

Reading Male Voice Choir

Minutes of a committee meeting held at Hawkedon School on 23RD February 2023

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) Mike Jearey (MJ), Paul Lyden (PL)

Officers: Clive Waterman (CW), Musical Director; Chris Peck (CP) Health & Safety Officer; Andrew Evans (AE), Steve Richardson (SR)

Minutes: Steve Andrewes

Guest Andy Sherwood

01/23 No Apologies were received

RL welcomed Steve Andrewes and thanked him for taking on the role of Minutes secretary. Also thanks to Andy Sherwood for all his work as the retiring minutes secretary.

02/23 Minutes: The minutes of the meeting on the 24th November were agreed to be an accurate record of the event.

03/23 Matters arising from the minutes: Contact has been made with Builth Wells Choir regarding a joint Choir performance and possible weekend away. AE and JK are visiting Builth Wells to hear their choir sing and we will review the way forward following this visit.

We have 2 new members who have recently joined, so our recruitment programme is working well.

JK is setting up a new Bank Account to receive funds from alternative sources e.g. for Young Singers competition etc.

ACTION – JK TO ARRANGE VISIT TO BANK

Action JK

Our spare amplifier and microphone have been donated. Thanks go to SR, AE and JA for progressing this.

There was no identified benefit in purchasing additional staging offered to us so this matter will not be progressed.

Alfie is still working on the recordings he made at our rehearsals and at the recent concert. He is aware that priority should be given to the recording of Calon Lan.

A clip-on light has been purchased to assist Hayley when playing at concerts.

All reports have been taken as read unless further comments are received.

04/23 Choir Documents:

The choir has a number of documents; some are policy documents, some good practice and others advice. These documents are stored on the RMVC website in the member's area.

It is good practice for these documents to be reviewed by the Committee

annually. Committee members (Trustees) were asked to look through each of these documents before this committee meeting and to bring any amendments they would like discussed. Once each document is confirmed they will each be marked as such. Thanks to SR for this work. All members have been informed of this.

ACTION: SR to ensure that the documentation underlines that the First Aid kit should be available in rehearsals. Also, when loading the container, items should be replaced from where they were removed and new drivers need to be trained in this respect.

Action SR

05/23 RMVC Chairman's Report

Recruitment

We currently have two potential new members - Howard Ballard (Bass) and Robin Christian (Baritone).

We also welcomed back Keith Knee-Robinson (T1).

Hopefully, the informal singing event at Broad Street Mall on Saturday 11th February will result in additional interest in joining the choir.

I would remind Section Leaders of the importance to monitor/register chorister attendance at both rehearsals and concerts and, if a pattern of non-attendance is evident, to contact the chorister to ascertain if there is an issue.

ACTION: JJ and PL to establish whether new two new choristers are to become permanent and progress matters accordingly.

Action JJ, PL

Resignations. We said goodbye to Paul Smallman (T2) and Artur Stanciewicz (Basses)

Concerts: The two (RMVC) concerts in November (All Saints) and December (Greyfriars) were extremely disappointing in terms of audience numbers, and this certainly had an impact on the whole choir in terms of both performance and choristers 'enjoyment'. The contrast was clearly demonstrated in our January concert (Christchurch, Woodley) in aid of Parkinsons UK, when we had an audience of 135 - there was a significant improvement in terms of performance and very positive feedback from both members of the audience and choristers. We need to explore strategies to ensure that future concerts (and informal events) have similar outcomes. Further discussion on this will take place under Secretary Report - agenda item :9

Repertoire: Clive has introduced a number of new/resurrected songs to our 202-23 repertoire and this should 'refresh' our future concert programmes for both audience and choristers. This will require concerted learning by all choristers to ensure that the new items can be included in our concert programmes at the earliest opportunity.

