

Thursday 16 January 2025 7pm, at Marianne Grayson's: 50 Endcliffe Glen Road, S11 8RW

MINUTES

- 1 Apologies: Patrick Callaghan, Georgina Hulse, Jenny Swann.

As usual the Committee was reminded of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

- 2 There were no conflicts of interest.

- 3 3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 Nov 2024 were approved without amendments.

3.2 Matters Arising: Outstanding actions were checked against the action list which has been updated accordingly. Significant points to note include the following:

MG is working on the member survey which will cover a range of matters, including repertoire, ideas for increasing tenor numbers, how to improve diversity and how to improve concert attendance by Chorus members (although it was noted that progress has already been made in this regard).

Concert dress for men will in future be specified ie with or without jackets to ensure consistency at each concert.

ACTION: JB to communicate the arrangements for men's concert dress to the Chorus at an appropriate time.

Reviews of concerts: AA reported that she has heard from a music student at the university who is interested in taking this on. She has sent further information and will arrange a meeting in due course.

Concert stage procedure is still not working as it should be – the wording about how folders are held when closed is to be revised (ie arms across) and updated on the website.

ACTION: AA to update stage procedure wording re. how folders are held when closed.

ACTION: JM to send Making Music account details to AA for inclusion in the weekly Update so that Chorus members can access the website.

ACTION: AA to add to the website the option for couples with young children to take out a combined/joint subscription.

ACTION: MG to amend the subs and application forms to include the combined subs option.

ACTION: MG to reactivate the Voice Exchange for The Creation concert.

There is still a requirement for a 'compere' at the March concert.

ACTION: JM to ask the MD if Stephen Johnson will be attending the concert. If so, he might be an ideal person to approach about compering. If this is not possible, JM to approach (in order of preference) Tom McKinney (R3), Sarah Walker (R3), Dan Walker (BBC) and Paul Allen (ex-BBC). The question of a fee was raised but not resolved, as this may depend on who is approached.

- 4 Governance

4.1 Finance

There was discussion of the reports and budgets. AA reported that the soloist fees for the Boulanger concert do not need to be covered by SPC as the Halle is doing so. This also

means that SPC won't receive any income from the City Hall for this concert.

JP reported that the SumUp funds have now been received.

She also signalled that subs will need to be increased next year in order to cover the higher cost of St. Andrew's Church.

MG queried the continuing high reserve in the SPC bank account and whether the Charity Commission has any rules about this. AA clarified that there are no rules in this regard, but said that the CC is not in favour of excessively large reserves if these are not necessary to the running of the organisation.

4.1.1 Finance Reports: the Crystal Report and Financial report were approved.

4.1.2 Budgets

The 2024-25 budget was approved.

The 2022-2025 budget was approved.

4.2 Equality Diversity and Inclusion.

It was reported that 64% of SPC members responded to the recent EDI Survey – a good outcome. It was agreed that the results of the Survey will be posted on the SPC website.

ACTION: AA to post the Survey results.

There was discussion of the need to amend/update the wording of the SPC's EDI policy to take account of legislative changes. It was agreed that this could not be completed without further research.

ACTION: AA to consult with Jo Towler of Music in the Round about suitable wording and what has been adopted by other relevant organisations such as MITR.

The policy paper will be reviewed at the next Committee meeting in March.

4.3 SPC Strategic Plan

Progress against the Plan was reviewed and it was agreed that good progress is being made in a number of areas. There are still various key issues to continue to take forward, but some of these are by definition ongoing and/or cannot be concluded swiftly (eg the aim of arranging a concert to reach a more diverse audience).

Certain key policies were reviewed (see item below).

An EPG meeting is needed ahead of the concert in March.

There was brief discussion of the Sheffield Cultural Strategy document which has just been made public. AA emphasised that it's important that SPC continues to lobby and makes its views known, in order to support classical music in the city.

4.4 Policies

4.4.1 Privacy Policy: this policy was approved.

JM pointed out that a sentence needs to be added explaining that members have access to their own records.

ACTION: AA to incorporate appropriate wording to this effect.

4.4.2 Safeguarding Policy

JM pointed out that another safeguarding officer should be appointed, with the same level

of DBS clearance as his own (ie enhanced).

