

Abbeydale Singers: Concert Management Manual

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Venue liaison (Secretary)

Booking the venue, ensuring payment of the venue via the treasurer, liaising with the venue in the run up to the performance.

Usually the Summer Concert is held in St John's on a Saturday in mid-July, with the Christmas Concert in St Mark's on the second Saturday in December. The committee and the MD coordinate dates and bookings with each Church Secretary as far ahead as possible; where deposits are required they are paid by the Treasurer.

The booking may include a rehearsal in the Church on the Thursday evening immediately before the concert and on the Saturday afternoon; for some concerts it may be necessary to book the whole Saturday. The timing of the Saturday rehearsals will depend on other potential events, particularly at St John's at the height of the summer wedding season. The St John's booking should include hire of the Annexe and/or Parish Centre toilets as there is only one toilet in the church.

Where piano tuning is required this should be specified on the booking; if a second piano is required this needs to be hired well in advance and arrangements made for delivery and for the two pianos to be tuned together, preferably at least a day ahead of the concert, with special access arrangements made for the tuner.

**Risks.* It is important to double-check that venue bookings made well in advance are still firmly in each Church's Secretary's diary nearer the time – say six months ahead. There have been occasions where a musical event organized by a Church's Musical Director has not been cross-checked with the Church Secretary's diary and double-bookings have occurred.

Where piano tuning has been booked, it is important to check, say a fortnight ahead, that this has actually been actioned by the Church Secretary and the tuner appointment made; where a second piano has been pre-hired both instruments must be tuned together.

Programme curation

Deciding the programme for the concert.

The MD decides, in consultation with the Committee and choir, the content of each concert well in advance. The MD also decides on any choir soloists and sub-groups.

Musician coordination

Booking any supporting musicians such as the accompanist and/or organist. Booking guest artists such as young musicians. Liaising with supporting and guest musicians in the run up to the concert.

In consultation with the MD and Committee (including the Treasurer and Concert Manager regarding budget), engage guest musicians and accompanists and agree their fees. Agree with the Committee how many free tickets should be reserved for guest artists' families and communicate this.

**Risks.* Sometimes the names of guest musicians and their music programmes are not confirmed until very close to the concert, leading to a final rush to get programmes printed. Where this happens, the guests' names and their programmes won't appear in any pre-publicity material.

Flowers, gifts and fees for soloists

Arrange for flowers or any gifts required for soloists, in liaison with the Pastoral Care Officer and the Treasurer. Arrange for fee cheques to be presented at the end of the concert.

Accessibility and Legal coordination

Where appropriate, arrange PRS licences, TEN licence, public liability insurance, health and safety risk assessment, child safeguarding arrangements, accessibility provision.

Each venue specifies any special legal requirements in its booking form. The main areas to be sure about are:

- Public Liability Insurance: the Hon Treasurer renews our annual policy and should be reminded to bring a copy for public display in each venue; for the cover to be valid on the night of each concert, the TEN licence must be displayed;
- TEN (Temporary Event Notice) Licence: the Hon Treasurer should be reminded well in advance to apply for a specific Licence for each concert from Sheffield City Council and to bring a copy for public display in each venue; this allows us to serve alcohol;
- Performing Rights Fees: this is managed either through Making Music (speak to the treasurer) or through each Church who is responsible for billing the choir for any fees due after each concert.
- Child Protection: where the Choir invites children to join in any of our concerts, it is important to ensure that the adults responsible for them are formally identified and that they have all the necessary Child Protection procedures and clearances in place;
- Disabled provision: each Church is responsible for ensuring reasonable disabled access; equally, it is important to have spaces available for wheelchair users so that they can sit comfortably with their family/friends; you should consider other accessibility requirements also such as the availability of a loop.
- Health & Safety: each Church has its own regulations which choir members must strictly observe and should provide a Health & Safety representative at the event; usually, following consultation with the verger/caretaker, the Concert Manager each concert welcomes the audience five minutes before it starts, points out the emergency exits and mentions the interval refreshment arrangements.

