

Minutes of the Committee meeting held at Rush Hill, Tyrells End, Eversholt on Tuesday 19 September 2017 at 7.30pm.

Present: Jeremy Hopkinson (in the Chair) (JH); Peter Snelling; Jenny Harris (JH);
Amanda Nott; Ian Smith.
In attendance: Vanessa Skelton.

1. Apologies and welcome

Apologies had been received from Michael Palmer.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

2.1 The draft minutes as amended and circulated were approved.

2.2 PS noted that when reference was made to future concerts it would be useful if the minutes recorded the precise dates.

2.3 JH reported that as yet the Communications Sub-committee had not met. She had emailed the members to ask if there were any matters they wished to raise but had not received any responses.

2.4 Thanks should be recorded to both Carol Yirrell and Robin and Rosie Dawson for the organisation and the hosting of another very successful summer social event.

3 Arrangements for Joint November 2017 concert; responsibilities for all issues

The spreadsheet for the concert on 19 November was checked.

Chairs would be needed – PS would check with Beverley Thompson as to whether this had already been arranged.

Action: **Peter Snelling**

A technical meeting would be needed about 14 days before the concert to sort out the lay out of the performers. JH would ask David Roberts if he would arrange this.

Action: **Jeremy Hopkinson**

Beverley Thompson had already asked the soloists for their CVs and photos for the programme.

About 4 helpers would be needed from about 12 noon on the day, together with programme sellers (the programmes were to be sold for £2 each). PS would arrange this.

Action: **Peter Snelling**

Final numbers of singers from both the Danesborough and the Chorale would be needed four weeks before the Concert. Carol Yirrell could then prepare signing-in sheets - they would be

needed for the Chorale and the orchestra as well as for our singers. Carol should also be asked to prepare signs for the dressing room doors, and to ensure that these and the signing-in sheets arrived in good time.

Action: **Jeremy Hopkinson**

PS had booked the CMK Church for the Friday night.

JH would ask the Bentons and Barbara Titchmarsh whether they would once again do the refreshments for the orchestra.

Action: **Jeremy Hopkinson**

IS would prepare an Introduction for the start of the Concert

Action: **Ian Smith**

JH would check with Helen Macario that publicity material had been given to the Chorale.

Action: **Jeremy Hopkinson**

4 Future Concerts

The dates for these were confirmed as

2018: 3 March; 23 June; 14 October; 15 December;

2019: 6 April; 29 June.

PS reported he had emailed Woburn Church to confirm the bookings for those of the above dates that were relevant.

JH confirmed he had sent the paperwork to the Theatre for the booking for October 2018, but no formal confirmation had been received as yet.

IS reported that as there were nine weeks between the October 2018 concert and the 15 December concert he was planning a more 'meaty' programme than the choir often gave at Christmas.

IS confirmed he had already booked Fiori Musicali for the Vespers in June 2019.

5. Selling of tickets by members

It was noted that many members did not regularly sell tickets. IS reported that Bedford Choral Society members were each physically given two tickets, and that the expectation was that they should sell these themselves. It was, however, felt that our arrangements for selling 'numbered' seats did not lend itself easily to such a system. It was agreed that the matter should be raised for discussion at the AGM - PS would also raise it in the next newsletter. IS offered to provide a bottle to be awarded to the member who sold the most tickets.

Action: **Jeremy Hopkinson and Peter Snelling**

6. Membership and the need for new members

PS reported that he believed that there were 6 members who would not be returning this year, but that there were 5 or 6 possible new members. There was, however, a particular need for new basses. Information about the choir had appeared in the Leighton Buzzard Observer and in MK pulse. JJH suggested that Judy Barker be asked if the Leighton Buzzard magazine Bee Local could be approached. It might also be helpful to approach schools in Milton Keynes. It was believed that Sheila Edwards was now helping Judy.

Action: **Jenny Harris**

PS had organized a presence at the Leighton Buzzard Arts Bazaar.

IS confirmed that he had spoken with Carol about auditions for this years' new members, and about the re-auditions, which would recommence in April 2018.

7. Treasurer's report

PS had previously circulated the final Management Accounts for the 16/17 year, and his proposed budget for 17/18. The final accounts showed an unexpected surplus of around £2000. This was due in part to a generous one-off payment by one of the Choir's Friends – this donation had also affected the Gift Aid income-stream positively. The concert expenditure had been very much as forecast, although the summer concert had cost slightly less, as an expected instrument had not been used.

PS reported that he had been cautious in his predictions for the 17/18 budget. He was expecting a small deficit, but this was to be expected due to the sponsoring of the joint concert. He had only predicted receiving subs from 95 members, and only 600 ticket sales for the joint concert, though he was considering whether the Theatre should be asked to send its regular 'music' ticket-buyers an email 'flyer', in the hope that this would raise sales. Sponsorship from Neville Funeral Services was again expected. Weddings were going well this year, despite coming in below budget last year.

