



Minutes of the Committee meeting held at 44 Beverley Crescent on Tuesday 3rd September 2019 at 7.45pm.

Present: Tessa Cox (in the Chair); Ian Smith; Peter Snelling; Kate Atalay; Jenny Harris; David Roberts; Susanne Minocha; Jeremy Hopkinson; Sian Rees.

Action

1 Apologies and welcome

The Chair welcomed those attending. Apologies had been received from Vanessa Skelton.

2 Minutes of the last meeting (21 May 2019) and matters arising

- The minutes were approved.
- Matters arising:

(a) Complimentary tickets

Peter agreed that complimentary tickets should be offered to advertisers for the November concert. Only the cheapest tickets should be offered and this would be a trial only. Jenny said she would visit the advertisers in Leighton Buzzard and offer them tickets. Susanne suggested that advertisers be given a date by which to respond to the offer of complimentary tickets.

Jenny

(b) Replacement committee members

Tessa had canvassed chorus members but so far none had come forward. Ian commented that it would be worth considering what skills set we might want from potential committee members and approach people who have those particular skills. Tessa will ask Jonny Price and Jenny will ask Amanda Nott whether they might consider joining the committee.

Tessa and Jenny

(c) Replacement librarian

No one has yet come forward as replacement librarian. Vanessa and Tessa have organised the music for the November concert and would be willing to do the same for the March concert. Tessa would speak to Yvonne about taking on the role of librarian.

Tessa

(d) Logo

The committee approved David's new design for the chorus logo and thanked him for doing this.

(e) Treasurer's assistant

Peter informed the committee that Imogen Allen had offered to be assistant to the Treasurer.

(f) Amendments

Item 4, bullet point 9: MK Chorale has decided on a 7.30pm start for the June 2020 concert.

Item 5, bullet points 1 & 5: Two spelling errors were noted and should be amended as follows: McDowall and Grainger.

3 Review of the Summer Concert (29 June) and dress code for warm weather

- Ian had received emails from audience members to say that it was the best concert the choir had ever done. Ian thought it was the best performance of the Monteverdi Vespers that the choir had ever given and said that Penelope Rapson had been very pleased with the concert.
- Tessa noted that some choir members had been unhappy with the decision not to give gifts to the soloists.
- A discussion followed about choir dress code. Jenny's suggestion that the men should no longer wear black tie as it was outdated but should instead wear open-necked black shirts was approved. In winter months men should also wear a black jacket for warmth (but no tie). This will be put to the membership. It was decided that there should be no change to the dress code for female chorus members. A dress code will need to be agreed with MK Chorale for next summer's concert.

4 Future scheduled concerts

9 November 2019 (Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle*)

- The concert will include two works for piano and harmonium by Alexandre Guilmant which will be played at the beginning of the first and second halves of the concert respectively. David has booked the harmonium and Ian and David will ask John Witchell which piano he would prefer us to hire.
- Peter had not yet booked the Linslade Academy chairs but would do so.
- Peter raised concerns about not having enough helpers to set up on the day of the concert. He noted that two of the regulars, Ian and Karen Colcott, may no longer be available to help.

Ian &
David

Peter

28 March 2020 (Vivaldi *Gloria & Magnificat*, McDowall *Ave Maris Stella*)

- Vanessa and Tessa will sort the music for the March concert. Ian advised taking care when ordering copies as there are two Ricordi editions of the *Gloria*. He recommended using the edition edited by Malipiero. He also said to make sure that the correct orchestral parts are hired. We will also be using the Ricordi edition of the *Magnificat* and David has sourced copies from a choir in Scotland. There is only one edition of the McDowall and we have 86 copies of this.
- Ian had asked Carolyn Sampson to sing but she is unavailable. He proposed asking Rebecca Bottone and Bethany Seymour. David suggested asking Kitty Whately.
- Ian had contacted the Britten Sinfonia and the London Mozart Players but neither was available. He has been in touch with Fiori Musicali and Jan, the former MKCO fixer, but neither has yet replied. He has received a quote from Nick Cutts of the Alina Orchestra. The quote of £3495 includes all music hire, portorage and travel costs. Ian will circulate the other two quotes to the committee once he receives them.
- It may be necessary to hire an organ or harpsichord. John Witchell could be asked to play the continuo part.

Tessa &
Vanessa

Ian

Ian

28 June 2020 Elgar *Dream of Gerontius*

- Tessa informed the committee that the joint rehearsal dates with MK Chorale have been organised. The ticketing issue has been resolved and we will revert to our normal ticketing practice.
- David expressed concern that as this breaks with our traditional summer concert at Woburn we might need to encourage our audience to come. Jenny said she would put future concert dates in the next letter/email to concert-goers and highlight that this concert will be at MK Theatre.

Jenny

- A discussion followed on the subject of the extra long rehearsal period following the November concert and how best to make use of this time. David suggested starting work on the McDowall after the November concert and working on Scarlatti *Stabat Mater* or works by Gabrieli or Schütz for future programmes, leaving the Vivaldi *Gloria* and *Magnificat* until January. Ian said he would like the choir to learn part of the *Gloria* from memory. Ian also suggested organising one or two training sessions on vocal technique with an external vocal coach. Peter mentioned that we would be singing at the Christmas lights switch-on in Woburn on Friday 6th December at 6.00pm. The choir would also be carol singing on Wednesday 18th December in aid of charity and could spend a little time preparing music for this. Some time could also be spent learning new repertoire to sing at weddings.

