

Wed 14 January 2026 7pm, in Shirley House, St Andrew's Psalter Lane Church.

MINUTES

Present: Jo Briddock (Chair), Alan Anderson, Paul Duffield, Marianne Grayson, Georgina Hulse, Rebecca Hutten, Ros Hobson, Anita McKay, Annie Park, Jane Parkin, Christine Pennington, Kathy Towers (Minutes), Sally Turnbull, Patricia Wake, Alex Walton.

1. Apologies and EDI Policy

Apologies: Helen Kirk

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

2 Conflicts of Interest

There were none.

3 Minutes and Matters Arising

3.1 Minutes of meeting held on 12 Nov 2025 were approved. The following members are to be added to the list of attendees: Alex Walton, Patricia Wake and Rebecca Hutten.

ACTION: KT to add missing members.

3.2 Matters Arising

The list of action points was updated to reflect tasks that had been completed or are in progress.

The next EPG meeting is to take place on 17th Feb.

Matters to be pursued:

ACTION: The matter of women's concert dress (including the question of brooches) is to be revisited at the end of the season and a discussion point added to a future Agenda.

ACTION: CHRISTINE P to check the current status of professionals' contracts (ie Darius, Maggie and Rachel Fright) with Rachel Mallaband and Anne Adams.

ACTION CP: Guidance as to how members can log into the SPC website with their own passwords is to be added to the Update.

ACTION JB: Winners of the Young Composer competition to be contacted (via Anne A) to see whether they would like to receive the spare scores of their compositions.

ACTION CP/JB: A reminder about returning music on time is to be added to the Update – the note to reiterate that there will be a fine for late returns.

4 Governance

4.1 Finance

Jane P provided the Committee with a brief update on finances, including the fact that all members have now paid or made arrangements to pay their subs.

She pointed out that the cost of music hire needs to be kept under review, as the cost of hiring some pieces has risen considerably. However, it was agreed that over the course of a season the £5 fee (per concert music) is likely to be adequate. The Committee is to review this at the end of the season.

There is a new £30 pcm fee payable to Microsoft.

Come & Sing concerts now nearly break even.

4.1.1 The Finance Report was approved.

4.1.2 The Crystal Report was approved.

4.1.3 The 2025-26 budget was approved.

4.2 Equality Diversity & Inclusion (inc recruitment & retention)

Marianne G reported that 70% of SPC members completed the EDI survey that was included on the subs form. A pleasing 9% of members are now under 35 (an improvement on the 5% of last year). Several members responded with praise for the SPC's proactive approach to EDI and inclusivity.

Boo S had raised via email an uncomfortable incident at a rehearsal involving a black female singer's hair being touched. It was felt that incidents of this kind are very rare but that it would nevertheless be a good idea to discuss this further.

ACTION: Marianne G to discuss with BS in case any action needs to be taken.

BS also raised via email the question of the currently-on-hold brooches for women. This issue is to be revisited as outlined above.

4.3 SPC Strategic Plan

Progress was reviewed against the strategic targets in the Strategic and Governance Action Plan.

The Minutes of the 2025 AGM need to be uploaded to the SPC website.

ACTION: KT and JB to check that the Minutes are up-to-date, after which they can be uploaded.

Further actions required are as follows:

CP: to update the Trustee information pack

CP: to check all signed declarations of interest are uploaded to Sharepoint and remedy if this is not the case. CP to upload her own declaration.

CP: to check voice coach and accompanist contracts.

JB: to update lines 27 – 32 of the Action Plan and make any further changes as required.

4.3.1 Risk management policy

The document was reviewed by the Committee and it was noted that certain names (eg First Aiders) need to be updated to reflect current status.

ACTION: JB to check that all names in the Risk Assessment document are current and correct.

ACTION: JB to review insurance requirements to check whether there is scope to streamline SPC's health and safety documents.

It was agreed that a risk assessment for every concert is essential for insurance purposes. This is the ongoing responsibility of Ros H and the EPG.

It was pointed out members' emergency contacts need to be updated on a regular basis. It was agreed that the simplest way of achieving this is to add something to the annual subs form.

ACTION: MG to add request for emergency contact details to the next subs form.

4.4 New trustees and recruitment (finance officer and librarian)

The Librarians and Finance Officer are standing down at the 2026 AGM, as previously indicated. Pam Leon has stepped forward to take over the FO role. Patrick Callaghan previously expressed interest in the Librarian role has not confirmed this.

