

Date: Wednesday March 8th, 2023, 19.00 to 21.30 on Zoom (snow)

1 Present: Anne Adams (minutes), Alan Anderson, Jo Briddock (Chair), Patrick Callaghan, Marianne Grayson, Georgina Hulse, Jim Monach, Jane Parkin, Christine Pennington, Jenny Swann, Sally Turnbull,

Apologies: Paul Duffield. Helen Kirk, Kathy Towers

2 Declaration of any conflicts of interest: There were none.

3 Minutes of previous meeting

3.1 Minutes of meeting held on 18 January 2023 were agreed.

3.2 Matters Arising - outstanding actions were checked and updated (see action list).

Arising from scrutiny of role descriptions, Risk Assessments would be added to the Chair's role; Patrick C offered to complete these for the time being, for which he was thanked. It was reported that alto Flick Goodliffe had offered to help with web updates, but that she did not want this to be announced.

ACTION: AA to upload 18 January minutes onto SharePoint and onto the Members' Area of the Chorus website.

ACTION: AA to send Patrick C the RA document for amendment prior to the Verdi concert.

ACTION: JB to send formal thanks for her offer of help with the website work.

4 Governance

4.1 Finance.

4.1.1 SPC's current bank balances are Co-op Bank account £45,780.15 and savings account £71,000. The finance reports were approved.

4.1.2 Jane P's report was noted. The 2022/23 budget (financial planner) currently predicts a loss of around £17,000. However, it includes the costs of the composer competition (likely to come within the £10,000 originally budgeted), and the Mahler 2 concert is likely to break even. We haven't yet been charged for copies of the Shaw, so final figures for that concert are not yet available. The St Mark's concert in November 2022 made a profit, and the finances came out positive for the Christmas concert.

The size of the projected loss for the Verdi concert is concerning due to the deal with the City Hall (we pay for the soloists; in return they pay a percentage of the box office takings).

Following discussion about the fact that payments from the City Hall for SICS concerts have not yet been received, Trustees agreed that request for payment must be made immediately, and with vigour.

The regular business figures are as expected apart from Tue rehearsal room hire, which is higher because the bill for the 2021-22 summer term is included in this year's accounts, and the charge for St Mark's when KES is not available is much higher than the KES rate. However, Anne has negotiated any future St Mark's rehearsal fees to match that charged by KES.

Predicted regular business (fixed) costs of £20,400 will be more than covered by the predicted regular business (fixed) income of £28,021.98.

The budget / financial planner was approved.

4.1.2 The three-year budget will be discussed at the next meeting

Jane P was thanked for clear reports.

ACTION: AA to write to City Hall to ask for payment for the two SICS concerts for which payments are due, and to ask that in future payments be settled as soon as possible after the concerts.

4.2 Recruitment Retention and Diversity

Darius had asked that we discuss how to respond to the low tenor numbers. It was acknowledged that this is a problem for all choirs and that we should not feel that SPC is failing in any way that is particular to us. Ideas put forward included:

- Make more effective use of the Voice Exchange
- Pay tenors from outside the Chorus to sing at concerts for which they know the works
- Reduce rehearsal attendance requirements for tenors from other choirs who know the works
- Use a combination of these efforts to build up a pool of tenors who could sing on request
- Invest some funds eg by paying young tenors to sing with us – operated like a bursary or scholarship
- Use altos to sing the tenor line
- Recruit via a Come and Sing day
- Recruit via a Bring a Man night (recognised that this has not worked previously)
- Require members to sign up to each concert so numbers in each voice part can be properly forecast, enabling the size of the tenor shortage to be known in plenty of time
- It was agreed that we should ask our tenors if they would mind these strategies.

Following extensive discussion it was agreed that a small group be formed to pull together the key points and a set of potential actions to be considered in order to address the current failure to recruit sufficient tenors.

ACTION: PC, JM and HGH to meet to pull together a paper to put to Darius

4.3 **SPC Strategic Plan.** Deferred to the next meeting

4.4 Policies

4.4.1 **Application Form** This was approved, dependent upon removal of the height requirement. Sally and Marianne were thanked for their work on the form, which was agreed was a great improvement.

