

Wed 16 July 2025 7pm, at St Andrew's Church, Psalter Lane, Sheffield.

Present: Anne Adams, Alan Anderson, Jo Briddock (chairing meeting), Marianne Grayson, Georgina Hulse, Helen Kirk, Sally Turnbull, Kathy Towers.

Visitor: Alex Walton

Apologies: Patrick Callaghan, Paul Duffield, Annie Park, Jane Parkin.

MINUTES

1 Apologies were reported and there was a reminder of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

2 Conflicts of interest arising from one or more agenda items – there were none.

3 3.1 Minutes of meeting held on 14 May 2025 were approved without further amendment.

3.2 Matters Arising

The Membership Survey is ready to be issued. The MD is to be asked to send it to Chorus members a week apx before the rehearsal on Sept 9. Recipients will have three weeks in which to respond and a link will be included in the Update for three weeks after the Survey is issued.

ACTION: MG to ask the MD if he's happy to circulate the Survey.

Auditions for new members.

It was agreed that evening auditions for potential new members might be logistically easier than weekends, as the MD, Rachel and Maggie all need to be present at these.

ACTION: Sally T to speak to the MD about this possibility.

Name badges

HK reported that there are some available at £5 / £7 apx.

ACTION: HK is to investigate further and obtain samples for review.

Concert reviews

There has been no progress with securing concert reviewers.

ACTION: AA to approach Trisha Cooper about undertaking concert reviews.

4 Governance

4.1.1 Finance – Crystal Reports

Due to Jane Parkin's indisposition these reports will be submitted and discussed at the September meeting.

4.1.2 Deferred as above.

4.1.3 Subscription rates

An increase in standard subscription rates of 10% (to £184) was approved as a resolution for the November AGM. No increase in the concessionary rate of £42 is to be sought.

4.2 Equality Diversity & Inclusion, including recruitment & retention

There were no suggestions from Committee members as to logos or visual devices for the website, as there appear to be none that are in common use.

4.3 SPC Strategic Plan

Progress against the strategic targets in the Strategic and Governance Action Plan was reviewed. Nearly all items in the 2024-25 Plan are now green, which is excellent progress.

With regard to item 45 (making the Chorus more welcoming and friendly) it was suggested that the MD could be asked to 'mix up' the voice parts more frequently.

In the 2025-26 Plan AA has now prepared all items for her successor and was thanked for her hard work in doing this.

4.4 Policies

4.4.1 Contracts and Fees

Jane Parkin was thanked by the Committee for preparing the document for review, in spite of being unwell.

It was agreed that for this year the 'average earnings' model will be adopted for all professionals – ie an above-inflation increase of 5.9%. Next year's decision will look at the three options in JP's summary document.

ACTION: JB to let JP know which option the Committee has decided to adopt.

ACTION: AA to write this into all agreements with professionals, starting with the MD's agreement.

4.4.2 Financial Reserves policy

The updated 2025 Policy was approved by the Committee.

4.5 Friends

There was nothing to report.

4.6 Chorus roles

JB updated the Committee as to the current situation. There are now volunteers for several roles, namely Event Planning, Concert/Event and Contracts Officer roles. In addition, Chorus members have stepped forward to act as Member Reps (although a tenor Voice Rep is still needed).

ACTION: MG to approach Patrick Callaghan about taking on the tenor Voice Rep role.

ACTION: JB is to approach Anita McKay about taking on the new Secretary role. She will emphasise that much of the work for the coming year has already been completed by AA. (If not successful, Christine Pennington to be approached.)

ACTION: AA to let Anita know that JB will be in touch.

ACTION: Depending on what happens with the Secretary role, JB to speak to Christine Pennington about rejoining the EPG.

4.7 Chorus Communications

There was discussion about how communications might be improved, following feedback as to how news of Jim Monach's death had been shared.

After a helpful exchange of views it was decided that in future the committee will be told by email before the chorus, plus - *if possible* - by phone if it is a sudden or unexpected death of a current prominent member of the choir

It was also agreed that where circumstances allow (eg when it is known that a current Chorus member is seriously ill) there should be an announcement at a rehearsal, including an indication of how any further news is likely to be communicated (eg whether by email or in person at a rehearsal).

It was felt that these steps will help to reduce any potential distress to Chorus members when bad news has to be given.

5 Operations

5.1 Brief review of recent events to determine learning points

It was agreed that the recent Come and Sing had been tremendously successful. However, the Committee felt that it would be beneficial if in future these were held earlier in the year – allowing more time for any potential new members to join the Chorus earlier in the season.

HK was thanked for her work in organising the wonderful refreshments.

There was brief comment on stage etiquette and the fact that there's no consistency in how Chorus members hold their folders at the end of a concert. This is to be returned to at a future meeting.

5.2 Voice Exchange

Nothing to report.

5.3 Marketing and Publicity

This item was deferred until a future meeting when KC is able to attend.

5.4 Women's concert dress

It was pointed out that the Sheffield Chorale has adopted a rosette very similar to the one being considered for SPC. The Committee still has reservations about how to appear distinctive and professional, especially at a distance in large venues. Further consideration is still needed.

ACTION: In view of the above, JB to contact Boo and ask her to pause her rosette-making.

ACTION: Info about this matter can be added to an Update once Boo has been contacted.

6 2024-25 season and beyond

6.1 Repertoire Planning Group

The RPG report was reviewed, including its financial projections, which indicate increasing losses for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 seasons.

6.2 Event Planning Group

A brief verbal report was given. The Group will reconvene at the start of the new season.