5 Change to Charitable Incorporated Organisation

- The committee thanked Susanne, Jeremy and Sian for their hard work on the new constitution.
- It was agreed to add extra wording to Clause 9 Membership of the CIO such that 9(1)(a)(iv) reads “shall attend at least 75% of rehearsals”.
- It was decided to change the wording in clause 25(3), replacing the word “verified” with “examined” and deleting the words “externally” and “independently”.
- Susanne agreed to make the above changes and circulate the new version of the constitution to the committee.
- It was confirmed that the names of the of the first charity trustees would be put in once the constitution has been adopted at the AGM.

Susanne

6 Weddings

- Peter noted that there is a core of choir members who regularly sing at weddings and observed that newer members are more likely to volunteer. Roughly half the choir will have sung at one wedding during the season. To encourage more members to volunteer it might be helpful to let people know what repertoire we sing at weddings as a lack of familiarity with the music might be deterring people from volunteering.
- Peter informed the committee that he would like to do fewer weddings as he now has other commitments. He thought we should not take on too many weddings and the committee agreed with him that we should not overcommit. Peter also said he would not accept wedding bookings unless there is someone to conduct them. He suggested that Michael Palmer might take on some of the responsibility for conducting. Other people who might be approached to conduct at weddings were Jonny Price, Pauline Naylor and Penny Miller. Ian suggested asking John Witchell to help out with conducting, although there would be no fee for doing this.
- Michael Palmer had offered to take on Kate’s role as wedding organiser. Peter had also been approached by one of the choir sopranos who was also willing to take over from Kate.
- Kate has written a job description for the role of wedding organiser and has produced a booking form both of which she will send to Jenny to put in the handbook.
- Kate had compiled a playlist on Spotify of music that the choir performs at weddings to help bridal couples select music for their ceremony.
- Tessa said it would be useful to have more orders of service available for the choir as generally there are insufficient copies. Kate said when she takes a booking she always asks the bridal couple to provide orders of service.
- Peter raised the issue of brides arriving late for weddings. This can be very frustrating for the choir and the committee discussed whether it might be practicable to charge a deposit which would not be refundable if the bride was more than 15 minutes late. It was decided that Kate would talk to her wedding photographer friend to find out how she manages the issue.

Kate &
Jenny

Kate

- Peter announced that two choir members, Sarah Mazzone and Jonny Price, had asked the choir to sing at their wedding on 15th August 2020. He recommended that no fee should be charged. The committee members concurred and offered their congratulations to Sarah and Jonny.

7 Treasurer's report

2018-2019 Accounts

- Peter said the accounts for the season were not yet completely finalised as he was still awaiting the gift aid figure. However, a profit of over £5000 had been made.
- Ticket sales for the joint concert in October 2018 had exceeded the projected sales by a considerable margin. Ticket sales for the April 2019 concert had also been greater than expected and the costs for this concert were lower than predicted. Costs for the June 2019 concert were under budget but somewhat disappointingly ticket sales were £400 below budget. Peter said that overall it had been a good season and the choir's financial reserves had been enhanced.

2019-2020 Season forecast

- Peter said he was anticipating a profit of £4000 for the coming season. He said he had not set a high budget for ticket sales. He had budgeted for sales of 200 tickets for the concerts in November and March but was hoping more would be sold.
- Peter said he would need approval for the budget subject to the final figures for the concert in March once the orchestra had been booked.
- Peter said the budget was based on having 100 members this season. Currently there are 93 members and with two new men and one new alto due to join at the start of the season that would bring the total to 96. Ian stressed the need for more basses.
- Peter informed the committee that the cost of hiring Aspley Guise village hall had increased from £28 to £31.
- Peter had increased subscription fees by £5. The new subscription fees were approved by the committee and Tessa said she was happy with the budget.

8 Future meeting dates

Future meeting dates are: AGM 16th October 2019; 12th November 2019; 14th January 2020; 28th April 2020.

Jeremy is unable to make the meeting on 12th November and David is unavailable for the meeting in January.

9 A.O.B.

- David drew attention to the new Making Music platform which featured in this month's *High Notes* magazine. He thought the resources might be useful and suggested we investigate further.
- A membership press release had gone out. Ian suggested we advertise in the Bedford U3A magazine.
- Kate would get flowers to present to Judy Barker at rehearsal on Wednesday 11th September.
- The committee will need to decide when and with whom to do another joint concert.
- Ian's annual Bring and Sing is a performance of Haydn *Nelson Mass* on Saturday 12th October 2019. Peter will put this in the newsletter and Jenny will put the details Ian sends her on the website.
- Tessa mentioned that John Rutter is doing a Come & Sing event at Northampton High School on Saturday 21st September 2019.

Kate

**Peter, Ian
& Jenny**