

Weds 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 7pm at Marianne's: 50 Endcliffe Glen Road, S11 8RW, 0114 266 1200

Present: Steve Terry (Vice Chair, chairing meeting in absence of JB,) Anne Adams, Alan Anderson, Paul Duffield, Marianne Grayson, Georgina Hulse, Jim Monach, Christine Pennington, Boo Spurgeon (part of meeting), Kathy Towers.

Apologies: Joanne Briddock, Patrick Callaghan, Helen Kirk, Jane Parkin, Jenny Swann, Sally Turnbull.

### **MINUTES**

1. **The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy** was read to the Committee by acting Chair Steve Terry.

ACTION: AA TO CHECK THE LATEST VERSION IS ON SHAREPOINT.

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

3. **Previous Minutes**

3.1 Minutes of meeting held on 10 January 2024 and of the AGM in November were approved as a true and accurate record. It was noted that the date for the next AGM is 19<sup>th</sup> November – to be corrected as required.

- 3.2 Matters Arising

Outstanding items on the actions list were reviewed.

There was a verbal update on progress with the Yorkshire Carol Book – in progress.

KT volunteered to take forward the SPC Friends scheme.

ACTION: KT TO PROGRESS FRIENDS SCHEME AND AA TO SEND KT ANY INFO SHE HAS.

JM reported that this year's Making Music Awards are not yet open but he will monitor and report to the Committee as/when.

The Risk Management Policy is still not complete and this is a cause for concern. The Committee requested that the full, updated policy be available for review at the next meeting.

ACTION: JB, AA AND PC TO MEET TO FINALISE THE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY.

4. **Governance**

Item 4.1 was discussed later in the meeting.

- 4.2 Equality Diversity and Inclusion, including recruitment and retention

- 4.2.1 Diversity of Trustees and Chorus

It was agreed that there has been some progress with regard to the diversity of the Chorus – and that strategies such as the buddy system have borne fruit. Removing sight reading from the audition process has helped too.

One member reported discussions at a recent Sheffield Cultural Policy group meeting where it was agreed that activities need to be taken **to** the communities that are to be included – rather than hoping that they will come to the organisations.

It was also noted that the religious element in some of the SPC repertoire might be a deterrent for certain communities. However, it was agreed that SPC is essentially a symphonic Chorus and fulfils a different role from a community choir.

#### 4.2.2 Appointment of Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Boo Spurgeon was welcomed as the new Officer and was glad to take on her new role. She mentioned the danger of unconscious bias, as SPC is a largely white choir, and suggested that it would be a valuable exercise to establish a benchmark to measure where the Chorus is now in terms of diversity. All agreed. MG offered to help with this project.

BS added that SPC has done “brilliantly” in implementing its inclusion policy / practice and that the latest member has felt very welcomed.

**ACTION: BS AND MG TO SURVEY THE CHORUS EG VIA ONLINE FORM.**

#### 4.2.3 Recruitment especially of Tenors

There was nothing further to report.

4.2.4 Voice Exchange: MG said she has made some progress. An invitation has been made to selected individuals within the Bach Choir and the Sheffield Oratorio to sing Mozart with SPC.

MG has also made contact with Chamber choirs (Sterndale Singers, Sheffield Chamber Choir, University Chamber Choir and St John’s Ranmoor). Joe Banerjee has reported three people from University Chamber Choir interested in joining the Mozart tour – two tenors and a bass. MG is contacting Abbeydale Singers and Steel City Choristers and the Sheffield Chorale. MG was thanked for her good work!

#### 4.3 SPC Strategic Plan

Elements of the plan were discussed.

**ACTION: MG VOLUNTEERED TO TAKE FORWARD THE VOICE EXCHANGE INITIATIVE AS DETAILED IN THE GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN**

#### 4.4 Policies

##### 4.4.1 Risk Management Policy.

The finalisation of the Policy is to be reported at the next Committee meeting (see above).

##### 4.4.2 Policy and Investigations Guidance.

The proposed amendments to the Policy were reviewed and approved.

#### 4.5 Trustee structure

The establishment of sub-committees with responsibility for specific areas was carried forward to the next meeting.

#### 4.6 Governance Action Plan

Progress was reviewed. Further items on the plan were allocated to Committee members and the document was updated accordingly. Actions from the Strategic Plan have also been added to the Governance Action Plan to ensure they are taken forward.

## 5. Operations

5.1 Recent operations were reviewed in order to glean learning points.

Rehearsal venue.

It was agreed that there remain teething problems with Birkdale. It was suggested that a meeting with the school's head/deputy head would be a good idea, specifically to discuss issues such as the hall becoming unavailable at short notice. There are also other concerns eg the availability of a suitable space for Maggie's coaching sessions (which next week will take place in the Octagon – suitability of the space to be reviewed).

It was agreed that some of the above difficulties will apply to all educational establishments.

Other possible venues were discussed, specifically St Andrews Psalter Lane, St Andrews Hanover St., St Mary's Bramall Lane.

It was agreed that there should be a check list for those visiting new venues – to include, parking, disabled access, second room for Maggie, heating, toilets, choir seating.

