

Present

Anne Adams; Els Pearse; Sue Pennington; Helen Kirk; Ben Stone; Paul Duffield.

1. Apologies

Paul Henstridge; Graham Dawson; Sally Turnbull; James Oliver; Richard Salt; Georgina Hulse.

Note- the main focus of this meeting was to discuss issues around the Holy Face concert in June.

2. Minutes

Consideration of the minutes of the meeting of 27th February 2019 and of the matters arising from that meeting were held over.

3. Matters Arising

see item 2 above.

4. Replacement of Membership Officer

James Oliver is already in place as part of this role. Marianne Grayson will take over the remaining duties in September of this year. Until then she will liaise informally with Darius.

5. Recruitment Workshops for Men

The following were agreed:-

i) To set out clearly to the chorus the importance of every member joining the recruitment initiative.

ii) The need to choose the timing carefully to ensure the music being rehearsed alongside the workshops is appropriate.

NB need to check Darius' rehearsal schedule for September but likely works are Rutter Gloria, Christmas music and maybe Verdi Requiem all of which are suitable.

iii) To ensure a "nurturing" system is in place to support new potential recruits. Sally already does this very well but will need extra help if there is an influx of new people all at once. Ben volunteered to be part of this.

iv) Georgina could continue with her workshops for existing members over the next few weeks if she wishes to do so but the recruitment workshops should be in the autumn.

iv) Publicity outside the chorus for the recruitment workshops could be included in the remit of a new publicity system. See item 6.

6. Marketing and Publicity

6.1 There needs to be an advert for the Holy Face concert in the programme for the forthcoming Bach concert. Anne has already drafted a text for this. She will now progress it.

6.2 We are approaching the printing deadline for next season's SIV brochure. We need a full page advert in this brochure to promote our Messiah concert in April 2020. Anne will produce a draft and circulate it.

6.3 Rachel Mallaband circulated a comprehensive report on her recent experiments with Facebook promotions for which she was thanked. She has liaised with Alex Burns who is the digital marketing person at the City Hall.

It was agreed we should continue with this initiative despite it being difficult to assess its impact objectively. The cost is minimal.

6.4 Agreed that a new approach to Publicity and Marketing is needed, especially to promote the forthcoming Holy Face concert in June. This concert will be a hard sell.

Agreed to pay a professional from outside the chorus. In the first instance this is to be a pilot project for an 8 week period leading up to the Holy Face concert. We will then evaluate its efficacy.

Els will research on Making Music, in particular to ascertain what the fee should be. Anne will ask around her contacts. She is aware of a number of people who do this work on a freelance basis and is familiar with some of their work.

7. Governance

Nothing to report

8. Review of Recent Concerts and Events

8.1 Classical Sheffield concert in the ballroom.

Music hire and purchase was expensive and resulted in a shortfall of £243. There was also a soloist cost which had not been foreseen in the original budget. However, ticket sales for the Festival as a whole were good and we will receive our promised £850 to offset our approx. £1,000 costs.

The music was challenging to learn and perfect in the time available but it was agreed it is good to do new things outside our normal repertoire.

The main hall stage was not a good place to rehearse.

Feedback from an audience member focussed on the fact that most of the men never looked up.

9. 2019-2020 Forthcoming Performances / Recordings

9.1 Bach B minor Mass on 6th April

Anne and others have suffered great frustration trying to access the agreed Voucher Code Scheme on the City Hall website to the extent that it has had to be abandoned.

The problems encountered when trying to book any concert online are a significant barrier to buying tickets.

There will not be a Friends event at this concert.

Current sales are 740. The target is 1300. Lots of the usual paper publicity is missing.

9.2 Holy Face 9th June 2019

There is hope that the Voucher Code system might work this time.

Anne has written to Black Dyke band to ask if they can offer anything in the way of interaction with the young brass players we are hoping to attract.

No news available on Georgina's idea of working with some primary schools.

Anne will write to the City Hall and ask them to close the balcony for this concert. (Ticket sales currently stand at 8.)

We are braced for a significant financial loss on this concert but will focus on getting people in seats almost regardless of what they pay.

Tickets will be available to buy at rehearsals and members leaned on to buy them.

It is hoped our new marketing person will be appointed in time to work on publicity for this concert during the 8 weeks leading up to it.

There will be a party in the Ballroom bar after this concert. Black Dyke and the Halifax and Yorkshire Youth Choirs to be invited. Nibbles on the bar. Guests to buy their own drinks. Anne to check which organisations will be coming.

10. Future Planned or Possible Performances / Recordings

10.1 Rutter Gloria Black Dyke Band CD recording will be in St Oswald's Church Abbeydale Road 21st October. Need to set up a prior meeting at the venue.

10.2 Bochum Christmas concert 8th December. Nothing to report.

10.3 Christmas Concerts. Date now confirmed at 14th December. However the City Hall has also accepted a booking for a large and noisy party in the Ballroom to start at 7.00pm. They have requested a start time of 6.00pm for our evening concert which we are very unhappy about. Darius has already accepted this but we will not agree to the even earlier start they are now requesting. Suggest we ask the band to reserve their loudest pieces for the second half of the concert.

10.4 Messiah (self-funded) 3pm April 26th 2020 to include 2 visiting choirs and Black Dyke Band.

Nothing to report

10.5 Verdi Requiem 02/05/20

Not yet confirmed. It will be in the City Hall and include another choir.

10.6 Mahler 8th 20/06/20

Wrexham Symphony Orchestra in the Bridgewater Hall Manchester. Need to confirm that the orchestra funding arrangements include provision of choral scores.

11. Officers' Issues/ Reports

11.1 Els has obtained the presentation scores chosen by three long serving members. She is now working on securing the services of a book binder. It is likely to be next season before they can be presented.

11.2 The B&Q shelving at £40 per section have been approved. We need two. Els to Liaise with Howard.

There have been a few breakdowns in communication since John Spence's resignation mostly to do with personal circumstances of members. This will get sorted when Marianne is in place.

11.3 Issues raised by members reps - None

12. Correspondence- None

13. AOB

13.1 It was noted that Darius has a rehearsal planned for 23rd April. This is Easter Tuesday when usually we do not meet. Sue to email Darius to ask if he needs this date. (Update, Darius has removed this rehearsal from the schedule.)

13.2 There was a lengthy discussion about the possible need for an agreed procedure should a situation arise when a member might be asked to resign owing to voice issues making it inappropriate for them to continue as a singing member. A draft procedure was considered and agreed. Decided not to publicise or promote it but inform voice reps that a system is now in place should the need ever arise.

Date of Next Meeting - TBA