*Risks: it's important to note that our Public Liability Insurance will only cover accidents if the specific TEN Licence for the event has been taken out and publicly displayed at the venue. Our Christmas concert often coincides with bad weather: if the access steps and paths to St Mark's are icy, they need to be gritted – this requires liaison with the Church Office and/or bringing our own grit and shovels.

Publicity coordination x 2

Coordinating all social media, website, advertising (on- and off-line), printed advertising, listings and networking. Inviting dignitaries as appropriate.

Publicity

- Coordinating social media events, posts and advertising
- Arrange for the design (via Steph Spencer) and print (if necessary, via Peter King) of a concert poster. Distribute as appropriate.
- Ensure the concert is included in online and printed listings such as in the Sheffield Telegraph and on the Classical Sheffield website.

- Email out an invitation to the choir mailing list.
- Arrange for press releases as appropriate.

Special guests

Occasionally special guests are invited to our concerts, for example composers or dignitaries such as the Lord Mayor of Sheffield. For invitations to the Lord Mayor, early application to his/her office needs to be made with special forms filled in; also special arrangements need to be in place on the night, with reserved parking, meeting-and-greeting at the door, reserved seats and free programmes, and seeing them off afterwards.

Ticket count

Do a ticket count at each of the three rehearsals before each concert to encourage more sales by choir members. The Concert Manager gives the provisional count from the rehearsal in the week before the concert to the Refreshments Coordinator so that they can order refreshments accordingly.

Ticketing

Arranging the provision of tickets for sale. NB for now this is in advance via a choir member or on the door only, not online.

TBC: Chris Varnom?

Arrange for tickets to be printed and distribute them in the weeks before the concert to choir members. Members are then responsible for selling as many as possible, recording who they have sold them to and at what price, and paying all monies received to you or the Treasurer. Do a final reconciliation after the concert to determine actual audience numbers.

Reserving seats

Acquire printed 'Reserved' signs from the Secretary as required. In both churches the MD may ask for the front pews to be kept empty to avoid being distracted by audience members alongside the conductor's rostrum. Seats also need to be reserved for special guests, including members of soloists' families. Where ticket holders have pre-booked space for a wheelchair, the seats alongside also need to be reserved.

Front of house coordination

Recruiting volunteers for the front desk (and CD sales), meet and greet, ticket checking and programme selling. Managing the cash float and contactless machine.

Recruit choir members and volunteers for the following jobs:

- Meet & Greet: two people to welcome people inside the door and separate them into two lines: ticket holders to go straight past the ticket desk to ticket-checking, others to the desk. They also greet any people in wheelchairs and take them and their party to the appropriate space at the front or back of the church.
- Ticket desk: two people to sell tickets and hand out reserved tickets. Treasurer will provide float;
- Ticket checking: two people beyond the desk to check and tear off tickets;
- Programme Sales: two people to sell programmes; Hon Treasurer will provide float;

- CD sales: two people to sell CDs during the interval and after the concert – they can have done other duties before the concert starts. Note: currently, CD sales have been put on hold.

Staging and AV

Arranging all staging and audio visual equipment as required, in liaison with the Music Director and other members of the concerts team. Booking the piano tuner and liaising as required.

Recruit a small team of choir members to do any moving of church furniture and installation of temporary staging before the afternoon rehearsal at each venue; at both churches, depending on demand, a team will need to put out any extra temporary chairs at the back. Provision needs to be made for any wheelchair users by removing single pews (at St Mark's) or providing space alongside temporary chairs (at St John's).

At both venues it is important to check that the PA system, including hearing loop, is in place and functioning; also check that spare batteries are available for the microphone.

Refreshment coordination

Coordinating interval refreshments (wine, soft drinks, mince pies etc) including serving refreshments to the audience.

TBC Helen Beach

A minimum of two people is required to manage the interval refreshments, with one person designated as in overall charge.

The arrangements for concerts at St Mark's and St John's and are the same, except that there is a dishwashing machine at St Mark's; also at St Mark's we offer mince pies and shortbread, but shortbread only at St John's in the summer.

