would print out some forms to bring on the 7th for new members to complete if they had not already done so. **Siân**

Peter reported that he had delivered recruitment fliers round several localities, and would be in Woburn Sands today. The flier had been inserted in the *Leighton Buzzard Observer* and in *Bee Local*, a Leighton Buzzard magazine.

He has also contacted some old members (he has a list of old members who have agreed to our retaining their data) to invite them to join again. So far he had not received any positive responses.

Ian had circulated an old job description for the post of membership secretary together with a more up to date one he had drafted. It was agreed this should be discussed at the next committee meeting. All committee members were asked to consider the draft.

**Tessa
All**

In the interim, Siân agreed to keep the register, Tessa would meet and greet new members, Ian would take on the role of arranging auditions, with Vanessa's help. Chris Chamberlain and Philip Tranter still needed an audition, as well as the new members.

**Siân,
Tessa, Ian,
Vanessa**

4 Publicity Officer and strategy for publicity in absence

Sadly, it did not look as though Sarah Gammon would take on the role – she had not been at rehearsals since Easter. However, Hannah Dixon had come forward as someone able to help with marketing. It was suggested that those who had volunteered to take on part of the role might take on the whole task as part of a reconstituted communications sub-committee. Tessa would talk to Jenny Harris, who chaired the sub-committee about this, and also speak to Hannah.

Tessa

Jonny Price had approached Tessa with a suggestion of some reciprocal publicity for Redborne School's future production of Beauty and the Beast and the Danesborough. This was agreed.

Tessa

5 Closure of the old charity

This could take place once this year's Gift Aid submission had been dealt with and when we are reasonably confident that Friends have transferred their standing orders.

6 Communications Sub-Committee – proposal for them to meet re publicity and recruitment

This item had been dealt with earlier – see 4 above.

7 AGM 5 October – recruitment of new committee members to replace Carol and Jeremy

As well as reminding members that new committee members were needed for the year at the first rehearsal, Tessa would approach potential members individually, as it was believed this would be a more fruitful method of recruitment. All new candidates were always welcome, however.

Tessa

Imogen would stand as a full member, rather than as a co-optee.

8 Health and Safety

It was agreed that there should be a fire drill on 14 September. Siân would arrange this

Siân

It was agreed that formal PAT testing of our lights was not necessary – Stuart Freake should be asked to make sure he was happy with the lights as they were after each

time of use. Ian had looked for the missing lighting part in St Andrews church.

Vanessa would ask Stuart exactly what was missing.

Vanessa

One member of the choir had been taken ill during the summer concert. It was agreed that we would reinforce to members that they should drink water regularly and, should they feel at all unwell, they should sit. It was agreed that, if any choir member is taken ill during a performance, a neighbouring singer should wave at Ian to attract his attention so that medical assistance can be sought.

9 Future scheduled events in this season

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

It was agreed not to present the soloists with wine/flowers after the concert, as a (minor) cut in costs. **Tessa** would tell Beverley to remove the question as to which they would prefer from the letter she sends.

Tessa

10 December 2022 (NB date change) – Christmas Carol Concert

Ian would complete the programme

Ian

A decision about refreshments at the concert would be postponed until the next committee meeting, when there would be more indications of the likely Covid situation in December.

Tessa

Ian would contact Tim Gage about whether the organ might be tuned in time for the concert. It was agreed that an offer to help finance this could be made if necessary.

Ian

Ian would ask Thomas Warner whether they wished us to sing in a Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Christmas service this year.

Ian

There had been no word so far about the Christmas lights switch on in Woburn. There was to be a new vicar for the Woburn church – contact should be made with him/her as soon as practicable after the appointment was made.

18 March 2023 – *Dvorák Stabat Mater*

Ian had let Peter know the likely costs. He has four soloists in mind for the concert. We would be using the Novello edition of the work.

24 June 2023 – (change of programme) *Puccini Messa di Gloria* + another work
David would consult with the Programming committee to suggest a second work.

10 Treasurer's report

Peter had circulated a revised budget, taking account of the proposed changes to the programme and the rise in subs. This predicted a loss of just over £2200, rather than the loss of over £7000 with the original budget. This was approved by the Trustees. Whilst not sustainable for the long term, it was clearly a considerable improvement.

Further steps would need to be taken to remove the deficit for future years, for example approaches to Arts trusts in the area. Recruitment of new members remained essential, as was fundraising. Fees from weddings seemed to be drying up, adding to problems to be faced.

There had been very few responses to the rise in subs from members – only one had been negative, although some members had, whilst supporting the rise, asked if they might make staged payments. This added to the amount of work (already considerable) that the Treasurer undertakes, but he had agreed to them on an individual basis.

Peter also reported that the bank account move had still not been completed. The bank was now asking that he attended at a branch. He was hopeful that a larger branch than that in Leighton Buzzard might have the ability to move things forward.

He reported that the contactless system had worked at the last concert. He would bring it to the first rehearsal in case members wanted to use it for paying for music hire – though a written record of who had paid this way would be needed due to SumUp not providing this level of transaction detail.

The possibility of holding some kind of singing event for non-members as well as members was discussed briefly. It was agreed this should go on the next agenda. Hopefully this would raise money and possibly recruit new members.

Tessa

Imogen was proceeding with the Gift Aid submission. She had had several forms returned already. Worryingly it appeared that a significant number of members were not in fact now eligible.

[11 This was a duplicate item]

12 Future meeting dates

1 November 2022 (Note date change, as Ian was unable to make the original date proposed.)

10 January 2023

9 May 2023

5 September 2023

11 October 2023 (AGM)

Rehearsals for the 2023/24 season will recommence on 6 September 2023.

13 Any Other Business

It was agreed that the option of attending rehearsals by Zoom should continue for the present.

Ian

Ian would book up for himself and Julia to attend the Making Music session on Music education.

Ian

Peter could not attend the rehearsals on 14 and 23 September. **Vanessa** agreed to see to locking up the Hall.

Vanessa

Vanessa reported that in the next couple of years a replacement van driver would have to be found, as the hire company would no longer allow Peter Skelton to hire the van because of his age.