4.4.2 **Recruitment procedure** Changes were agreed as follows:

- 'ethnicity' to replace 'skin colour' at 1.6
- Remove reference to a CV
- Add 'where possible' at 2.3.6
- Remove 'Marketing and Publicity Officer' from the list of Trustees
- Remove the apostrophe from 'it's' in Appendix One

The policy, as amended, was approved

4.4.3 **Complaints Policy including Investigations.** It was agreed to replace 'Chorus' with 'recipient of the complaint'. The policy, as amended, was approved

4.4.4 **Privacy Policy** – was approved

4.5 Governance Action Plan. Good progress continues to be made.

ACTION: ST/MG to remove the reference to height in the Application Form and upload it to Sharepoint

ACTION: AA to make changes to the Recruitment Policy (ethnicity' to replace 'skin colour' at 1.6, remove reference to a CV, add 'where possible' at 2.3.6, remove 'Marketing and Publicity Officer' from the list of Trustees, remove the apostrophe from 'it's' in Appendix One) **and upload it to Sharepoint and the member's Area of Chorus website**

ACTION: AA to make changes to the Complaints Policy (Replace 'Chorus' with 'recipient of the complaint'.) **and upload it to Sharepoint and the member's Area of Chorus website**

ACTION: AA to upload the Privacy Policy to Sharepoint and the member's Area of Chorus website

5 Operations.

It was agreed that the Caroline Shaw concert had gone smoothly and was most enjoyable.

6 2022-23 season

6.1 Young Composer Competition. It was agreed that SPC would pay for the competition segment to be filmed.

6.2 Mahler 2 19 March 2023. The risk assessment was considered, and the key risks discussed. Patrick C offered to collect Anna Harvey from the airport if rail strikes held up her journey. It was agreed that soloists should be asked to find replacements should they become ill.

6.3 Verdi *Requiem* 18 June 2023. Springs Academy has pulled out of the rehearsal commitment on Friday 16th June. Anne A is investigating possible replacements.

ACTION: AA to ask soloists to research possible replacements should they be indisposed.

ACTION: AA to continue to investigate replacement venues for the Verdi *Requiem* rehearsal on Friday June 16th 2023

7 2023 – 24 season and future projects

7.1 Sat 28 Oct 2023 Self-funded concert. St Mark's has been booked

7.2 Recording with Black Dyke Band in early October – venue and date being sought.

7.3 Christmas Concert City Hall 16th Dec. This will probably be afternoon-only as in 2022.

7.4 Concert in Victoria Hall – date yet to be sorted

7.5 Mozart *Requiem* Sheffield (SICS), London, Edinburgh on June 21st, 22nd, 23rd. Deferred

7.6 It was agreed that the French trip should go ahead, from Weds July 10 to July 17th.

7.7 Mahler 8 concert in Chester Cathedral, May/June 2025. Deferred.

7.8 Rutter Gloria with BDB – deferred

7.9 Concert in non-traditional venue – deferred

7.10 Trip to Bochum – deferred

7.11 Yorkshire Carol book. Sue Pennington's proposal for a new book full of carols with a connection to Yorkshire was a great idea. It was agreed that a group meet to pull together a feasibility study.

7.12 Fund-raising elective in Bakewell Church. Deferred

ACTION: AA to continue to seek venues and dates for next season's concerts

ACTION: GH, JS plus Sue Pennington and Helen Eyre to meet to develop a feasibility study re the proposed Yorkshire carol book

8 Committee Officer issues/reports

8.1 **Membership.** Trustees notes that there are currently 151 active members, and that average rehearsal attendance this season is 110. However, attendance at the Shaw concert was just 95, with 25 members being taken ill in the last few weeks before the concert. All the men are due their re-auditions in the summer. Marianne was thanked for her work in this area.

8.2 **Education and Outreach.** Singing workshops had been curtailed due to GH's surgery. They would start again during the period we will be rehearsing the Verdi *Requiem*. It was agreed this would coincide well with the recruitment drive for men. Trustees gave warm wishes to GH for her full recovery and thanked her for her work on this.

9 Any Other Business

9.1 Sue Pennington's paper. Amy Howe is standing down as Marketing and Publicity Officer. Georgina Hulse offered to take over the social media posts, for which she was thanked.