ACTION: AA to add a call for another volunteer officer to the weekly Update.

The Safeguarding Policy will be approved when the second officer has been appointed.

4.4.3 Rule change. The revised wording of Rule 4.16 below was agreed.

The annual subscription is payable as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting but within three months, ie by 31 December, at the latest. Members who have not paid or made firm arrangements for payment with the Finance Officer will not be eligible to sing in the Christmas carol concert. Also see [constitution](#) clause 9 (4) (a) (iii) Termination of Membership. Members can pay the whole amount in cash or by cheque or bank transfer or pay regular instalments via direct debit or standing order. Concessions are readily granted by the Finance Officer in order that no one is excluded from membership for financial reasons.

4.5 SPC Friends: this item was postponed until the next meeting as Georgina Hulse was not present.

4.6 Trustee diversity and succession planning.

There was discussion of the pressing need to appoint an Administrator to replace AA when she stands down at the next AGM. It was pointed out that there is a continuing vacancy for a Vice Chair too. The Committee acknowledged (with gratitude) that the tremendous amount of work undertaken by AA might also make Chorus members reluctant to volunteer.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to make a simple/clear presentation after a rehearsal outlining the responsibilities of the role. It may also be possible to delegate some of AA's tasks to make the workload more manageable (eg the weekly Update might be taken on as a stand-alone task).

AA said she would be happy to continue her responsibility for the website and for the Stella Jockel Young Composer competition and the Committee was very grateful for this. She also emphasised that any successor must be someone who is prepared and able to check the email inbox daily and respond to urgent information.

ACTION: AA and JB to prepare a simple presentation about the Administrator role.

ACTION: Trustees to continue to put forward and sound out possible replacements so that the handover can begin as soon as possible.

5 Operations

5.1 Brief review of recent events to determine learning points.

Sally Turnbull said she felt that the Christmas concerts would be considerably enhanced if members of the audience had words to the carols and were able to join in more. She suggested projecting the words, but unfortunately the City Hall doesn't have a projector. The idea of a QR code was also mooted, as well as handing out free sheets at the door (ie separate from the concert programme). No decision was made but this matter can be revisited before the next Christmas concert.

One Committee member reported that he had noticed some unhelpful behaviour by a small number of chorus members at the St Lukes Carol Service. The Chair reminded all Trustees to challenge any such unprofessional behaviour if/when it arises.

It was agreed that such incidents should be reported to the appropriate Voice Rep who can then speak to Chorus members as appropriate.

5.2 Voice Exchange: to be reactivated for The Creation as stated above.

5.3 Marketing and Publicity: nothing to report.

5.4 Young Conductor Scheme

The Committee reviewed the encouraging feedback report prepared for Joe Banerjee by the MD and all agreed that the initiative had been highly successful and is worth repeating.

6 2024-25 season

6.1 Repertoire Planning Group

The RPG has met recently and plans are progressing well for the next season and for a Bochum visit in 2026.

6.2 Event Planning Group

ACTION: JB to circulate a date for the next meeting, as stated above.

6.3 Stella Jockel YCC 2025

AA provided a brief update, saying that there were nine entries and that both poems were set. The shortlist will be announced on January 31st. AA has invited the Lord Mayor to attend the celebration concert, as previously, but hasn't yet received a reply.

7 2025-26 season and beyond

This item was covered in the RPG report above.

8 Committee Officer issues/reports

8.1 Membership update: nothing to report.

8.1 Social Events: the Events Officer was not present, but plans for the Ceilidh are progressing.

8.2 Music and Librarians

Alan Anderson said that the librarians are willing to continue in their role for another year and was thanked for this. It was agreed that volunteers are invaluable when new music is being handed out and that this had worked well at the last rehearsal.

ACTION: AA to add to the next Update a reminder about the fines that are payable when music is returned after the deadline.

8.3 Women's concert dress

Annie Park outlined the survey findings and confirmed the clear preference for abandoning the gold sashes. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that an alternative should be investigated so that the women are not dressed only in black. A fabric brooch/corsage was thought to be a good solution.

ACTION: AP to investigate available options for a budget of apx £3-4 per item.