7 Committee Officer issues

7.1 Membership Officer

MG reported that the Chorus now has 165 singing members (up from 156 at the start of the year). The total on the Chorus roll is 177.

The Committee was pleased to hear that rehearsal attendance has also increased and is now at 78%. Average concert attendance stands at an average of 77% - another example of improvement.

It was reported that the Tenor Bursary will be renewed next year. The Committee agreed that the newly-recruited tenors have made a tremendous difference to the sound of the Chorus.

The new Bursary opportunity will be posted on the website at the appropriate time – all potential recipients will be asked to audition.

The Committee will revisit the value of the Bursaries as it's important that the SPC offer compares favourably with other local choirs. The Committee discussed whether the tenor bursary should be less than the £500 offered under the Young Conductor scheme, but agreed that this limitation was not necessary, as the Young Conductor Bursary offers more in terms of experience and mentoring. (It is rare for aspiring conductors to have the opportunity to conduct a large symphonic chorus, and the valuable guidance of an experienced choral music director.)

ACTION: MG to inform current recipients that the Bursary will continue next year at a higher fee (TBC). She will explain that there will be an audition and also ask the recipients to spread the word among their peers.

ACTION: AA to post the 2026 Bursaries on the website.

7.3 New Membership Officer

ST reported that six new-member auditions are in the pipeline. She anticipated that there may well be more from August onwards.

It was agreed that it would be a good idea to revive the 'buddy' scheme for new members.

7.3 Social Events Officer

There was nothing to report. It was confirmed that there are to be no audience refreshments for the November concert.

HK asked whether wine will be allowed at the AGM social (given that the SPC now meets at St. Andrew's).

ACTION: AA to check about serving alcohol on the church premises.

7.4 Librarians

Nothing to report.

7.5 Education and Outreach Officer

Nothing to report.

7.6 Other Officers

Nothing to report.

8 Any other business

The dates of future and 2026 meetings (as below) were agreed.

Date of Trustee meetings: 10 September 2025 (AGM paper approval meeting), 12 November 2025, 14 January 2026, 11 March 2026, 13 May 2026, 15 July 2026.

Date of AGM 2025: 07 October 2025

ACTION LIST

From 16 July 2025

MG to approach the MD about circulating the Survey to Chorus members at the beginning of September.

MG to reactivate the Voice Exchange in February 2026 for the Arvo Part concert.

ST to speak to the MD about possibly holding new auditions in the evening after a rehearsal.

HK is to investigate name badges further and obtain samples for review.

JB to let JP know which fee increase option for professionals the Committee has decided to adopt.

AA to write the agreed fee increase into all agreements with professionals, starting with the MD's agreement.

MG to approach Patrick Callaghan about taking on the tenor Voice Rep role.

JB is to approach Anita McKay about taking on the new Secretary role. She will emphasise that much of the work for the coming year has already been completed by AA.

AA to let Anita know that JB will be in touch.

Depending on what happens with the Secretary role, JB to speak to Christine Pennington about rejoining the EPG.

JB to contact Boo and ask her to pause her rosette-making.

AA: Info about women's concert dress and the rosettes etc. to be added to an Update once Boo has been contacted.

MG to inform current recipients that the Bursary will continue next year at a higher fee (TBC). She will explain that there will be an audition and also ask the recipients to spread the word among their peers.

AA to post the 2026 Bursaries on the website.

AA to check about serving alcohol on the church premises.

AA to ask Trisha Cooper about undertaking concert reviews.

From 15 May 2024

~~MG to progress survey seeking member input re repertoire Scheduled for New Year 2025~~

From 9 July 2024

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

From September 2024

KC to take forward sourcing sound files for YouTube IN PROGRESS

~~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

KT to check with JS as to her progress with an annual awards calendar with opportunities, categories and deadlines etc.

AA to check progress with Joe Banerjee about concert reviews and any contacts he may have

AA to continue to take forward hire agreements IN PROGRESS

From 16 January 2025

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

~~JM to send Making Music log-on procedures to AA for inclusion in the weekly Update so that Chorus members can access the website.~~

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

~~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.

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

From 19 March 2025

Carol Book: GH to discuss with the MD what might work best as a format for the publication.

GH to explore potential concert reviewer candidates.

Anne A to speak to Nick Potter again about possible reviewers from University of Sheffield music dept.

~~JM to revisit his action point re. Making Music account log-in etc. and take forward.~~

~~AP to speak to the supplier to ascertain when the required number of brooches can be available.~~

~~Anne A to update the Finance Officer role description document to reflect the duty to update Finance reports prior to their scrutiny by the committee.~~

Committee members to send to Anne A any suggestions as to how the wording in the Strategic Plan might be adjusted to make it easier to report/signal progress. ONGOING

~~Anne A to remove the reference to submitting a CV from the 'How to apply' section of the Recruitment Policy.~~

GH to explore opportunities re the SPC Friends initiative and report back to the Committee in due course.

~~Alan A, Paul D, Georgina H, Jane P and Boo Spurgeon to define their officer responsibilities and add these to the document / send to Anne A by the end of March.~~

~~Annie P and Patrick C to add details about the responsibilities of member reps, based on their own experience of the role.~~

~~Anne A to update the website with a list of roles + links to a page for each which gives detail of responsibilities. This to be completed by the time the presentation is made to the Chorus in mid-April.~~

~~Date for presentation to the Chorus about roles and opportunities TBC.~~

~~Jo B to convene an EPG group meeting ASAP.~~

~~Alan A to provide Anne A with the cost of the 'for music like the sea' scores as this will be covered by the legacy.~~