

Wed 14 May 2025 7pm, at St Andrew's Church, Psalter Lane, Sheffield.

Present: Anne Adams, Alan Anderson, Jo Briddock (chairing meeting), Marianne Grayson, Helen Kirk, Annie Park, Jane Parkin, Boo Spurgeon, Kathy Towers.

Apologies: Patrick Callaghan, Paul Duffield, Georgina Hulse, Jim Monach, Sally Turnbull.

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 19 March 2025 were approved without further amendment.

3.2 Matters Arising

The Repertoire Survey: progress has been made and there are a few amendments to make following comments by the MD. Up-to-date wording re. EDI also needs to be added once it has been approved by the Committee.

ACTION: MG to continue to take this forward.

YouTube material: JB has contacted Chris Taylor at the BBC but there has been no response.

Awards: it was agreed that Rachel Fright's new carol (to be performed at the Christmas concert) is likely to be suitable for entry into an award such as Making Music.

ACTION: AA to progress as / when appropriate.

Men's attire for The Creation

ACTION: JB to clarify and inform Chorus members at the appropriate time.

4 Governance

4.1.1 Finance – Crystal Reports

JP reported that the HMRC Gift Aid refund of £5K has been received. She also confirmed that the last concert made a profit, thanks in part to Stephen Johnson's contribution to costs.

She reported two anonymous legacies/donations – one to the Tenor Bursary and one to cover the costs of complimentary tickets for City of Sanctuary refugees.

She reminded the Committee that it will still be necessary to increase subs next year to cover the higher costs of St. Andrews.

The Committee approved the Crystal Reports.

ACTION: Anne A to add to the Update a thank you to the anonymous donors who are likely to be Chorus members.

4.1.2 The 2024 – 25 budget was approved.

The 2022 – 25 budget

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

4.2 Equality Diversity & Inclusion, including recruitment & retention

There was discussion of the wording relating to protected characteristics as outlined in the paper submitted ahead of the meeting. AA had looked at MITR and ACE wording and the following was proposed for SPC policies and statements:

We have a legal duty to consider equality in our policy making. We aim to prevent discrimination and promote equality and diversity for people from protected characteristic groups defined in the Equality Act 2010 – including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We also recognise the barriers that arise from class and socio-economic status and will seek to go beyond our legal duty to ensure that the work we invest in is reflective of the diversity of our society.

When the Minutes are approved, the wording can be incorporated into all relevant documents.

ACTION: AA to update all policies with new wording once approved.

ACTION: MG to incorporate new wording into the Survey that is currently being progressed.

The potential implications for SPC of the recent Supreme Court ruling relating to the rights of the transgender community were highlighted. It was agreed that appropriate wording could be added to the Survey to communicate SPC's commitment to inclusivity and equality in this regard. There was also discussion of how to communicate this commitment via the website – either in words or by using a visual device / logo that is widely recognised.

ACTION: AA to review the website to ascertain where such a message / statement might best appear.

ACTION: Committee members to put forward suggestions as to visual devices or logos that might appropriately be used.

4.3 SPC Strategic Aims 2024 - 29

It was agreed that significant parts of the Plan are now in green – a marker of the progress that is continuing to be made.

Specific priorities for 2026 (to appear in the Annual Report) were agreed as follows:

- Hold concerts at a range of venues to ensure accessibility to all communities.
- Ask the Chorus for ways SPC might attract and retain more members
- Seek views from the Chorus as to why tenors aren't coming forward and ideas for recruiting and retaining more of them.
- Develop hire agreements for music professionals
- Seek ways to increase percentage concert participation among Chorus members
- Nurture and maintain good working relationships with Sheffield City Hall, the Halle Concert Society and Sheffield City Council.

4.3.2 SPC Strategic Plan

It was agreed that it's essential that the Strategic Governance Action Plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis so that progress continues to be made.

4.4 Policies

4.4.1 Contracts and Fees

The fees paid to the MD, Maggie, Rachel and Kirsty were discussed. All agreed that SPC should ensure it pays a fee that is at the higher end of what other Choruses in Sheffield pay their professionals.

ACTION: JP to look at the figures in order to recommend a percentage fee increase so that a decision can be made at the meeting in July. (Both 5% and 10% were mooted as possibilities.)

4.4.2 Risk Management Policy

The reworded 2025 Policy was approved by the Committee.

The organisational risk assessment was conducted and approved.

ACTION: AA is to add relevant details to the amended Action Plan.

4.5 Friends

This item was deferred as Georgina H was not present.

4.6 Trustee diversity and succession planning

There was discussion of the revised Roles and Chorus Management / Structure categories now posted on the SPC website. Anne A was thanked for all her hard work in this regard.

It was reported that volunteers have stepped forward for two roles, namely the concert planning and contracts manager roles. It was agreed that this is very good news as these two positions are key ones. There is not yet a volunteer for the Secretary role.

It was agreed that an end-June (end of season) deadline should be given for expressions of interest.

ACTION: JB will speak at the next rehearsal about the need for a new Secretary and for more member reps.

ACTION: JB to speak to the two volunteers above to confirm they are definitely willing to stand so that shadowing can begin at the appropriate time.

There was also discussion of how to make member reps more visible / known to Chorus members. The idea of reps wearing badges or a lanyard for easy identification was mooted. It was agreed that reps could stand at the front with JB during rehearsal notices.

ACTION: JB to encourage Christine Pennington to return as a member rep.

ACTION: Helen K to investigate affordable badges via her own personal contact.

