

# ***Reading Male Voice Choir***

**Minutes of a committee meeting held at Hawkedon School on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022.**

**Present:**

Members: Ryland Lee (RL), Chairman; John Adams (JA) Deputy Chairman; Martin Butler (MB) Secretary; John Kay (JK), Treasurer; Section Leaders (SLs): Arnie Howell (AH), Jeremy Jones (JJ) Andrew Evans (AE), Mike Jearey (MJ)

Officers: Clive Waterman (CW), Musical Director; Chris Peck (CP) Health & Safety Officer; Steve Richardson (SR) Publicity; Nigel Shaw (NS),

**Minutes:** Andy Sherwood.

**Apologies:** Paul Lyden, David Ewens.

<p><b>40/22 Minutes:</b> The minutes of the meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> October were agreed to be an accurate record of the event.</p>	
<p><b>41/22 Matters arising from the minutes:</b> Section leaders to ensure that relevant information in regard to mobility issues is gathered.</p>	<b>SL's</b>
<p>Research cost effectiveness of purchasing a number of perching chairs for use by those that need them.</p>	<b>NS</b>
<p>Contact to be made with Builth Wells Choir Secretary in regard to possible visit to Wales.</p>	<b>MB</b>
<p>Equipment checked and in order.</p>	
<p>PAT testing done.</p>	
<p>Recruitment and retention process to be further tested and modified as needed.</p>	<b>RL</b>
<p><b>42/22 Chairman's report:</b></p>	
<p><b>Recruitment.</b> Just a reminder that we all adhere to the agreed recruitment process and paperwork. This will ensure that potential new members are encouraged and supported during their initial rehearsals, publicly acknowledged when they become members and are added to the choir mailing list.</p>	
<p>In terms of new recruits, we welcomed Simon Walker to the baritone section. Although there was a brief discussion, at the September meeting, regarding potential issues in terms of the capacity of our staging we also acknowledged the mobility issues faced by a number of choristers. The likelihood is that, in the near future, some of these choristers will be unable to participate in concerts so recruitment of new members will be an on-going need.</p>	

Further discussion by the committee will look at recruitment strategies.

### **Resignations**

We said goodbye to bass Derek Fowler due to family commitments

### **Attendance registers**

Just a reminder that one of the agreed roles of Section leaders is to maintain a rehearsal register. This will enable us to identify any issues re: continued absences which can then be followed up to maintain contact with the chorister and identify any issues. The importance of rehearsal registers was highlighted by Chris Peck in relation to fire evacuation procedures - we must be able to provide an accurate headcount in the event of an evacuation from the hall during rehearsals.

### **First Aid**

Our first aiders have been increasingly called into action this year at both rehearsals and concerts. It is therefore important we have a pool of currently trained people to take on these roles. John Adams has taken on the task of ensuring we have the requisite number of first aiders and identifying training opportunities. The minimum training requirement is the one day 'Emergency First aid' course and we will be purchasing training placements at the Crescent Resource Centre, Lower Earley at a cost of £45 per person - considerably cheaper than the equivalent Red Cross training. To date, the following choristers have come forward for training:

- Allan Crisp (trained)
- Allan Broodbank
- Oz Ravelo
- Chris Peck
- John Painter
- Andrew Evans
- Kevin Boyle
- Peter Woodward
- (possibly) Nigel Shaw

Two training places have been booked for 7th December and two for 26th January. Further places will be booked as opportunities become available

Thanks to John Adams for his work on this.

### **43/22 Section leader's reports:**

#### **First Tenors**

The T1s have continued to be well represented at both formal concerts so far this year with 15-17 members at each. We also had 8 present at the Oddfellows informal concert on 8 November.

Covid has a continued presence with 3 of the T1s succumbing this term so far, although none presenting with any serious symptoms; hopefully this will continue to be the case as it would appear that covid is still around and vaccines & boosters do not provide 100% protection.

Membership is stable at 17. --- Mike Jearey

## Second Tenors

No report.

## Baritone

No report.