9.2 John Spence & Matthew Morgan's idea about using assisted hearing technologies was discussed, and considered to be a good one. There exists a system in which Darius would clip on a tie pin mic, and users could interface with their hear aids directly, or choose to use ear plugs. It may help with our inclusiveness goal. Matthew had done some research with an expert and recommends a Radio system, with individual receivers for interested users, rather than a Hearing Loop system. It was agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting

ACTION: AA to give GH admin access to Facebook and Twitter, and to ask for another volunteer via the weekly update (not until after the Mahler)

ACTION: AA to add assisted hearing technologies to the agenda of the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.30

Items for future agendas

SPC Strategic Plan; Recruitment and Diversity; Concert in a different part of Sheffield; YouTube channel, contracts, Sue Pennington carol book proposal, assisted hearing technologies

ACTION LIST**From 10.02.22**

- Amy H to design new banners with new logo and photo(s) **UPDATE IN MARCH MEETING**
- Sally T to set date and draft "Bring a Man" announcement/note for weekly update for next term—*Verdi Requiem* **DONE**

From 14.09.22

- ALL to check that they have uploaded to SharePoint their SPC documents which might be valuable to successors or in emergency **IN PROGRESS**
- Marianne G to create a guide to using SharePoint and circulate to trustees **DONE**
- Anne A/Jane P to produce a set of Financial Procedures to include how SPC deals with payments to trustees. **IN PROGRESS**
- Georgina H to consider initial costs and practical details for setting up a youth choir and come back to the Committee with further suggestions

From 19.10.22

- Georgina H to send details of the RAT music stand to Jane Parkin so one can be purchased.
- Sally T to have sufficient sashes made to provide for new members throughout the season. **DONE**

From 18.01.23

- AA to upload 19 October Minutes onto SharePoint and Members' Area of the website. **DONE**
- MG to circulate the Sharepoint guide to trustees. **DONE**
- AA to ask Russell E and Amy H to share the photos taken at St Mark's **DONE**
- ALL to look at their own role descriptions to see if any tasks could easily be delegated to chorus volunteers.
- ALL to reflect on a sentence or two about the SPC's vision for discussion at the next meeting.
- AA to make the small changes detailed above to the Safeguarding Policy doc and respond to further amendments suggested by Jim Monach. **DONE and uploaded to website and Sharepoint**
- AA to include in the next Update an appeal for a chorus member to take over website admin. The volunteer must be in a position to respond swiftly when changes need to be made. **DONE – a member has volunteered and will shadow Anne A from now**
- AA to finalise the choir's purpose statement and circulate to Maggie and Rachel. **DONE**
- AA to discuss with Kerry Shakeshaft at the City Hall the idea of choir members wearing an identifiable SPC wristband that will enable them to enter the City Hall quickly and securely. **DONE – no response re wrist bands as yet**
- Jim M to raise with the MD the possibility of using organ seats when numbers allow. **DONE – Darius agrees**

- ~~Jo B to remind chorus members, at the next rehearsal, of the importance of the fundraiser on Feb 19 and to encourage people to buy tickets. She will also ask for three more skills offers for the auction. DONE~~
- ~~AA to continue to investigate venues for the Verdi *Requiem* rehearsal on Friday June 16. DONE – Springs Academy hired, Leeds Festival Chorus and SPC informed – BUT AN ISSUE HAS ARISEN – UPDATE PROVIDED IN MEETING~~
- ~~Jo B to discuss 2023-24 season, and suggested July dates for French tour, with the MD DONE - SEE AGENDA~~
- ~~Anne A to report back suggested July dates to Matthew M DONE – Matthew happy with mid-July dates but Darius not, suggests 10 – 17 July~~
- ~~Marianne G to pass on to Voice Reps the decision to continue with the existing arrangements about attendance and appeals. DONE~~
- ~~Christine P to feedback the news about making a CD with Black Dyke, to the member(s) who raised the issue. DONE~~

From 08 March 2023

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- **JB to send formal thanks for her offer of help with the website work.**
- **AA to write to City Hall to ask for payment for the two SICS concerts for which payments are due, and to ask that in future payments be settled as soon as possible after the concerts.**
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