



Minutes of the Committee meeting held by Zoom on 3 November 2020

Present: Tessa Cox (in the Chair); Ian Smith; Julia Dickens; Siân Rees; Jeremy Hopkinson; Peter Snelling; Vanessa Skelton (Minutes Secretary). David Roberts joined the meeting at 8.45 for item number 8.

Action

1 Apologies and welcome

Tessa Cox welcomed the Committee. Carol Yirrell sent apologies.

2 Minutes of the last full committee meeting and matters arising

The Minutes were approved, and there were no matters arising not covered elsewhere.

3 Zoom rehearsals – best use of rehearsal time/split of breakout to full choir/Christmas social

Sadly, it was agreed that there could be no return to live rehearsals for the time being. Ian asked for any input into how to keep the rehearsals interesting and exciting. It was agreed that Ian was due much thanks for the work, energy and enthusiasm he put into the rehearsals. The leaders of the breakout rooms were also thanked; they did a brilliant job. It was difficult to think of a way to run the rehearsals better. The fact that Tim was now providing a live accompaniment was felt to have been beneficial, although for some, the problem with broadband speed could interfere with the timing of his playing. Two short 'breakouts' rather than one longer one was also felt to be an improvement. It would be helpful if **Ian** could turn on the 'allow screen share' facility for use in the breakout rooms.

Ian

There was an issue with music distribution. Some members were uncomfortable with having to print sheet music, in terms of both environmental concerns and difficulties with their own printing capabilities. It was pointed out that it was, in fact, possible, where a member's screen was large enough, to read a pdf on screen whilst having Zoom minimised and being able to see Ian on a corner of the screen at the same time. However, not all members would be sufficiently technically experienced to achieve this. Julia had been printing and posting out sets for members who did not have access to printers.

Ian had been sent details of three Choral workshops on Koor, a new app developed for choral singers. While these looked interesting, it was agreed not to encourage our members to participate, as they were all to be held on Wednesday evenings.

Sheila Edwards had suggested rehearsing the Stabat Mater – it was agreed that undertaking a ten-part work on Zoom was too challenging.

Julia suggested that a good way to encourage members who had not participated much in the Zoom rehearsals was to make joining in as simple as possible. She suggested that the Zoom link should be sent out every week so members could simply click on it to join the meeting, together with the rehearsal schedule for that week and the week's music in as easily downloadable format as possible.

Peter

There was a discussion about GDPR. It was agreed that only one person should hold the distribution list of emails, but **Peter** should ensure that Siân had access to it in case of emergency.

Peter

It was agreed that the last rehearsal this term (16 December) should take the form of a Zoom party. It would be possible to put people into breakout rooms to ease 'chatting', we would sing carols from Carols for Choirs 1, and **Vanessa** volunteered to make a short Christmas quiz.

Vanessa

Term would start again on 6 January 2021, with 17 February off for half term.

4 Membership – confirmed leavers since 19/20 season, current numbers, retention of existing members/recruitment of new members

Choir membership had dropped with several leavers and no new members, as might be expected under the circumstances, although there had been a couple of enquirers, who had decided to postpone joining until things returned to normal. The list now stood at 88 members. **Peter** would try to make contact with members who had not paid the 'voluntary' sub. He had sent names of those who had not attended zoom rehearsals so far to Carol, in the light of her offer to contact them, but had not heard back from her as yet.

Peter

5 Website/provider discussion

Jenny Harris' papers on the future of the website were discussed. It was agreed that she had done an extremely good job in making a usable and friendly website, and her suggestions for further improvements were to be welcomed. After a short discussion it was agreed that there was no need to employ a professional to redesign, in view of Jenny's excellent work. Nor should we consider changing platform at the moment.

The use of an on-line booking facility was also discussed (Making Music offer one they believe is suitable). This might have benefits for some audience members, indeed that there might be an expectation of online booking these days, and the suggestion was made that we could allocate 1 or 2 rows at Woburn for online booking. The fact that we have a willing volunteer to 'man' a live box office was very advantageous. It was agreed that this should be discussed with Ellie Pettigrew.

Peter

It was felt that the current WIX platform worked well, but it might be helpful to ask some non-choir members to try it and report back on ease of navigation.

All

It would be good to have some more up-to-date photographs when circumstances allowed. Some recordings would also be a good idea – Jenny would be asked how easy it might be to put these up. It might be possible to use the Mass in Blue recording we had (with Will Todd's permission of course), and it might also prove something that could be worked on next term if concerts were still not feasible.

Tessa

6 Treasurer's report – progress of set up of new account

There was very little to report by way of change in respect of the accounts: we are paying hire fees for the Village Hall; slightly less had been received by way of gift aid that had been hoped for. Peter is waiting for the Auditor's Certificate and will send last year's accounts to Tessa for dispatch to the Charity Commission once this is received.

The new bank account has not as yet been set up, as NatWest insist on checking each Trustee, not just the ones named as signatories.

7 John Witchell's leaving presentation

Most people have contributed to the collection – a bank statement is expected soon, when Peter will be able to ascertain exactly how much has been collected. Ian will contact John's wife to ask for ideas for a gift - Peter thinks there will be about £200-£300 available.

Ian

8 Future scheduled events (discuss latest possible commencement times for rehearsal and distancing logistics):

4th Dec 2020: It is unlikely that the Woburn Christmas lights event will take place, although it has not officially been cancelled as yet.

12th Dec 2020: The Christmas concert has already been cancelled by Woburn Church

27th March 2021: Ian estimated that the last date on which we would start Face to Face rehearsals for this to be undertaken successfully would be 24th February, but overall it seemed unlikely that restrictions would have lifted in time for the concert to take place in any event.

David had looked at the capacity of several of the largest local venues, and there was discussion about what might be feasible – several venues were discussed, including Stantonbury, the Ridgeway Centre, the Venue etc. Julia pointed out that the Royal School of Church Music guidance said that the distance between singers from a sideways perspective need only be 1 metre, with 2 metres from front to back, but she added that the guidance from different sources was inconsistent – some was even inconsistent within the same document. There was discussion about whether it would be best to perform the works scheduled for a March concert in June. It was finally agreed that it was not possible to make any final decision about concerts for the rest of the season until the effect of the current lockdown became clearer. A further meeting would be needed – 15 December was agreed for this. Meanwhile Julia was asked not to make any alterations in the score hiring arrangements for the moment.

Siân asked about booking venues for next season. Further discussion took place, and it was agreed that the date of 13 November 2021 seemed feasible – possibly to perform the Haydn concert delayed from June 2020.

A carol concert should be planned for 18 December 2021 at which we would perform the programme originally scheduled for December 2020.

2 April and 2 July 2022 were agreed for the spring and summer concerts with consideration that our combined concert of the Dream of Gerontius with MK Chorale, originally scheduled for June 2020, might be rescheduled by then.

It was agreed that there would need to be careful programme planning, possibly of popular classics, to win back our regular audience.

Siân

9 Future meeting dates

15 December 2020; 12 January 2021; 13 April 2021

10 AOB

There was none.