

SHEFFIELD PHILHARMONIC CHORUS COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 18TH October 2023, 19.00 to 22.00

Present: Anne Adams, Alan Anderson, Jo Briddock (Chair), Patrick Callaghan, Marianne Grayson, Georgina Hulse, Helen Kirk, Jim Monach, Kathy Towers (minutes), Sally Turnbull.

1. **Apologies: Paul Duffield, Jane Parkin, Christine Pennington, Jenny Swann.**
2. **Declaration of any conflicts of interest.**

There were none.

3. Minutes

3.1 Minutes of meeting held on 12 July 2023 were approved.

3.2 Matters arising – outstanding actions were checked and updated (see action list).
The visit to France in 2024 will see ticketed concerts (a change from previous years) which should help to offset any potential losses. This is being organised by Matthew Morgan.

4. Governance

4.1.1 Finance. Jane Parkin's finance reports and summary were reviewed and approved. SPC's current bank balances on 1st October are Co-op Bank account £34,531.15 and savings account £71,000. Total is £105, 531.15.

4.1.2 Budgets for 2023 – 24 could not be approved in the meeting due to an anomaly in one of the spreadsheet columns. This was rectified after the meeting and the budgets approved by email by Committee members. The 2022 – 2025 budget will be reviewed at the next meeting. The Crystal report was approved.

4.2 AGM

4.2.1 Trustee Annual Report

The Committee thanked Anne Adams for co-ordinating the report. Minor edits were noted, including a clarification of the 'conversion' figures in the New Members report and a rewording of the sentence about growth in membership (so as not to imply that this has increased consistently over the past five years). Committee members are to email any further notes to AA so she can finalise the copy.

ACTION: AA to amend the Annual Report as above

ACTION: Committee members to email AA any final comments on the Annual Report – ASAP.

4.2.2. The AGM Agenda was approved.

4.2.3. The Trustee Nomination form and AGM emails were approved.

4.2.4 It was agreed that the Strategic Plan will be displayed as two large posters at the AGM. Chorus members will be encouraged to look at the Plan and make any comments by posting these in a box (to be provided with slips of paper and pens) or by annotating the posters. The Plan will also be circulated by email after the AGM so members have a further opportunity to comment (anonymously if preferred).

4.3 Recruitment and Diversity

4.3.1. Tenors. There have been no significant developments since the last report was made. GH pointed out that extra tenors will be required for the Mozart mini-tour as there are three concerts in different locations and not all Chorus members will necessarily be able to attend.

4.4 SPC Strategic Plan. See 4.2.4 above. Committee members to email to JB any comments on the current wording before the Plan is shared at the AGM.

4.5 Policies – Contracts.

4.6 The Governance Action plan was reviewed and recent progress reported by AA.

There is a requirement for a stand-in conductor and accompanist if the MD or Rachel are unexpectedly delayed or unable to attend. GH offered to stand in as conductor. AA is to request accompanist volunteers in the next Update.

All contracts will be reviewed annually and reissued. Current contracts with the MD and Maggie and Rachel are close to being finalised and signed.

The Equality/Diversity and Safeguarding policies will be reviewed at the next Committee meeting in January 2024.

ACTION: Committee members to email to JB any final comments on the Strategic Plan.

ACTION: AA to add call for volunteer accompanist to the next Update.

ACTION: Helen Kirk to organise the production of the large posters and make arrangements for the feedback devices (box, paper, pencils etc.)

ACTION: Patrick Callaghan offered to be the contact for post-AGM email feedback and to collate the responses.

5. Operations

5.1. Review of previous events. It was agreed that the Summer Sing was worthwhile, although attendance would have been better if Chorus members had been given more notice. The Fat Cat room was a little small so GH volunteered to research alternative options.

5.2 Voice Exchange. It was agreed that there is considerable potential to extend the range of the Exchange beyond the current three choirs (eg St John's could be invited to participate). GH volunteered to investigate further and contact Chairs of choirs on the Classical Sheffield list. This approach will yield considerable benefits, including the recruitment of more tenors, which is a priority.

5.3 Stocksbridge venue. Jenny Swann was not present but has reported that the venue would be very suitable for a future 'outreach' concert, although there is no organ.

5.4 Rehearsal venue: Proposed change to Birkdale School from January 2024.

This was discussed as the MD is strongly in favour and there are now various difficulties with King Edward's. It was agreed that the new venue would offer a number of advantages, as long as disabled access is found to be appropriate and convenient.