It was agreed that arrangements with Birkdale should be further pursued and if possible improved, while other avenues are being investigated.

ACTION: AA TO GENERATE CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATION OF NEW VENUES.

ACTION: PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR EVALUATING EACH VENUE TBC.

ACTION: JM TO REQUEST A MEETING WITH BIRKDALE DEPUTY HEAD/HEAD VIA HIS CONTACT MICHELLE. JM TO ATTEND THIS WITH AA

5.2 Voice Exchange

See item above.

5.3 RPS Inspiration Award

Those who attended reported a "fabulous" evening. There was however disappointment at the lack of support from Sheffield City Council in encouraging local voting for the Chorus. It was felt that the SPC would have had a good chance of winning if there had been more local support.

5.4 Marketing and Publicity

Alex Burn's resignation means that a replacement marketing officer must be found as a matter of urgency. (AA has been carrying out publicity and marketing in the meantime and was thanked for stepping in.)

Kirsty Christer has been approached but it was unclear whether she has been offered payment for the role.

ACTION: AA TO CONFIRM TO KIRSTY THAT THE ROLE IS A PAID ONE AND TO SHARE THE EXISTING CONTRACT WITH HER.

If Kirsty declines it was suggested a Sheffield Hallam graduate might be approached.

GH volunteered to produce any flyers/publicity material etc in the short term and was thanked by the committee.

## 6. 2023-24 season

6.1 Progress reports and updates were provided.

Victoria Hall concert (self-funded) on 16th March.

The EPG reported that all is in order, other than stewards to see performers on/off.

ACTION: JM TO LIAISE WITH MD TO MAKE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS.

ACTION: OUTSTANDING PERFORMER CONTRACT TO BE SIGNED – SHAUN BRINES. AA TO EXPEDITE.

A volunteer has agreed to survey audience members to ascertain how they heard about the concert.

Programmes are ready and will be put out on seats after rehearsal. Various members volunteered to help AA with this.

CP provided feedback from some Chorus members who have complained that the repertoire for this concert is difficult and rather unrewarding. Some members have expressed the view that they have therefore found it more difficult to promote the concert to family/friends as they normally would.

There followed a lively discussion, with reports that there have also been highly positive comments from elsewhere within the Chorus – with people relishing the challenge and the progress made since the initial rehearsals. It was also agreed that the challenging music in the Duruflé concert made for a brilliant event that was enjoyed by the Chorus and audience alike.

It was agreed that it may be useful to combine challenging items with “crowd pleasers” however. It was also noted that performing less well-known items is called for by the SPC’s strategic aims. (Any effect on ticket sales of the less well-known programme can be reviewed after the concert.)

6.2 Saturday 4 May 24 Come Sing Creation (self-funded)

This item was carried forward to the next EPG meeting.

6.3 21 to 23 Jun 2024 Mozart Requiem London, Sheff (SICS) Edinburgh (IMG funded).

Details of coach arrangements are still TBC. It was noted that this information is vital as some members are deciding which concerts to attend on the basis of the travel arrangements.

ACTION: AA WILL CIRCULATE DETAILS AS SOON AS THESE BECOME AVAILABLE.

6.4 11 - 17 Jul 24 Trip to France (self-funded)

MD expenses and fees plus publicity costs total £2000 (of which £100 is for publicity).

**Commented [MG1]:** The next full committee meeting is after the 4 May

It was agreed that each participant should contribute £25 to these costs, and that SPC will underwrite the balance. It is understood that the MD has already booked his travel to ensure reasonable prices.

Alan Anderson reported that he has not been asked about scores and so cannot advise about any possible costs.

6.5 23-24 Young Conductor Sponsorship.

All is progressing well and Joe Banerjee has received feedback from the MD. Costs are £500 each for JB and the MD – funded via Stella Jockel Bequest.

Young Composer competition.

The next competition will see two texts for composers to choose from – a poem by KT and one by Chorus member Susie Wilson. Philip Wilby is joining the judging panel this time and one further judge (female) is TBC by the MD who is also revisiting the competition rules and criteria.

ACTION: AA TO PREPARE PAPERWORK FOR THE NEXT COMPETITION.

#### **7. 2024-25 season**

Next year's season was confirmed/outlined in brief.

7.1 Fri 15 Nov 2024, City Hall SICS - Lily Boulanger piece.

7.2 Sat 14?? Dec 2024, Christmas Carol Concert at City Hall SICS.

7.3 Sun 23 Mar 2025, final concert Classical Sheffield Festival Weekend, Young Composer Competition winner(s), two new commissioned works, Faure Requiem (self-funded, part-sponsored)

AA is currently researching venues – St Marie's (preferred) or St Mark's.

Alternatives to the Faure Requiem are welcomed.

7.4 April/May 2025 – possibility of another Bring and Sing.

Fox Valley Civic Centre was mooted as a good 'outreach' venue.

7.5 Sun 8 Jun 2025 City Hall SICS – Haydn Creation Halle.

7.6 Stella Jockel Young Composer Competition 2025 (funded from legacy) See above.

#### **8. Future Projects**

These were discussed very briefly.