ACTION: Section Leaders please help Clive to monitor the learning, identify difficulties, use 'confident' singers within the section to support others and encourage the use of Noteworthy (a valuable resource)

ACTION Section Leaders

Young Singers: We have had a good response to date (22) across the three age categories. Planning is now well underway for the auditions on 11th March - hopefully you will be able to provide help and support on the day. Further details will be discussed under the YS agenda item 10

Website: The web team has now been working on updating and populating the website - further information will be covered in agenda item 12. Updated copies of the choir's constitution and associated papers have also been uploaded. **Steve Richardson will provide further information**

06/23 Section leader's reports:

Tenor 1 Report

This past quarter, the T1s membership is now up to 19 active members with the welcome return of Keith Knee- Robinson to the Choir in the New Year.

We typically have 16 men present at rehearsals and concerts, and the newer members are confident and enjoying performing in the concerts.

Several of our members have had more lengthy spells of ill health (that have kept them away from Choir activities for more than 2 weeks) which kept our numbers down over the past couple of weeks, but the reports indicate that they are on the mend and should be back to full participation soon.

The recent ill-health does not seem to be Covid related which I suppose is progress.

Tenor 2 Report.

Paul Smallman: this member's leaving came as something of a surprise to most. He told me he was going but, being new to the job, I assumed he would inform other members of the committee himself, so at least there would be no puzzlement or worry about the event. However I was mistaken in my assumption and I apologise for this. I have not heard from Paul since he left and I assume we will hear nothing more from him.

Robin Christian: as I write this report our newest candidate, Robin, has agreed to apply for full membership which is really good news. He is getting on well with other members of the section and I hold out great hopes for him. The only thing that needs to be done is a voice test, which might result in him being classified as Baritone rather than Second Tenor. Notwithstanding, I believe he will contribute most positively to the RMVC.

The voice test for Robin Christian resulted in his being transferred to the Baritones. He continues to not receive updates.

John Oversby: John continues to battle against this dreadful curse of cancer. He continues to fight on and appears to have no intention of giving up either the fight against it or of the desire to join us as much as possible in our musical exploits.

Baritone Report

The Baritones in general have been well attended and have supported the choir in recent concerts with the customary enthusiasm. Geoff Gale has stood in for Nigel Shaw and organised stage positions, Allan Crisp has sorted the correct beat for Wana Baraka with everyone singing in their correct place and Robin accompanied Allan for Jamaica Farewell. Attendance at both concerts and rehearsals has been good and I'm pleased that Simon Walker is back after his illness, he also attended Broad Street, with Allan's coaching we may see him at his first concert by the end of the year.

We also have a new member Robin Christian, who has sung before but not in a choir and he plays an instrument, which is another string to our bow.

The Baritones have observed the rule of not attending rehearsals if they have a slight cough or cold avoiding the spread of covid

ACTION. PL TO ENSURE THAT RC RECEIVES REGULAR CHOIR UPDATES**Action PL****Bass Section Leader's Report**

Andy Sherwood and Artur Stankiewicz have left the choir. We thank them both for their contributions to the section and to the choir in general, with Andy having acted as minute secretary to the committee, and Artur initiating visits to and from the Harfa choir in Poland.

07/23 Treasurers report:

CURRENT BALANCES. Here is where we stand financially as of 31st January 2023 and my projections for the year to 31st May 2023

Balance at the end of	MAY 22	31 JAN 23	MAY 23
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	PROJECTED
<u>ACCOUNT</u>	£	£	£
ASSETS	18	18	18
DEBTORS	-	-	-
METRO BANK CURRENT ACCOUNT	27,070	11,394	8,148
METRO BANK RESERVE	229	17,515	17,515
CASH AND CHEQUES	0	333	-
CREDITORS	-	-	-
TOTAL	27,317	29,260	25,681
RESERVES	27,299	29,242	25,633

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 £1,636. This compares with budgeted deficit, approved by the AGM, of £1,395. Net Core Expenditure would be £3,986 and net non-core income would be £2,349. Our Reserves would reduce to £25,633 which is about £8,133 above our long-term target of £17,500 and which includes £2,500 'ring fenced' to support future Gwyn Arch Young Singers competitions

Concert Fee Structure - discussion

Apart from our last concert in Woodley, audience numbers at recent concerts have been disappointing. Small audiences result in little (or no) financial benefit to the charity involved and less 'satisfaction' to choir members who commit their time and effort to stage a professional and enjoyable concert for audience and choristers. In addition, a significant proportion of the audiences comprise guests and partners of choir members themselves.