ACTION: AA to order badges for all roles after HK has reported back.

5 Operations

5.1 Brief review of recent events to determine learning points

Note was taken of the implications of Jim Monach's illness if his absence continues for a long time. AA has undertaken arrangements and planning for the imminent Come and Sing and Creation concerts and was thanked for this.

Learning points from the concert at St. Marie's were shared. It was noted that side aisle pews will be available for Chorus members at the next concert so that prolonged periods of standing are avoided.

The unfortunate difficulties experienced by some audience members trying to access the Cathedral before the concert were probably due to a communications failure within the Cathedral team.

ACTION: AA is to include clergy in emails re. arrangements for future concerts at St. Marie's.

5.2 Voice Exchange

Nothing to report at the present time – the VE will be reactivated for the February 2026 concert.

5.3 Marketing and Publicity

The Committee reviewed Kirsty Christer's full and detailed report and wished to thank her for all her hard work this season. Her report was very well received and it was agreed that excellent progress is being made.

5.4 Women's concert dress

Brooches: Annie P reported that there are only 22 items available of the style chosen at the last meeting. A full set of 200 is needed in time for the Christmas concert.

Boo S said that with support she might be able to undertake making these and the Committee was very grateful for her offer.

ACTION: BS to make a prototype to be considered at the next meeting, having been shown samples by AP at the next rehearsal.

6 2024-25 season and beyond

6.1 Repertoire Planning Group

The RPG report and notes from the meeting held on 7 May were reviewed. It was agreed that the next season is looking very positive.

A non-traditional venue is still needed. The MD is discussing this with Nicholas Childs of the BDB.

The Classical Weekend date in 2027 is March 12 – 14. There is a possibility of a collaboration with the City of Sheffield Youth Orchestra / Music Hub.

6.2 Event Planning Group

Plans for the Come and Sing are all in hand and will appear in the Update.

The Creation

AA very kindly offered to deputise for Jim M.

The time of the rehearsal is TBC as there is a pre-concert talk at 3pm.

A taxi or lift for the SPC President was discussed so that it is easy for her to attend and access the City Hall.

ACTION: AA is ensuring the MD has a comp ticket.

ACTION: MG to check whether the Chorus member who needs the stair-climber is singing so that arrangements can be made if needed.

ACTION: Alan A is to send AA details of the cost of copies.

Chatsworth Sing

The music has been chosen and 50 copies of each score are being made.

There will be rehearsals on the two Tuesdays before the event, led by Georgina H who is to be paid for her time.

It was agreed that the light / non-religious music chosen for this event will be a useful addition to the Chorus's repertoire.

Summer Sing

There was enthusiasm for a repeat event in Charlotte's garden.

ACTION: HK to confirm the date with Charlotte.

7 Committee Officer issues

7.1 Membership Officer

There has only been one resignation (due to relocation).

ACTION: MG is to pass St Andrew's keys to Annie P as she no longer lives close by.

7.2 New Membership Officer

Six new-member auditions are taking place on 31 May.

7.3 Social Events Officer

Helen K confirmed that she has booked the Crookes Social Club and the band for the Ceilidh on Friday 9 May 2026. Pie and pea supper also booked. Helen K was thanked for all her work in finalising the plans.

7.4 Librarians

A presentation to two long-standing members was discussed and it was decided that this should take place after a rehearsal.

ACTION: Alan A is to organise two bound scores (via the University at a cost of £30 each) and the wording for the flyleaf will be confirmed via email by AA or JB

7.5 Education and Outreach Officer

Nothing to report.

7.6 Other Officers

Nothing to report.

8 Any other business

Nothing was raised.

Date of Trustee meetings: 16 July 2025, 10 September 2025

Date of AGM 2025: 07 October 2025

ACTION LIST

From 15 May 2024

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

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. with Rachel's Christmas carol in mind.

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 ahead of each concert.

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

~~MG to reactivate the Voice Exchange for The Creation concert.~~

~~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.

~~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.~~

Sally T to ask the MD whether auditions might take place without Rachel as she is the person with a large number of weekend commitments.

~~Anne A to accept Chatsworth invitation by end of March deadline.~~

From May 14 2025

MG to book the Shirley House Committee Room for 16 July.

Anne A to progress Award entries (eg Rachel's Christmas carol) as / when appropriate.

JB to inform Chorus members about male attire for The Creation at the appropriate time.

Anne A to add to the Update a thank you to the two anonymous donors who are likely to be Chorus members.

Anne A to update all policies with new EDI wording once approved.

MG to incorporate new EDI wording into the Survey that is currently being progressed, once wording is approved.

Anne A to review the website to ascertain where message / statement about EDI / inclusivity might best appear.

Committee members to put forward suggestions as to EDI visual devices or logos that might appropriately be used.

JP to look at the figures in order to recommend a percentage fee increase for SPC's professionals so that a decision can be made at the meeting in July.

Anne A to add relevant risk management info / details to the amended Action Plan.

JB to speak at the next rehearsal about the need for a new Secretary and for more member reps.

JB to speak to the two volunteers to confirm they are definitely willing to take on the new roles so that shadowing can begin at the appropriate time.

JB to encourage Christine Pennington to return as a member rep.

Helen K to investigate affordable member rep badges via her own personal contact.

Anne A to order badges for all roles after HK has reported back.

Anne A is to include clergy in emails re. arrangements for future concerts at St. Marie's.

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Alan A is to send AA details of the cost of copies for The Creation.

Helen K to speak to Charlotte about date for a Summer Sing.

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