## Bass

No report.

### 44/22 Treasurers report:

Loss for the year now anticipated to be £2,600 which is more than the original estimate of £1,400 communicated at the AGM.

### CURRENT BALANCES

Here is where we stand financially as of 31st October 2022, and my projections for the year to 31 May 2023. Balance at the end of:	May 22	31 Aug 22	May 23
	Actual	Actual	Projected
Account:	£	£	£
Assets	18	18	18
Debtors	-	-	-
Metro Bank Current Account	27,070	18,897	11,588
Metro Bank Reserve	229	13,097	13,097
Cash and cheques	0	639	-
Creditors	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27,317</b>	<b>32,651</b>	<b>24,685</b>
<b>RESERVES</b> (net current assets)	<b>27,299</b>	<b>32,633</b>	<b>24,667</b>

The balance as at the end of May 2022 is as in the Annual Report and Accounts. Reserves are as defined by the Charities Commission. They are represented in our accounts by the subtotal Net Current Assets. Since we write down our fixed assets to nominal values, in most years our total balances only slightly exceed our reserves.

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2022/23

The current forecast for the financial year is that Expenditure will exceed Income by £2,614. This compares with budgeted deficit, approved by the AGM, of £1,395. Net Core Expenditure would be £3,763 and net non-core income would be £1,149. Our Reserves would reduce to £24,667 which is about £11,804 above our long-term target of £12,863 (£10,000 at 2017 prices).

### 'Reserves' Working Group

This group has met once on 20th October to discuss what actions are necessary to regularise our Reserves position. You will recall that our current long-term target is that our Reserves should be £12,863 and I am forecasting £11,804 above this figure by the end of May 2023.

The 'group' discussed what an appropriate level should be and considered a possible 'worst case scenario' being that our professional musicians became unavailable to the choir and/or another event (e.g., a pandemic) resulted in the choir being unable to operate for a year or so. To find a replacement MD and/or AMD at market rates would be expensive, and our current reserves target is unlikely to be sufficient to sustain operations for a long period (say 12 months).

Consequently, the recommendation is to increase our long-term reserves target to £17,500 which the 'group' consider to be a more appropriate amount.

**Young Singers:** We have received £3.3k sponsorship for this initiative to date, with another £1.3k expected. The group proposed to 'ring-fence' £2,500 from our reserves to be earmarked for YS in the event that sponsorship in future years is not forthcoming.

Other actions areas to consider are staging and First Aid Training (John Adams); lighting and set design (John Kay); Web site management (Ryland Lee) and Signage and set up (Martin Butler). Further updates and recommendations will be forthcoming in due course.

**Decisions required:** The Committee are requested to approve the proposals from the group that our long-term Reserves target be increased to £17,500 and to allocate a further £2,500 from our reserves to be 'ring-fenced' to support future Gwyn Arch Young Singers Competitions.

**-AGREED**

#### **Additional Bank Account**

Each year, the choir arranges tours and social events that are intended to be self-funding. These activities can result in significant funds being collected and paid, particularly for overseas tours. The 'income' from these funds currently is held in our current account and, consequently, are included in the choir's annual gross income even though there is no 'financial' benefit arising from these self-funded activities.

Therefore, I am asking the Committee to approve the opening of an additional bank account with the Metro Bank which will be used to receive and pay out monies related to social events and tours. It is intended that this account will 'zero out' on the completion of each such event.

**Decision required:** The committee are requested to approve the opening of an additional account with the Metro Bank with the same signing authorities and operating powers as associated with our existing current (Community) account.

**-AGREED**

Bank visit required for account to be opened.

**JK**

Steps to be made to ensure that money from members is paid into the correct account.

**JK/MB**

Since my last report (September 2022):

- Our concert at All Saint's Church in aid of church funds resulted in a net income to the choir of £244

- Our concert at Greyfriars church on 12th November (for choir funds) resulted in a net income of £341 including donations of £40 and £46 (refreshments) and £10 CD sales.  
- 3 members have not yet paid their subs (1 Top Tenor(?) and two Basses).