ACTION: JB to draft a note for the Update inviting expressions of interest for the Librarian role. This can be a 'job-share' as is currently the case.

ACTION: JB to confirm with Pam L that she is definitely willing to stand.

5. Operations

5.1 Brief review of recent events to determine learning points

The enthusiastic audience response to the Christmas concert was noted. There were no learning points as all had gone very well.

However, the programme 'honesty box' was slightly short of money. This had already been mentioned at the rehearsal. SPC is to reimburse the City Hall for the small shortfall.

5.2 Music Library storage

The question of storage was discussed. The space at the Broomhill Library has been paid for for a further six months while other options are explored. SPC members have been asked for suggestions, and the Burton Street Foundation has been mooted. Other suggestions may well be in the pipeline.

ACTION: CP to explore and pursue alternative provision

5.3 Marketing and Publicity

No update was available as Kirsty Christer was not asked to attend the meeting but it was agreed that there has been plenty of positive activity.

6. 2025-26 season and beyond

6.1 Repertoire Planning Group.

MG provided a brief summary of the meeting held on 12th January. She confirmed that the summer 2027 concert with the Halle will be the Sea Symphony, possibly with the Walton Te Deum and one other piece.

It was agreed that it would be helpful if SPC chorus members were made aware of the high costs of putting on major City Hall concerts – as a way of encouraging them to get more involved in spreading the word and selling tickets.

ACTION: JB to mention during rehearsal notices.

The October 2026 Come & Sing will be the Brahms Requiem. Soloists to be confirmed – perhaps David Clover might be a good source?

Other concerts in the pipeline include the Verdi Requiem with the CSYO, date TBC. It was noted that this is likely to make a significant loss which will need Committee approval.

Georgina H suggested the new Steam Works in the centre of Sheffield as a possible no-traditional venue. This was thought to be a good idea – acoustics permitting!

MG also reported that the results of the repertoire section of the Membership Survey have now been shared with the RPG and will be sent to the Committee very soon. Thereafter they (and the results of the other sections of the Survey) will be shared with SPC members – method TBC and to be discussed via email.

ACTION: MG to circulate email to Committee members canvassing views on how to share the RPG survey results.

6.2 Event Planning Group.

There were no current issues to report or discuss.

Ros H reported that arrangements for the Feb 6th concert are in hand.

ACTION: GH to revisit platform etiquette at the on-the-day rehearsal, specifically with reference to how folders are to be held.

7 Committee Officer issues/reports

7.1 Membership Officer

MG reported that there are now 176 chorus members – the highest for a long time. This comprises 61 altos, 61 sops, 16 tenors and 38 basses.

It was agreed that it might be helpful to add an extra row at the front at St Andrew's rehearsals, as some members find it difficult to hear the MD.

ACTION: GH to discuss this with the MD.

The Committee agreed to paying £18 pcm to Mailchimp, to facilitate hiccup-free circulation of the weekly Update. It was agreed that Mailchimp might be useful for other purposes too (eg for a Friends and/or Honorary Members' mailing list), as it's a versatile tool.

7.2 New Membership Officer

Sally T reported that there were nine visitors at the most recent rehearsal and four more to visit in the near future. Six auditions are taking place next week – all very positive.

7.3 Social Events Officer

Helen K asked that the question of Ceilidh tickets be discussed at the meeting and Christine P volunteered to create paper tickets for sale when the time comes. The price of the tickets is TBC but should include a mark-up to raise Chorus funds. The price can be agreed when all the exact costs (eg pie/peas and the band) are known.

ACTION: CP to make Ceilidh tickets and to contact HK and JB to firm up costs and plans.

7.4 Librarians

See above.

7.5 Education and Outreach Officer

GH reported that all activities are progressing well.

ACTION: GH to check with the MD as to the safety of the rostrum. If it's not adequate there will be a need for a replacement.

7.6 Other Officers

Nothing to report.

8 Any other business

It was agreed that the external lighting at St Andrew's is not ideal.

ACTION: Christine P to check whether there is a Risk Assessment for this rehearsal venue (eg one was potentially prepared by Jim Monach).

The Committee was told of a complaint that an Honorary Member had not been informed of the death of Bill Smyllie. It was agreed that this was an unfortunate oversight.

ACTION: CP to review the honorary membership programme and recommend any addition provisions that can be made for these members.

It was noted that archivist Penny Webster has been active in collating various items of new material that have been received. There have also been quite a few enquiries from people trying to track down former SPC members.