The question of potential parking difficulties was raised and it was reported that there are 30 spaces at the Grayson Building, 3 x 12 spaces elsewhere, as well as spaces in the Oakbrook car park and free on-street parking after 6.30pm.

GH reported that public transport is good with a range of buses passing close by.

The Committee was in favour of the move to Birkdale as long as disabled access is found to be suitable. There is to be a follow-up visit to the school to look at details after which it should be possible to finalise the contract.

ACTION: GH to research alternative venues for a future 'Summer Sing'.

ACTION: GH to research recruiting more local choirs to the Voice Exchange.

ACTION: AA to inform Birkdale that the Committee is in favour of the new venue in principle and to arrange a follow-up meeting to be attended by other Committee members who have expressed an interest.

6. 2023 - 2024 Season

6.1 Durufle Requiem at St Mark's Concert 28 October (self-funded.) All arrangements are in hand, including rooms for soloist and wheelchair user, parking for any members with special access needs and 'greeters' to show audience members to their seats etc.

6.2 Carol recording with BDB, Birkdale School on Monday 20 November. Refreshments will be required for the Band. Helen Kirk to organize this. Chorus members will need a copy of 'Carols for Choirs'. It was agreed that it would be a good idea for every Chorus member to have their own copy of this and AA will add this suggestion to the next Update. The same info should also be added to the 'welcome' email sent to new members.

6.3 Christmas Concert at the City Hall. All is in hand and the music has been finalised by the MD.

6.4 Concert at the Victoria Hall on March 16 2024. The music for this has now been decided, namely 'Three Psalms' and 'Two Psalms' by Gustav and Imogen Holst respectively, Britten's 'Rejoice in the Lamb' and a piece by Grace Williams. Soloists will be required for the Britten – TBC. It was anticipated that this self-funded concert will come in below the budget of £3K.

6.5 Come Sing Haydn Creation will take place on May 4 2024 in the Upper Chapel. There will be morning and afternoon rehearsals with a break for lunch and an early evening concert for friends/family. Guests (not SPC members) will pay a fee of £20 to

include refreshments of tea/cake and hire of the music. This will probably not entirely cover the envisaged costs of venue hire and soloist fees.

6.6 Mozart Requiem tour 21 – 23 June 2024. Marianne Grayson offered to produce a sheet for Chorus members to complete, indicating YES/NO for each concert venue (note that any uncertain decisions should be recorded as NO). It was agreed that it's important to know Chorus numbers as soon as possible, partly because of the high cost of coach hire (£2K for each non-Sheffield venue) and the potential need to recruit extra tenors.

6.7 Trip to France 10 – 17 July 2024. Matthew Morgan is organizing for the concerts to be ticketed to avoid the trip making a loss as previously. The concert venues have now been booked. JB to prompt MM for more information so Chorus members can book travel and accommodation – all of which is self-funded (ie no SPC funding).

6.8 Young Conductor initiative. AA reported good progress and said that the hope is for the initiative to begin in January 2024. The format will be that nominated young conductors will attend an SPC rehearsal and have an opportunity to conduct for 10 - 15 minutes after which they will receive feedback from the MD. The MD will receive a fee (TBC). It was agreed that it would be important to ensure that conductors from a diverse range of backgrounds are represented. KT suggested that AA add wording to the effect that we are seeking participants from 'non-traditional' backgrounds when she contacts the local universities (and musical colleges further afield if required).

It was agreed that this initiative should be publicized via a press release as it supports several of the SPC's Strategic Aims.

ACTION: HK to organise refreshments for the BDB at the recording session.

ACTION: MG to create attendance sheet for Mozart Requiem concerts.

ACTION: JB to prompt MM to provide more info about the French trip.

ACTION: AA to contact Sheffield universities about the Young Conductor initiative.

7. Future Projects

7.1 Plans for 2024 – 25 season. AA reported that the MD has reported the potential for a concert in 2024 with Brigantes and Leeds Festival Chorus. He has also spoken of the possibility of performing new work by the composer Stephen Johnson for which there would be sponsorship available. This would take place in 2025.

7.2 Mahler at Chester Cathedral has sadly been cancelled.

7.3 Classical Sheffield Finale concert – no further developments reported.

7.4 Stella Jockel Young Composer competition 2025 – no further developments.

7.5 Other projects: Bochum trip, Yorkshire Carol Book, Rutter Gloria with BDB, concert in non-traditional venue – no further developments reported.

