



Minutes of the Committee meeting held at 36 Station Road, Woburn Sands on 9 May 2023

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

Action

1. Apologies and Welcome

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

2 Minutes of 10 January 2023 – approval and matters arising not covered elsewhere

2.1 Stuart Freake had told Vanessa that he had forgotten which piece of lighting equipment was missing, and there had been no ill effects for lighting at the last concert.

2.2 All seemed to be going very well with the new membership secretary now up and running. There were three auditions to take place this term, one had already been arranged, two would be arranged shortly.

2.3 Regrettably, Susanne Minocha had not as yet returned the GDPR documentation. Both Tessa and Ian would contact her again to ask for them. Once the documents have been returned it will be necessary to carry out a GDPR review.

Tessa, Ian

2.4 **Tessa and Imogen** were exploring the idea of a centralised system for storing documentation. David raised the issue of the need to ensure any system was large enough. They would continue their exploration.

**Tessa,
Imogen.**

2.5 Ian reported that he had learnt that the Chorale had been able to use money from a trust fund for their choral scholarship. In view of our current financial position, it was agreed that this idea could not be pursued at present.

2.6 The minutes were agreed as circulated.

3 Treasurer's report

3.1 Peter set out the financial difficulties the choir was facing. Although concert deficits were slightly better than forecast, the income from weddings had dramatically fallen, there were fewer members and thus fewer subs and less gift aid received, ticket sales were lower than pre-covid, and on the other side of the balance sheet, we were now having to pay rent for the store.

3.2 A discussion of possible measures to help followed. Peter felt we would have to programme more popular works if ticket sales were to improve.

**Programming
committee**

3.3 An appeal for sponsorship for particular concerts should be tried. [NB Imogen later agreed to take the lead on this]

Imogen

- 3.4 The 'Friends' scheme should be further pushed – an item should be inserted in future programmes, and Ian would make an appeal from the rostrum at the next concert. **David, Ian**
- 3.5 The choir should be reminded of the very difficult situation we are in, and asked to redouble their efforts to sell tickets, to recruit new members and to recruit new Friends. A new recommended minimum annual donation for a Friend was agreed: £50. **Tessa**
- 3.6 In the light of the lack of weddings, Funeral Directors should be approached, and asked to offer our services. **Peter**
- 3.7 Imogen agreed to approach Pat Haig from the MK Festival of the Arts, to make enquiries as to whether we might be able to obtain sponsorship for hire of a piano from a manufacturer. **Imogen**
- 4 Closing the Danesborough Chorus (Charity no.279281)**
- Work was on-going to complete the position with gift aid. The charity could then be closed. **Imogen, Peter**
- 5 Josephine Baker Trust**
- David reported that he had approached the Trust. Jonathan Wilcox had responded very quickly (almost certainly because of his prior knowledge of Ian), accepting us as an 'approved' choir. This meant that we could apply for grants to support our engaging singers on the Trust's list. Providing the choir is in a financial position to proceed with the *St John Passion* concert, this would be a suitable chance to use the scheme. David also said he had done some work on finding cheaper alternatives for hire of instruments necessary for the concert. **He, Ian and Peter** agreed to meet to discuss these measures, and provided Peter was happy with the revised budget, for *St John*, Ian would approach the vocal heads of the Royal College, Academy and/or Guildhall Schools to find suitable soloists. David circulated a sheet with the details of the scheme, including the various conditions imposed, none of which were felt to be so restrictive as to mean we would not wish to use it. David was thanked for his hard work on this. **David, Ian, Peter**
- 6 Future scheduled events in this season and 2023/2024**
- 6.1 • 24 June 2023 – Puccini *Messa di Gloria* + Purcell *My Heart is Inditing*
- Imogen noted the concert was to be held on the Woburn Open Gardens weekend. While this might lead to problems with parking during the day (to be alleviated by asking the choir to attend setting up and rehearsals in shared cars wherever possible), it might be possible to piggy back on their publicity. **Tessa Imogen**
- Tessa** agreed to publicise the concert on the two Woburn Facebook groups, and to talk to Helen Richardson about an A3 poster for the sandwich board outside the church. Julia could print an extra one if necessary. **Tessa**
- Ian** volunteered to look after the soloists between rehearsal and concert. **Ian**
- Tim Grant-Jones will be playing continuo.