- Wines & soft drinks: for each concert the rule of thumb is to have 18 screw-top bottles of red and white wine ready, plus 12 single cartons each of apple and orange juice. Where wine is left over from the previous concert it should always be identified in advance and used first. Any soft drinks left-over won't keep well and should be sold at cost to choir members or used at the summer barbeque. Tesco, Aldi and Lidl all offer good deals on wines and juices.
- Mince pies & shortbread: Summer concert: 24 packs of shortbread (Tesco); Christmas concert: 24 boxes of 12 mince pies (Lidl) and 12 packs of shortbread (Tesco);
- Glasses and trays: various choir members now hold 13 crates of 24 glasses owned by the choir and need to be reminded to check that they are clean and bring them to the concert venue. Helen Beach holds all the choir-owned trays.
- Washing and clearing up: at St Mark's there is an excellent dishwashing machine that can wash all used glasses very quickly; the person in charge needs to know how it operates. As there is no machine at St John's, choir members holding glasses take their dirty glasses home and wash them. All rubbish needs to be bagged and taken away or put in bins; empty bottles to be put in appropriate bins or taken away.
- At each venue a small team of choir members needs to reinstate any church furniture and work with the official on duty to ensure that the church is left clean and tidy.

Concert dress

Ensuring all choir members are aware of the concert dress requirements and have the appropriate items (tops, socks, pocket squares).

Women wear blue sequin tops and black trousers with black shoes.

The men wear black open-neck shirts, with black trousers and black shoes at both concerts with a blue pocket square and blue socks.

At other events, such as after-dinner sings and weddings, dress decisions are made on an ad hoc basis.

Programme production

Arranging the design and print of the concert programme.

TBC

Concert manager

Coordination of all concert volunteers. Communicating with the concert team and holding planning meetings when required. Managing the concert budget. Acting as venue manager on concert day.

Coordinating the Concert Team

Coordinate the overall management of each concert, liaise closely with the MD, Choir Secretary, Treasurer, and members of the concert team. Have overall responsibility for the concert, working closely with the formal office holders and concert team, coordinating regular meetings as required and ensuring all areas of responsibility are covered.

Venue manager

Acting as venue manager on the day of the concert, being the first point of call and the key decision maker, in liaison with the team.

Budget

A budget for each concert needs to be agreed in advance with the MD and the Hon Treasurer. The main outgoings are: venue deposits and hire, guest musicians' fees/gifts/flowers, hire of music, use of organ, piano tuning/hire, Temporary Events Notice (TEN) Licence for alcohol sales, printing (posters, programmes, tickets), performing rights fees and interval refreshments. The main sources of income are ticket and programme sales. As a minimum each concert should cover all its costs. Special concerts such as those marking anniversaries can be subsidized from reserves and/or outside sponsorship.

*Risks. One of the main risks, especially at Christmas, is extreme weather resulting in poor turnout or cancellation. In the case of cancellation the hire deposit would probably be lost but it should not be necessary to pay the balance of the full amount – this should be negotiated with the Church Office as required.

Announcements

You should make announcements yourself or arrange for another person to make the announcements. You should include:

- welcoming the audience five minutes before it starts, pointing out the emergency exits and mentioning the interval refreshment arrangements.

Appendices

Appendix 1: St John's contacts and procedures

Main contacts: Claire Webber, Parish Administrator, 230 1199, Mon-Wed 9.30am – 2.00pm.

administrator@stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

Emergencies only: Church Wardens – Brian Parfett 07914 220938

Carl Webber 07833 494108

Director of Music: Edward Barbieri – music@stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

360 5845; 07973 263837.