Old spare unused amplifier to be donated to Berkshire Maestro's.

SR

Wireless Microphone system to be replaced to the value of up to £500

SR/JK

**45/22 Musical directors report:**

Feedback in regard to concerts to continue in written form in the RMVC update from Martin, freeing up rehearsal time and is available sooner.

No written report due to extra Christmas work and the choir's familiarity with the pre-Christmas period so was thought to be unnecessary.

Poor turnout to past two concerts. Not enough work being done by Charities in regard to selling tickets. We are not able to identify a single reason, but we can look at things we can change in order to promote ourselves within the local Community. There seemed to be no objectivity or purpose with the All Saints Church concert from the Church itself.

Some Charities regard us as being too expensive when our charges are coupled with the cost of a venue.

The Ukraine concerts were free to attend but made more money by donations than ticket sales would normally achieve.

When possible, winter concerts will start at 7pm from now on (Christmas 5pm).

We do a lot more concerts than other choirs, we need to think carefully about not putting any two too close together in time and distance.

Repertoire could do with changing/expanding.

Local events such as Broad St mall and Reading Station give a free venue and good exposure.

Further thought/discussion needed about how to improve things.

All

## **46/22 Secretary's report:**

### **Current Membership**

Top Tenors	19
Second Tenors	16
Baritones	15
Basses	17
Total	67 plus Clive & Hayley

### **Hawkedon School**

New entrance and exit procedure.

3 new card available to hand out – to decide who has these

We now have a total of 8 cards -These are issued to :-

- 1, Martin Butler
- 2, Ryland Lee
- 3, Geoff Crabb
- 4, John Adams
- 5, Jim Grufferty
- 6, Steve Richardson
- 7, Christopher Peck
- 8, Clive Waterman.

All have been emailed the procedures of how to use to access both gates and School.

### **Season 2024**

Possibility to visit Holland in April/May 2024 to visit Arnhem - Arnhem Clarinet Choir and Fortisimmo.

From last meeting no follow up to Holland

Awaiting reply from John Kay on discussion with contact in Welsh choir (see note below)

### **Term Dates for 2022 - 2023 season**

Start of Autumn Term Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

End of Autumn Term Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Start of Spring Term Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2023

End of Spring Term Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

Start of Summer Term Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2023

End of Summer Term Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023 (AGM)

**Events this season 2022 – 2023**

**Saturday 22nd October 2022 @ 7.30pm**

All Saints Church, Downshire Square, Reading (For Church Funds)

Guest : RMVC singers

Concert had approx 70 people and only broke even for the church. They questioned amount charged and were explained the way to make profit is to sell more tickets and not to rely so heavily on RMVC selling tickets. The reason for concert was the last concert prior to covid they a discounted rate because of low audience total and had not anticipated back to normal, despite being fully explained. Also complained costs of flyers and tickets are high for what they received. Despite all this are happy for concert in April 2023.

**Saturday 12th November 2022 @7.30pm**

Greyfriars Church, Reading (for RMVC) - Guests Belle Canto Trio

Approx 64 people attended, this was our own concert raising our own funds, had a few people came from Oddfellows that had been at during that week. Belle Canto Trio also had friends attend. Profit was £300.

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 @3pm**

Main concourse, Reading Station for Royal Berks Charity and promotion of 17<sup>th</sup> December concert.

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022 @ 11 am**

Reading University - Santa Run. Informal Event.

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2022 @ 5pm**

Three choirs Christmas Concert RMVC, A440 and Occasions singers.

Christmas at Reading Minster.

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2023 @7:30pm**

For Parkinson's Reading David Adby last weekend as chairman of Parkinsons.

Christ Church Woodley with Guest - Saxello (Saxophone & Cello – from Hayley) Parkinsons Reading Branch - David Adby

**Saturday 25th March 2023 @7:30pm**

St Mary's Church, Purley-On-Thames for Church funds.