<p>Siân would ensure she returned to the church by 1.30, after helping set up, to let in the orchestra. Ian would tell Nick Cutts the church might not be open until then.</p>	<p>Siân Ian</p>
<p>Two seating plans for the choir would be needed. Siân, David and Ian would work on these</p>	<p>Siân, David, Ian</p>
<p>At the last concert it had been evident that tickets could not be sold using the on line device at the church, due to a problem with the internet connection. Peter would talk to the church warden, to see if a solution could be found – Julia could find out more about booster systems if this would help. Peter hoped Tony Ashmore would be on the desk for the concert, and would discuss the problem with him and with Elly Pettigrew, so she could warn people collecting tickets on the door.</p>	<p>Peter Julia Peter</p>
<p>6.2 • 25 November 2023 – Rutter <i>Gloria</i>, Paul Patterson <i>Magnificat</i> and Bruckner <i>Ecce sacerdos & Afferentur regi</i></p>	
<p>Ian would ask Beverley Thompson to confirm the brass group booking.</p>	<p>Ian</p>
<p>Peter would ask Paul to play the organ.</p>	<p>Peter</p>
<p>6.3 • 23 March 2024 – Bach <i>St John Passion</i></p>	
<p>David reported he had found a possible cheaper source of an organ This could be taken forward when he, Ian and Peter met.</p>	
<p>6.4 • 29 June 2024 – Will Todd <i>Mass in Blue</i> and a compilation of jazz songs</p>	
<p>Ian would persevere with obtaining a jazz band.</p>	<p>Ian</p>
<p>7 Christmas Concert 2024 venue</p>	
<p>Siân had checked the price of St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford. As well as the fee of £150, they required 30% of the takings, plus heating at least £10 an hour (it was likely that pre-heating would be needed) and they would arrange and take the proceeds of catering. In the light of this, other possibilities were discussed. It was agreed that the Hockcliffe Street Baptist Church in Leighton Buzzard had worked reasonably well last year, and that as people now knew the venue and would be travelling in the light (a three o'clock start had been agreed), this might be the best choice. Peter would enquire if it was free on 7 December. The possibility of asking a school choir to join us was discussed. Tessa would make enquiries of local schools</p>	<p>Peter, Tessa, Imogen</p>
<p>8 GDPR Consent Forms</p>	
<p>Siân will ask Amanda Owen if these have now been returned.</p>	<p>Siân</p>
<p>9 Publicity and Marketing (Communications Sub-Committee)</p>	
<p>9.1 Tessa had circulated two updated recruitment posters David had been working on. Various suggestions were made, and David agreed to produce a third, using feedback received from the committee. Again, he was thanked for his work.</p>	<p>David</p>

- 9.2 It was agreed that **Ian** should approach Nick Cutts to ask if there was a possibility of recording the choir singing with the orchestra at the next concert for publicity purposes. Jonny Price had offered the use of the Redborne School recording equipment. **Tessa** agreed to take new pictures from rehearsals. Jenny Harris' husband had also offered; this was welcomed. **Ian**
Tessa
- 9.3 Nick Cutts would also be asked if he was happy for us to use photos including the orchestra on Social Media – it had been noticed that they had published photos which included choir members on their FaceBook page. **Tessa**
- 9.4 Nick Cutts is still doing his Choral Favourites show on Stony Radio. **Vanessa** offered to choose some of her favourites for the show. **Vanessa**
- 9.5 Jenny had said she wished to relinquish the chair of the Communication sub-committee. It was agreed to ask another member of the group if they would be happy to take this on. It was also agreed that it would be preferable if the group met more than once a year. **Tessa**

10 Website management and renewal of contract

We agreed to stay with Wix for ease of use. Jenny has created an account for Yvonne for the Content Management System.

It was agreed that we should increase the visibility of the Friends scheme, change some photos and look at copy with respect to Search Engine Optimisation.

The Committee expressed its thanks to Jenny for continuing to manage the Danesborough website.

11 Forthcoming 50th Anniversary (2024/25 season)

- 11.1 Ian has asked Harry Adam about hiring the Leighton Buzzard Golf Club, and was waiting to hear back.
- 11.2 Julia expressed herself happy if Danesborough Friends as well as members were invited to the party to be held at her home.

12 Come & Sing fundraiser 2nd March 2024

- 12.1 **Siân** had enquired about costs of holding this at Redborne School: £70 an hour, plus £13 per hour for technical support, together with whatever security was agreed, and use of kitchen for £38. She also had found out that the costs of the Chrysalis Theatre would be over £1000. **She** would find out about Fulbrook school, which she knew had capacity for 150 in their hall. **Tessa** agreed to enquire about costs of St Edward the Confessor Church, Shenley Church End. **Tessa** and **Siân** agreed to enquire of the MK schools between them. **Siân**
Tessa, Siân
- 12.2 Ian suggested several works for the event; Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* was agreed as most suitable.
- 12.3 It was agreed that the event would need to be publicised as from September this year.

13 Recruitment of new Committee members and replacement Chair

- 13.1 Tessa had approached the choir member identified as a possible chair. Unfortunately they did not wish to take on the role, although might be happy to join the committee. Regrettably no further ideas were forthcoming to take on the role. It was agreed that the choir should be informed that a new chair was urgently needed. **Tessa** would draft an email to this effect. She would also talk to other possible committee recruits.

Tessa

14 Future meeting dates: 5 September, 11 October (AGM), + set the next dates for the 23/24 season

Committee meeting dates for 2023/24 were agreed as follows:

14 November; 9 January; 7 May; 3 September; 9 October for the AGM

15 Any other business

- 15.1 **Peter** raised the possibility of increasing ticket prices by £5. It was agreed he should try this for the *St John* concert next March, though the cheapest, at £10, should remain at that price. There was some discussion of raising the price for all concerts thereafter – he would investigate the possibility of raising the price of tickets bought in advance by £2.50 (subject to the facility being available on wegottickets), with those bought on the day being raised by £5, as almost all tickets bought prior to the concert were paid for by cheque or on-line, and so the issue of finding change would not apply.

Peter

- 15.2 It was agreed that **Siân** should book the piano tuner this summer.

Siân

- 15.3 There had been several absences from rehearsals noticed. Amanda Owen had been asked to contact those involved, and it was possible that Ian would need to adjudicate on some individual cases.

- 15.4 Ian circulated a useful table he had produced showing dates of our concerts and Bedford Choral Society's dates, together with numbers of rehearsals available. **Siân** would share our dates with the Chorale, and Leighton Buzzard Festival (via Julia). She had already sent them to Polymnia, but would do so again.

Siân