Verger: Steve Dugdale - verger@stjohnsranmoor.org.uk

- - Access and security: if there is to be a Thursday evening rehearsal in the church, the key must be collected from the Parish Office and signed for during its limited Mon-Wed opening hours. Special care needs to be taken to ensure the security of the church during rehearsals and during the break between the Saturday afternoon rehearsal and the concert.
- - Health, Safety & disabled access: all the other keys needed hang on a hook on the wall beside the font at the west end of the church. Before the concert starts, the gate to the left of the main entrance must be unlocked to provide access for wheelchair users to the ramp leading to the North doors, which is their main access route; these doors are also a fire exit and must be unlocked before the concert. Similarly access to the fire exit from the choir vestry, which is opened by a push-bar, needs to be checked; the steel gate beyond this exit also needs to be unlocked before the concert. After the concert all these gates and doors need to be relocked. The Verger, Steve Dugdale, is usually the appointed Fire Officer for the concert. It's important to liaise with him about the Health & Safety announcements immediately before the concert – currently this is the concert manager. As there is no disabled toilet in the Church, wheelchair users must use the one in the Parish Centre.
- - Church furniture: before the Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon rehearsals, a small team of choir members is needed to move the altar, any other furniture and the grand piano as required. These must be replaced immediately afterwards. The MD's rostrum, held by the choir, must also be brought to the church, together with their music stand. Where guest musicians are engaged, it's important to check if they need music stands too.
- - PA system: it's important to check with the Verger that the PA system and hearing loop are switched on, that the free-standing microphone stand is in place and that the batteries in the microphone are fully charged.
- - Lighting: most of the lights are controlled from a switchboard at the West end of the church, but there are also several flood lights radio-controlled from the sound system desk towards the back of the church. Steve Dugdale is very experienced in all aspects of lighting controls and should be consulted in good time before the concert starts.
- - Parking: spaces should be reserved immediately outside the church doors for the MD, refreshments team, concert manager, any pre-booked disabled ticket holders and any special guest performers or dignitaries. Steve Dugdale will put the cones out if asked in advance; the cones are stored behind the locked gate to the left of the main entrance.

Appendix 2: St Mark's contacts and procedures

- Main contacts: Sarah Rousseau, Church Administrator, 266 3613, Mon-Fri 9.00am-1.00pm.
office@stmarkssheffield.co.uk

Caretakers: Tim Moore or Sarah Frost caretaker@stmarkssheffield.co.uk

Director of Music: David Willington. music@stmarkssheffield.co.uk

Other useful contacts: David Ryder and Anna Ryder.

- Access and security: if there is to be a Thursday evening rehearsal in the church, the key must be collected from the Church Office and signed for during its limited Mon-Fri opening hours; it can be held until after the concert and handed back to the caretaker on duty or to the office on the following Monday. Special care needs to be taken to ensure the security of the church during rehearsals and during the break between the Saturday afternoon rehearsal and the concert. If staging is used, a special key is needed to open the store under the organ; David Ryder is the staging expert and must be consulted.
- - Health, Safety & disabled access: The Caretaker on duty is usually the appointed Fire Officer for the concert. It's important to liaise with him/her about who will do the Health & Safety announcements immediately before the concert – currently this is the concert manager. Spaces for wheelchairs can be made available at the the front of the Church by temporarily removing the single pews at the outer ends on both sides. Spaces can also be left when extra folding chairs are set out at the back of the church. There is a disabled toilet off the entrance foyer.
- - Church furniture: before the Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon rehearsals, a small team of choir members is needed to move any furniture and the piano as required. Extra folding chairs are kept on trolleys in the vestibule beyond the organ; these are set out at the back of the church and as single extra seats at the outer end of all the pews. All the furniture must be replaced immediately afterwards. The MD's rostrum, must also be brought to the church, together with their music stand. Where guest musicians are engaged, it's important to check if they need music stands too.
- - PA system: it's important to check with the Verger that the PA system and hearing loop are switched on, that the free-standing microphone stand is in place and that the batteries in the microphone are fully charged.
- - Parking: a limited number of spaces can be reserved with cones in the Church's own car park. In the evenings spaces on the road are a premium. In recent years we have had permission from King Edward's School to use their car park on the evening of the Christmas concert; the contact is Scott Holmes, Facilities Manager, who needs to be consulted by late October.
sholmes@kes.sheffield.sch.uk tel: 01142 296580.
There has been talk of installing a traffic barrier at the school but at the time of writing, it doesn't appear to have been installed – this needs to be checked with Scott Holmes.