

WHITEHALL CHOIR

Minutes of Committee Meeting

18 April 2024

Present: Philip Pratley (Chair)
Anne Courtney, Martyn Humphries, Laura Lowenthal, Christine Keiffer, Tania Mendes, Marianne Michael, Jo Tomlinson,

Apologies: Lloyd Fleming, Rachel Nixon, Jacky Sellers, Martyn Wake, Ian Williamson

	Action
<i>Utrecht Tour</i>	
JT had met with Aileen and Jacky and all arrangements were well in hand. PP noted that Aileen had prepared an email which would be shared with the committee.	PP
PP noted that the bursary fund had been used to enable a choir member to attend who would not otherwise be able to.	
JT noted that as the concert was abroad the dress code could be a little less formal provided it was smart and all black.	
MM intended to bring some spare music but thought it was a good idea to distribute across the committee in case of missing luggage etc. MM and JT to agree how much and MM to hand to committee members to pack.	MM/JT
<u>2023/24 Season</u>	
<i>Summer concert</i>	
<i>27 June 2024 – St Peter's Eaton Square</i>	
JS had suggested the audience should be offered a glass of sparkling wine or elderflower within the ticket price. It was agreed that this was a good idea. PP would ask Lloyd if this could be extended to members of the choir as well. MH would investigate the palatability of the sparkling wine in the choir cupboard. Otherwise, PP would ask JS and Lucilla if they could arrange something suitable.	PP MH PP
AC queried the music costs for the Michael Higgins and Oliver Tarney pieces as 30p per person seemed quite low. MM would clarify with Lloyd if this included the licence fees as well as the printing costs.	MM
PP thanked MM for all her work in organising the music for the current term.	
JT noted that as the repertoire included music by 3 living composers it would be a good idea to invite them to the concert. MM noted that Michael Higgins had been invited and would invite the others. LL would arrange for them to have complimentary tickets.	MM/LL

<u>2024/25 Season</u>	
<p>Concert dates</p> <p>21 November 2024 – St Peter’s Eaton Square 18 December 2024 - St Peter’s Eaton Square 26 April 2025 – Cadogan Hall 26 June 2025 - St Peter’s Eaton Square</p> <p>RN has confirmed all dates with St Peter’s</p> <p>Autumn concert</p> <p>There was some discussion around trying to move the November concert to the Friday as Friday concerts seemed to sell well. However, it was agreed to retain the current date as it was not clear if this was a function of Friday concerts or members enthusiasm for selling tickets. It was agreed to review in advance of the summer 2025 concert.</p> <p>Christmas concert</p> <p>JT noted that the December date was the only one where she, Ian and the Church were all available.</p> <p>Rehearsal time for this concert was quite short and so part reps would canvass opinions on whether an additional (Saturday) rehearsal or extended Tuesday rehearsals to accommodate some sectionals would be helpful. There would be some financial implications to this but PP thought that they could be accommodated.</p> <p>JT would also consider including some repertoire already known to the choir to help with the practice load.</p>	<p>RN to schedule</p> <p>Part reps</p> <p>JT</p>
<p>Spring concert</p> <p>This will be a joint performance of Handel’s Israel in Egypt with Constanza Chorus at the Cadogan Hall. This would be the Saturday after Easter (26 April 2025).</p> <p>PP noted that LF and JS had reached an agreement on concert arrangements and finances with Constanza and that the concert was financially viable. There was an outstanding issue regarding the cost of concert insurance which had increased significantly post-COVID.</p> <p>JT noted that the orchestra was booked although space both on stage and backstage would be tight with 2 choirs and 2 continuo players.</p> <p>There was a lot of music to learn for this concert as it was a substantial work so it would take up all of the available practice time in the spring term.</p>	<p>LF</p>

<p><u>Equality and Diversity</u></p> <p>JS had prepared a note on this subject which was discussed extensively. It was agreed that there should be a further committee meeting exclusively for this issue. In the meantime, the following should be taken forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MH to review the section of the website dealing with membership fees as this was a frequent question from those interested in joining. Whilst costs could be an issue they were in line or a little below those for comparable choirs. ● AC and LF to discuss the possibility of including a section on assistance with fees for existing and potential members who might experience difficulty with paying fees. ● TM suggested that this should also be included in the start of term emails from part reps. <p>It was agreed that the future meeting on the subject needed to look at who we are as a choir and to define diversity more closely in order to identify areas where we succeed and where we could do better as well as considering any action to take.</p>	<p>MH</p> <p>AC/LF</p> <p>RN/part reps</p> <p>RN to schedule</p>
<p><u>Recording</u></p>	
<p>PP noted that the licensing issues around streaming the recording were more complicated than anticipated but RN and LF had undertaken a significant amount of work and a satisfactory conclusion was imminent. JT had drafted an email for the distributor who was assisting with this issue which she would send to AC and TM to proofread.</p> <p>It would be about 6 weeks after that before the recordings were released and a social media campaign was needed to gain the necessary attention. MH would draft an initial strategy and AC would review social media best practice in this area.</p> <p>TM suggested that a pack was produced for members to post with a visual and some text – this could also be used to “talent spot” members of the choir with expertise in social media especially TikTok and Instagram. TM had relevant expertise and would be happy to help.</p>	<p>JT/AC/TM</p> <p>MH/AC</p> <p>TM/MH</p>
<p><u>Finances</u></p>	
<p>PP noted that LF would circulate an update to the committee. In the meantime the choir was in good shape in meeting the current year’s forecast primarily due to good ticket sales so far.</p> <p>Funds in hand amounted to £12k.</p> <p>The committee had given an undertaking to members that the music costs for the second half of the year would not be significant to reflect the higher costs they</p>	

<p>incurred for the autumn repertoire. PP thanked MM for her hard work in achieving this.</p> <p>TM noted that a couple of members had left the choir without paying for or returning last term's music and were not responding to her communications. MM noted that this would mean the choir had to pay for the missing music and PP confirmed that there was a contingency for this.</p>	<p>LF/CK/MM</p>
<p><u>Any other business</u></p> <p>LL urged that people used their Whitehall Choir emails when communicating on committee matters.</p> <p>MH noted that he had sold copies of the RS Thomas CDs to a book club in Wales studying his poetry.</p> <p>JT had agreed that the choir would collaborate with a project by Peters Edition who were commissioning Russell Hepplewhite to compose 12 new works one of which the choir would premiere next summer.</p> <p>.</p>	