

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus Minutes of Meeting of 8th June 2015

Present

Julie Smethurst; Janet Bower; Angela Argenzio; Els Pearce; Anu Adebajo; Helen Kirk; John Spence; Sally Turnbull; Sue Pennington; Jo Briddock; Nigel Wright; Graham Dawson.

Chorus member/archivist Penny Webster attended for item 2.

Angela was thanked for hosting the meeting.

1.Apologies

Paul Duffield; Paul Bedwell; Anne Adams; Steve Terry; Richard Salt.

2.SPC Archive project

Penny Webster had already circulated information about the 6 month long world tour undertaken by the "Sheffield Choir," (a predecessor of SPC) in 1911. She brought to the meeting letters, photographs and other material written and collected by May Midgley who took part in the tour. It is a rich archive and was warmly appreciated by committee members.

Chris Wiltshire has already transcribed a number of the letters with a view to writing a booklet, or a book, based on the material. Various ideas for other strands such as a radio programme were also floated.

It was decided to include a budget head for next season in case cash is required to proceed. Penny will speak to other chorus members with relevant expertise starting with Peter Miles and Helen Mathers. Els will check the SPC library for music specific to the tour.

3.Chorus Commission

Sue initiated a discussion about the possibility of asking Darius to write a new arrangement for performing at this year's Christmas concert. Her idea is for a compilation of 2 or more of the alternative, and far superior, tunes for "While Shepherds Watched." Agreed that money could be allocated to pay for this commission. Sue to communicate with Darius in the first instance.

4.Christmas CD

A list of possible recipients of complimentary CDs had already been compiled and circulated. It was decided to remove "The Halle" and add Trisha Cooper and Chris Wiltshire.

Julie will ask Steve to check on the lead time required for a second pressing should further copies be required nearer to Christmas.

Angela is looking into the possibility of using PayPal to facilitate easy purchasing.

5.Classical Sheffield Festival

Julie had circulated a detailed report from the Wider Network meeting of 1st June. This report included issues she has identified which need to be resolved. She also gave a resume of the various events due to take place over the weekend. Our direct input will be on the Saturday afternoon in the CH ballroom and also in the closing concert in the Cathedral on Sunday evening. It may be necessary for the chorus to subsidize fees for Darius and the cellist if the global festival ticket sales do not generate sufficient income.

6. Annual Report and AGM

Officers' reports should be with Janet by 14th September at the latest.

The AGM will be on Tuesday 10th November at 8.30pm and will be followed by a cheese and wine event.

7. Minutes of 29th April meeting

The minutes were agreed as being correct. They have subsequently been signed electronically by the chairman.

8. Matters Arising

a) Julie has drawn Darius' attention to the request at the last meeting for a Messiah or a Bach Passion performance during the 2016/17 season. No response as yet.

b) Job descriptions are being written by officers who are retiring this year.

c) Jim Monarch has submitted an email sent to the cathedral outlining feedback from the Cathedral concert of 2nd May. There were a number of negative factors mainly involving less-than-exact preparations by the cathedral. These presented extra difficulties for Jim and his team but the audience experience was very good and the concert was hugely enjoyable.

Peter Miles reported difficulties associated with programme production. The process was too last-minute.

The use of coloured tickets for Friends was a great help.

Jim, John, Jo, Angela, Kirsty, Helen, Peter, Stewards and all who helped at the event were formally thanked.

d) A draft budget for the June 2016 concert with the Royal Liverpool Orchestra had previously been circulated by Julie and Angela who will project manage the concert. It was agreed that ticket prices should be banded along the lines of those used for our Mozart and other subscription concerts.

Julie outlined the extent of the probable cost to the chorus which could extend to 25% of our reserves but it was agreed to go ahead since our aim is to make music not money.

e) A sub-group looking at our website design has been set up and has met. The up-dated site will include the facility to collect email addresses from users who wish to be on a database for receiving concert information. A budget head will be included next year to meet any expenses.

f) Work on the constitution update is on-going. It is hoped it will be completed in time to present it to the AGM in November. It will go to committee before then.

- g) Helen reported that donations comfortably covered the cost of the recent cheese and wine event.
- h) There was a short discussion about the possibility of rehearsing when no specific concert is in view eg at the beginning of the summer. On balance it was decided that this would be expensive and there should be time for working on musicianship issues during the coming autumn.
- i) Our Post Box system at Voluntary Action Sheffield is now up and running.
- j) Roy Gunstone's bound score is now with Rachel Copley. She and Christopher Wren will get it to him over the summer.

9. AOB

- a) It was suggested that Bach Society be invited to sing with us at the June concert next year. No decision was taken. Subsequently Julie has passed this idea to Darius who has spoken to Simon Lindley. Simon is enthusiastic but needs approval from the BS committee before this can be agreed.
- b) There was agreement with Nigel's suggestion that the aim of increasing the participation of younger people be a part of every decision we make.
- c) Betty Beeson, (alto,) has recently retired from the chorus after having been a member since 1957. Julie will write to offer her honorary membership. Helen will send a card.
- d) It was agreed that it would be advantageous to have a designated person responsible for dealing with issues to do with Honorary Members and Friends of the chorus. Friends do not always receive the benefits they were promised. Neither is it easy enough for them to renew their financial commitment.
- e) There are still 2 people who have not paid their membership fee for the 2014/15 season despite having sung in the concerts. Julie will write to them explaining that their membership has now lapsed.
- f) Els spoke about the difficulty she encounters when she does not have sufficient notice of repertoire. The provision of music often has to be arranged months in advance in order ensure that the process is efficient. She would greatly value early sight of an itemised list of all music requirements for the season.
- g) It was agreed to fund 50% of the cost of replacing John's computer system with one which is compatible with the latest Windows package which is required to support the new software used for membership records.
- h) It was agreed to run a series of workshops for potential new men starting in September. Sue to contact Chris Wiltshire for his availability and Paul Maddox for his contact list.
- i) The new season will start on Tuesday 8th September.
- j) Nigel reported that 5 SPC men are currently singing with the Oratorio Chorus as part of the voice exchange scheme. He has had no response to his invitation to Sheffield Chorale to join the scheme.

10. Date of next meeting

Thursday 24th September 2015