8. Marketing and Publicity Officer

Marketing plans were approved and the Committee wished to thank Alex Burns for her valuable work.

JM mentioned a cultural bulletin in which SPC concerts might feature – the 'Cultural

Update' coordinated by Natasha Maddox. AA to inform AB of this opportunity.

ACTION: JB to communicate the Committee's thanks to AB.

ACTION: AA to inform Alex Burns of the 'Cultural Update' bulletin.

9. Committee Officer reports.

9.1 Membership update. Marianne Grayson reported that there are six new members, four of whom will be singing in the next concert. There are now 157 members.

Kate Reece (A2 Voice Rep) has informed MG that she is stepping down, so a replacement needs to be recruited. MG to feed back to Kate and a volunteer who has come forward that the position will have to be publicised in the Update in order to be fair.

9.2 Other issues. Sally Turnbull reported a member's comment about not wanting to perform any Young Composer settings other than the winning one(s). The Committee responded that performing new repertoire is one of the SPC's Strategic Aims.

ACTION: MG to feed back to Kate Reece and the volunteer replacement.

10. AOB. Alan showed the Committee various items sent by ex-SPC Chair Julie Smedhurst. These are to be displayed at the AGM with a donation box (and if not wanted to be recycled etc).

The Committee expressed its thanks to Marianne for hosting the meeting.

ACTION LIST

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**
- **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. **NOT BEING TAKEN FORWARD**
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From 08.03.23

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

From 17 May 2023

- **JB** to feed back to JM that all the proposals in the paper, apart from Bring a Tenor, were approved and so can be taken forward to DB. **DONE**
- **JB** to set up a working group to take the Assisted Hearing Technologies proposals forward, inviting anyone with an interest to join. **NOT TO BE TAKEN FORWARD.**
- **Committee members** to send their suggestions for a mission statement to JB.
- **JB** to finalise the Strategic Planning document and the four aims in preparation for sharing it with members at the next AGM (taking account of comments on p7). **DONE**
- **JS** to research alternative venues for the recording on 20 Nov 2023 and report back to the committee in due course. **DONE**
- **GH** to approach Philip Collin with the invitation for St John's choristers to sing the St Nicholas (after checking with Darius) **DONE**
- **Event Planning Group** to investigate possible non-traditional venues for the Come Sing *Creation* in April 2024. **DONE**
- **Event Planning Group** to take arrangements for the French trip forward.
- **HK** to send details of a summer sing in August to AA for inclusion in the Weekly Update. **DONE**

From 12 July 2023

JM to set up a meeting with the MD to fine-tune the strategy concerning tenor numbers. **DONE**

JB to update the vision statement and recirculate to the Committee. Committee members to respond by sending any final/further thoughts to JB. **DONE**

JS to research alternative venues in case Birkdale cannot be used. **DONE**

JB to seek further details about the French trip from Matthew Morgan. **DONE**

JB to convey the Committee's thanks to Nigel. **DONE**

GH to take forward the Voice Exchange initiative. **IN PROGRESS**

AA to communicate the Committee's thanks to Alex Burns. **DONE**

PC to draft copy about male attire that can be included in the Weekly Update in September. **DONE**

JB to write to John Spence and Nigel Wright (re. his work on the Voice Exchange) with the Committee's thanks and to offer both Hon. Membership. **DONE**

MG to convey the positive membership/attendance statistics in her AGM report. **DONE**

FROM OCTOBER 18

AA to amend the Annual Report in line with comments received.

Committee members to email any final comments on the Annual Report to AA ASAP.

Committee members to email to JB any final comments on the Strategic Plan.

AA to add call for volunteer accompanist to the next Update.

Helen Kirk to organise the production of the large posters and make arrangements for the feedback devices (box, paper, pencils etc.)

Patrick Callaghan to collate posts-AGM responses to the Strategic Plan.

HK to organise refreshments for the BDB at the recording session.

MG to create attendance sheet for Mozart Requiem concerts.

JB to prompt MM to provide more info about the French trip.

AA to contact Sheffield universities about the Young Conductor initiative.

JB to communicate the Committee's thanks to AB.

AA to inform Alex Burns of the 'Cultural Update' bulletin.

MG to feed back to Kate Reece and the volunteer replacement.