8.4 Issues raised by other officers: nothing was raised.

9 Any other business

JB reported that Jenny Swann has said she is going to stand down due to a large number of other commitments. Members of the Committee expressed their gratitude to Jenny for her contributions and hard work over the years.

The date of the September meeting was changed to September 10th.

Date of Trustee meetings: 19 March 2025, 14 May 2025, 16 July 2025, 10 September 2025

Date of AGM 2025: 07 October 2025

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 13 March 2024

HK to investigate and take forward possibility of an autumn Ceilidh. **IN HAND**

~~MG to ask Cath Eadon if she is able/willing to upload selected soundfiles to the Youtube channel. MG HAS ASKED MATTHEW FOR SOUND FILES TO UPLOAD.~~ **ACTION NOW WITH KIRSTY CHRISTER**

From 15 May 2024

MG to prepare a survey seeking member input re repertoire etc. **Scheduled for New Year 2025. IN HAND**

From 9 July 2024

Kirsty Christer to market the Friends Scheme once it is in place

JM, MG and AA to review the concert stage procedure as it is not quite working as written

From September 2024

KC to take forward sourcing sound files for youtube

JB to check with R4 producer Chris Taylor whether excerpts would be available, including any material that wasn't included in the programme.

AA to continue to look for award opportunities **IN PROGRESS**

JS to start creating an annual awards calendar with opportunities, categories and deadlines etc.

JS to speak to Joe Banerjee about concert reviews and any contacts he may have

AA to continue to take forward hire agreements **ONGOING**

All committee members to reflect on possible replacement administrators and pass any suggestions to JB and AA for discussion. **ONGOING**

AA to pass to KC any contacts who might be of use for collaborative approaches

~~JB to pass on to KC her contact at Harmony Works~~

~~The EPG to focus on the practicalities of planned events in the next season~~

~~The RPG to focus on repertoire and the forward planning of events that meet SPC's strategic aims.~~

From 6 November 2024

HK to book Crookes Social Club. This social gathering to involve a fund-raising element eg a raffle.

~~AA to put out feelers with new CH management re new arrangements for payment formula etc.~~
NOT YET

~~JM to remind members of protocols for stage procedure~~ DONE

PC to look at promoting the SPC's score loan service. IN PROGRESS

~~JM to share with PC details for access to the Making Music account.~~

~~MG to raise the issue of combined subs for couples with the MD to ascertain his opinion of offering such an arrangement at SPC.~~ DONE

~~AA to add a call for one additional First Aider to the Update~~ DONE

~~AA to upload the AGM Minutes to Sharepoint~~ DONE

~~MG to ask JP and DB about back-ups of choir files and where these are held.~~ ALL UPLOADED TO SHAREPOINT

~~MG to check with MD that he's happy for the Voice Exchange to be reactivated for The Creation concert.~~ DONE

~~AA to raise the idea of a film-related Come and Sing (Alexander Nevsky) at the next RPG meeting.~~
FORGOT BUT NOW ON RPG NOTES SO WILL BE RAISED AT NEXT MEETING

AA or JM to invite selected MC to the March SJ Concert.

MG to continue to update the Emergency Contacts list. ONGOING

From 16 January 2025

JB to communicate arrangements for men's concert dress to the Chorus at an appropriate time.

AA to update stage procedure wording re. how folders are held when closed.

JM to send Making Music account details to AA for inclusion in the weekly Update so that Chorus members can access the website.

AA to add to the website the option for couples with young children to take out a combined/joint subscription.

MG to amend the subs and application forms to include the combined subs option.

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AA to post the EDI Survey results on the SPC website.

AA to consult with Jo Towler of Music in the Round about suitable wording and what has been adopted by other relevant organisations such as MITR.

AA to incorporate appropriate wording about audition info into the Privacy Policy document.

AA to add a call for another Safeguarding officer to the weekly Update.

AA and JB to prepare a simple presentation about the Administrator role.

Trustees to continue to put forward and sound out possible replacements so that the handover can begin as soon as possible.

JB to circulate a date for the next EPG meeting.

AA to add to the next Update a reminder about the fines that are payable when music is returned after the deadline.

AP to investigate available options for a corsage/brooch for a budget of apx £3-4 per item.