8.1 Concerts – E Smythe Mass with Brigantes, Rutter Gloria with BDB, annual targets (one non-traditional community or venue, two works by females, one by composer from under-represented group).

Brigantes concert looks likely. BDB still keen.

Tippett Foundation – grants available for groups that work with young singers. This is a possibility for SPC in 2025.

8.2 Other projects - Bochum trip, Yorkshire Carol Book, YouTube channel, new banners.  
Bochum – Graham Dawson will report back in due course.

Youtube channel needs more material but this must be of a sufficiently high standard. It was suggested that material from the existing BDB CD could be used. The forthcoming BDB CD might also yield some material – with BDB's agreement.

ACTION: MG TO ASK KATH EADON IF SHE IS ABLE/WILLING TO UPLOAD SELECTED SOUNDFILES TO THE YOUTUBE CHANNEL.

New banners etc needed – this to be progressed when the new publicity / marketing officer is appointed.

4.1 Finance (item deferred from beginning of meeting)

4.1.1 Finance Reports.

There are still teething problems with invoices from Birkdale – currently being ironed out.

All Crystal and Financial reports were reviewed and approved. The Committee thanked JP for the clarity of her financial reporting. The Committee was heartened to note fixed costs are still being covered.

SPC's current bank balances are Co-op Bank account £44,303.65 and savings account £71,000.00, making a total of £115,303.65

4.1.2 Budgets

The 2023-24 budget was reviewed and approved.

The 2022-2025 (3 year) budget was deferred until the next meeting.

## **9. Committee Officer issues/reports.**

9.1 The Membership Officer reported three new members (two new young members and one returner) and three resignations (all for practical reasons such as relocation). One departing member is eligible for honorary membership which was agreed.

ACTION: CHAIR JB TO OFFER HONORARY MEMBERSHIP TO DEPARTING MEMBER MALCOLM JOHNSON.

9.2 Summer Social and other social events.

GH spoke briefly on HK's behalf. The venue for the Summer Sing is TBC but possibly St John's Ranmoor Parish Centre with access to garden. Possible dates are Aug 13th /20th – TBC.

There was also the suggestion of an autumn/winter gathering such as a Ceilidh with pie and pea dinner. The Committee was enthusiastic about this, as Chorus members are eager for more social activities. Details TBC. Possible venue is Tupton Masonic Hall.

ACTION: HK TO INVESTIGATE AND TAKE FORWARD AS APPROPRIATE.

A further proposal was an annual 'President's Dinner' (as per the Bach Choir) in term 2. This would mean the Chorus has three regular events per annum.

ACTION: AA WILL ASK SILVER SERVICE FOR POTENTIAL DATES FOR 2025.

#### 10. Any other business

It was agreed that in future Minutes will be circulated to all Committee members within two weeks of the meeting date. Comments are to be sent to the Minutes Secretary within 7 days, after which full and final Minutes will be distributed and posted on the SPC website.

This will ensure that members with actions have plenty of time to complete their tasks.

Dates of next Trustee meetings: 15 May 24, 10 Jul 24, 9 Oct 24, 6 Nov 24

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### ACTION LIST

#### From 8 March 2023

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

#### From 10 January 2024

- EPG to flesh out ideas for making self-funded concerts more popular and financially successful (eg concert with youth choir, twinning with school or youth choir, video game music) also meeting SPC's aims of inclusiveness and diversity
- **JB AA and PC** to meet to complete Risk Management Policy which is overdue
- ~~AA to speak to AB about putting more info into her monthly report and about being more proactive~~ **DONE Alex has now resigned due to extra duties imposed by Halle. AA doing programme, Tweets, facebook, flyers instead**
- **JM** to investigate Making Music Awards

#### From 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Action: AA to check the latest version of the inclusion and diversity policy is on Sharepoint.

Action: KT to investigate expanding the SPC Friends programme and AA to send KT any info she has.

Action: JB, AA and PC to meet to finalise the risk management policy as a matter of priority.

Action: BS and MG to organise to survey the chorus eg via Survey Monkey.

Action: MG to take forward the voice exchange initiative as detailed in the governance action plan.

Action: AA to create checklist for new venues to be formalised. People responsible for evaluating each new venue TBC.

Action: AA to prepare paperwork for next Young Composer competition.

Action: JM to request a meeting with Birkdale deputy head/head via his contact Michelle. JM to attend this with AA.

Action: AA to confirm to Kirsty Christer that the role is a paid one. The existing contract can be shared with her.

Action: JM to liaise with MD to make necessary arrangements for vic hall concert. DONE

Action: Outstanding performer contract to be signed for Vic hall concert –Shaun Brines. AA to expedite. DONE

Action: AA to circulate details of Mozart mini tour as soon as these become available.

Action: HK to investigate and take forward possibility of an autumn Ceilidh.

Action: MG to ask Cath Eadon if she is able/willing to upload selected soundfiles to the Youtube channel.

Action: MG to offer honorary membership to departing member Malcolm Johnson.

Action AA to ask Silver Service for potential dates for 2025 for President's Dinner.