The draft budget was approved unanimously.

8. AGM Arrangements: Timing, Draft Trustees Report, Formal Notice, etc

Notice would need to be given 14 days prior to the AGM, ie by 4 October. It was agreed that this could be done by email – all members now received email, apart from one, for whom special arrangements could be made.

Action: **Jeremy Hopkinson**

As the hall was being used by another organisation the rehearsal would start at the usual time of 7.45, but it would be necessary to be prompt with the start on the day of the AGM (18 October), and the AGM would be held after the break.

JH had prepared a draft Trustees' report. This was approved subject to minor amendment and the addition of a sentence on the Strategy meeting in January and its outcome, and a further sentence to sum up the satisfactory state of the Choir's finances.

The committee also approved JH's circulated Revised Constitution, subject to minor amendments and an addition as to communication methods. JJH agreed to prepare a version highlighting the

differences between the existing document and the proposed revised document.

Action: **Jenny Harris**

AN informed the meeting that she would not be available as a committee member this year, as she would be taking a sabbatical from the Choir for a year. It was agreed that she would be much missed both from the choir and as a member of the committee.

Vacancies for a sponsorship officer and a Facebook coordinator were also noted.

9. Position of Secretary

Beverley Thompson had approached JH with the proposal that the secretary's post should be split, effectively hiving off the 'contracts' part of the job from those relating to general administration. She had said that she would be willing to take on the tasks relating to contracts, as a non-committee post holder. The committee looked at the secretary's job description, and agreed that such a split would be workable, and that in fact it would leave the general secretary post as one with light responsibilities, in essence the formal committee secretary would only be left with the tasks of arranging (and attending) committee meetings, producing AGM papers in conjunction with the Chair, dealing with general correspondence, of which there was little, booking the rehearsal venue and dealing with the Performing Rights Society returns, none of which were onerous tasks. It was agreed that Beverley's offer should be gratefully taken up, and that the proposal should be explained to members, and that members should be asked to consider standing for the formal post of secretary in this new light. This should be done before the AGM.

Action: **Jeremy Hopkinson**

10 Website

JJH had circulated a paper with her proposals for a new website. She informed the committee that Harry Adams, the choir's previous webmaster, had done an excellent job with the tools available at the time he took the post on, but she felt that now the 'ready-made' websites available were very much improved, and it would be possible to have a website that filled the choir's needs better, whilst also being less demanding for the webmaster. She had researched possibilities and looked at sites used by other choirs, and had come up with a proposal for the new website, elucidating proposed principles for the new site, and coming up with a plan of action involving a small user group.

There was some discussion as to various points:

- It was agreed that a space in the members' site for promotion of other societies' events could be useful, as in return other societies would be expected to promote our events
- Members' notices should be dated before being posted on the members' site.
- Documents posted on the committee-only site should be the responsibility of one member – caution was expressed over a facility for amending such documents being available, as constant amendments could lead to confusion over the final document.
- Archiving of Committee material was recognised as having historic value – an archive could be held on a memory stick
- JJH estimated that the cost of a suitable 'ready-made' site would be in the region of £8 per month.

The committee accepted the report with thanks for the thorough work that had gone into its production, and agreed that JJH should leave a questionnaire relating to website use on members' chairs at the next rehearsal.

11 Future meeting dates

The date of 28 November was proposed, at 26 Melfort Drive Leighton Buzzard. New members of the committee would need to be consulted on this.

12 Meet My Choir: result of recording of March concert and next stage

IS reported that he had yet to take further action on this.

Action: **Ian Smith**

13 Any other business

13.1 After some discussion it was agreed that there was no function that should be carried out by Voice Reps that was not in fact carried out by other means. The choir as a whole was friendly to newcomers, and Carol Yirrell as membership secretary always took care to welcome and encourage them. Members of the committee were available to hear points of view from members and there was a full discussion of matters which concerned members at the AGMs. Registers were usually satisfactorily completed. It was decided to drop the notion of Voice Reps. Kate Atalay, Chris Crispus-Jones and Carrol Yirrell would need to be informed.

Action: **Jeremy Hopkinson**

13.2 There had been an offer to video the choir at the wedding booked for 16 December. Kate Atalay would be asked to find out more about this.

Action: **Ian Smith**

13.3 JJH asked if it was OK to post photos of the choir taken at public events on the website. It was agreed that this was acceptable.

13.4 Changes needed to be made to the Society's bank account mandate, i.e. to add Jeremy Hopkinson and Jenny Harris and to delete Patricia Griffin. It was resolved that the authorised signatures in the current mandate for all Chorus accounts be changed in accordance with sections 5 and 6 of the NatWest document and the current mandate will continue as amended.