It was agreed that in future Committee members should bring their own refreshments, and that different volunteers should be responsible for setting up the room each time. These steps should avoid the same members having to arrive early for every meeting.

MG pointed out that the next AGM will be the 90th and that it might be a nice idea to do something to mark this.

ACTION: JO B to speak to Penny Webster about a possible display at the next AGM.

The meeting ended at 20.50.

The next meeting is on 11th March 2026.

Action List overleaf /

ACTION LIST**From 14 January 2026**

CHRISTINE P to check the current status of professionals' contracts (ie Darius, Maggie and Rachel Fright) with Rachel Mallaband and Anne Adams.

CP: Guidance as to how members can log into the SPC website with their own passwords is to be added to the Update.

JB: Winners of the Young Composer competition to be contacted (via Anne A) to see whether they would like to receive spare scores of their compositions.

CP/JB: A reminder about returning music on time is to be added to the Update – the note to reiterate that there will be a fine for late returns.

JO B to discuss with BS in case any action needs to be taken about the touching of a soprano chorus member's hair.

KT and JB to check that the AGM Minutes are correct, after which they can be uploaded.

CP: to update the Trustee information pack

CP: to check all signed declarations of interest are uploaded to Sharepoint and remedy if this is not the case. CP to upload her own declaration.

CP: to check voice coach and accompanist contracts.

JB: to update lines 27 – 32 of the Action Plan to bring the Action Plan fully up to date and make any further changes as required.

JB to check that all names in the Risk Assessment document are current and correct

CP to pursue alternatives to Broomhill Library for the storage of scores etc.

JB to review insurance requirements to check whether there is scope to streamline SPC's health and safety documents.

MG to add request for emergency contact details to the next subs form.

JB to draft a note for the Update inviting expressions of interest for the Librarian role. This can be a 'job-share' as is currently the case.

JB to confirm with Pam L that she is definitely willing to stand.

JB to mention cost of concerts and need for Chorus members to sell tickets during rehearsal notices.

MG to circulate email to Committee members canvassing views on how to share the RPG survey results.

GH to revisit platform etiquette at the on-the-day rehearsal specifically with reference to how folders are to be held.

GH TO DISCUSS THE ROSTRUM WITH THE MD

CP to make Ceilidh tickets and to contact HK and JB to firm up costs and plans.

Christine P to check whether there is a Risk Assessment for this rehearsal venue (eg one was potentially prepared by Jim Monach).

CP to review the honorary membership programme and recommend any addition provisions that can be made for these members.

JB to speak to Penny Webster about a potential display at the 90th AGM.

From 10 Sept 2025

- Kirsty Christer to try and source contact details for reviewers on Bachtrack and approach as appropriate.
- ~~JB to ask Rachel Mallaband if she will take on the professionals contracts as well as soloists.~~
- ~~JB/RH to reconvene EPG meetings~~
- ~~Jane Parkin to make amendments and recirculate the budget to the Committee to be approved by email – DONE~~
- ~~JB is to check that the nominated conductor and accompanist stand-ins are still willing to fulfil this role.~~
- ~~ANNE A to add to the Update that there will be a presentation to Donald after the rehearsal that precedes the AGM – DONE~~
- ~~Marianne volunteered to review all Anne's email addresses and re-allocate as appropriate. She also volunteered to set up the automatic reply from the administrator address- DONE~~
- ~~Jo B to continue oversight of the marketing contract ONGOING~~
- ~~Jo B to let Kirsty know that the marketing plan and budget have been agreed by the Committee and to ask Kirsty if she needs specific input from Committee members on particular initiatives. DONE Anne~~
- ~~Anne A to put a note into a future update to revise the concert dress info on the website accordingly~~
- ~~Jo B to add the library store to the next Committee meeting Agenda- DONE~~
- ~~Anne A to add details of the forthcoming singing opportunities (eg the one with the Bach choir) to the next Update – DONE~~

From 12 Nov 2025

- Kirsty Christer to try and source contact details for reviewers on Bachtrack and approach as appropriate.
- Jo Briddock to ask Rachel Mallaband if she will take on the professionals' contracts as well as soloists.
- Jo B to update the New Trustee pack.

- Ros to ask Darius for suggestions on a suitable rostrum for the chorus to buy.
- Ros to try to locate the music stand.
- Jo to liaise with Young Composer winners re the scores of their music.

**Date of Trustee meetings: ~~12 November 2025, 14 January 2026, 11 March 2026,~~
13 May 2026, 15 July 2026.**