Guest: TBC. (Possible Cello/Piano or Quintet)

**Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023 @7:30pm**

All Saints Church, Downshire Way, Reading for Church Funds

Guest: Aneesa Chaudry

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2023 7:30pm**

Christchurch, Christchurch Road for Church funds  
Guest: TBC

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2023 @7:30pm**

Venue to be confirmed, Gala concert for young singers.

**Events next season 2023-2024**

October - St Edmond Campion, Maidenhead TBC

To be discussed at the meeting

- Possible change of times for winter concerts **See MD's report**
- How to increase ticket sales/reduce costs - V's cost of living crisis. **See MD's report**
- How to attract different charities wanting support. **See MD's report**
- Let's Sing Reading Competition @ Hexagon - March 2023 (date TBC) **Go ahead in principle, need date to be confirmed but will be in March. Two songs needed. Needs to be put to members.**
- Trip for March/April 2024 UK or Abroad
- How to get men to read updates and reply to requests without asking for information again at rehearsal? Especially when all information has already been sent out.....

**47/22 Young Singers competition:**

Only one application so far but many more expected after Christmas.  
Auditions 9am - 5pm 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023, Abbey School lecture theatre, practice rooms/outside area will be available - £240 charge. There will be other things going on within the school at the same time.

Negotiations for final in progress, Main hall and dining room 4pm to 10-10-30pm. £450 charge.

**MB**

**48/22 Health and Safety report:**

Annual maintenance:

- Testing of all choir portable electrical appliances was completed on 13/14 Oct 2022. No failures reported.
- Inspection of concert staging was completed on 12 Nov 2022. All items of equipment were visually checked. A few minor adjustments were made, all was in good working order. There was evidence of superficial rust on some of the riser steps and back rails. All items were deemed to be safe to use.
- The Annual Fire Safety Briefing for rehearsals at Hawkedon School was given to members at the rehearsal on 28 Oct 2022. The same briefing was given to the Friends Meeting on 4 Nov 2022.

Covid Risk Management



- Following the stopping of free Lateral Flow Test kits, in April, we have asked members not to come to rehearsals if they have cold, flu or Covid symptoms. Members appear to be following this guidance

Health & Safety Documentation:

- The updated 2022 documents are waiting to be uploaded to the new website.

First Aiders

- Christopher Peck and Alan Broodbank are due to attend a one day First Aid at Work training session on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022. Further members are attending the same training in the new year.

Choir Accidents and First Aid Incidents:

- No accidents or incidents have been reported since September.

Risk Management

- We are continuing to assess the accessibility needs of choir members arising from impaired mobility, balance or eyesight, particularly when moving about in the rehearsal hall, at unfamiliar concert venues, or when standing for long periods. Section Leaders are helping to identify escorts/buddies as necessary.

Christopher Peck (Health & Safety Officer), 19 Nov 2022.

The possibility of procuring a defibrillator was discussed, but for now the location of the nearest one will become part of venue checks.

First aid kit should always be at concert venues but has been missing on at least one occasion. Must be returned to container after use.

**49/22 Social media and website.**

Training to be carried out soon for website maintenance.  
 Noteworthy training to be made available.  
 Content contributions and management to be pursued.  
 Re-send all current documents for upload.

AE  
 AE  
 AE/All  
 All

**50/22 Recruitment and retention.**

Choir videos to be made. JK to liase with Grandson.

JK

**51/22 Choir staging.**

4/3 tier second hand equipment available from Barnstaple Male Voice Choir for £4,950 including trailer. Can Accommodate 48 on staging plus 12 on floor in front, which is about right for us. 12 years old but only used four times a year and has been unused for the last four.

<p>Contact to be made with BMVC for checking equipment and negotiation. Team to be assembled for visit - Possibly Martin Deaves, Nigel Shaw, Chris Peck, Steve Richardson.</p>	<p><b>JA</b></p>
<p><b>52/22 Any other business:</b>          Everything is in order for Christmas Dinner.          Lighting to be looked at.</p>	<p><b>NS</b></p>

**Dates of Next Meetings:**      **23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023,**  
    **8th June 2023.**