Examples for discussion:

- 1) Should we require charities/event organisers to 'commit' to promoting the concert amongst their congregations, supporters and local communities?
- 2) Should we restructure our fees (e.g., a 50/50 split on ticket sales up to a certain level)?
- 3) Any other ideas?

Since my last report (November 2022):

- We have received £350 from the Minster Christmas Concert as RMVC's share of ticket sales.
- Our concert at Christ Church Woodley (in support of Parkinson's UK) is expected to result in a net income of c. £307.

Also, we have received a VAT refund of £38 from Greyfriars.

- A further £1,200 sponsorship for Young Singers has been received from UnaVida Wealth Management, Wills Tax Trusts Ltd., and Stephen Townsend

Wealth Management

- All subs and tuition fees have been paid for this season.

John Kay 19 February 2023

08/23 Musical Directors Report

CW had suggested that, as he reports at weekly rehearsals all that is taking place, he should not duplicate information by providing another report. RL felt that a report was required to provide a formal record of what was being progressed etc.

CW informed the meeting of the Let's sing competition taking place in the Hexagon on 24th March.

The Walkers memorial service is due to take place shortly and CW would like to produce a list of appropriate of songs which fit the mood for such occasions. This suggestion met with approval.

CW will not be available for Rehearsal on 12 May as he has an A440 competition on the same day.

The Gala Concert on 10th June, will include the 3 winners of the Young Singers Competition and CW suggested that we include singers of the Abbey Junior and Senior schools in the 1st/2nd half respectively

09/23 Secretary's report:

Jane Arch has expressed her desire for the Young Singers competition to have every success.

Current Membership

Top Tenors 19

Second Tenors 16

Baritones 15

Basses 15

Total 65 plus Clive & Hayley

Remaining 2023 season

End of Spring Term Friday 31st March 2023

Start of Summer Term Friday 14th April 2023

End of Summer Term Friday 7th July 2023 (AGM)

Saturday 25th March 2023 @ 7.00pm (rebooked from last season)

St Mary's Church Purley on Thames (for church funds) - Guest Brass Quintet)

April 22nd 2023 4.00pm – 5.00pm Reading Minster for Walkers memorial service followed by

April 22nd 2023 7.00pm or 7.30pm Reading Minster, Chain St Reading (For Church Funds) – Guest Aneesa Chaudry - Raising funds for Musical Outreach Project at the Minster

Saturday 20th May 2023 7.00pm (rebooked from last season)

Christchurch, Christchurch Rd Reading (for church funds) Guest Charis Ann Luke

Saturday 10th- June 2023 @7.00pm(Gala Concert for young singers)

-Abbey School, Kendrick Road, Reading with guests winners of competition and a school choir.

Season 2024

To date I have NO confirmed bookings for 23-24 season, apart from 16th December 3 choir Candlelit concert at Reading Minster

Leads for Trinity church, PACT charity are interested in booking, St edmund Campion church but date is not suitable as Clive not available. St James church could be interested.

All Saints Church could be interested for next season though would need to sell more tickets, or a charity book as a venue.

Greyfriars are always happy for us to perform there again.

Be useful for a discussion at the meeting on how we move forwards with bookings, Problems around costings, audience numbers. Kevin Boyle interested in help liaising with concert venues. Leads required to assist in bookings

Possibility to visit Holland in April/May 2024 to visit Arnhem - Arnhem Clarinet Choir and Fortissimo Or Travel to other Male voice choirs in UK (Wales) From last meeting no follow up to Holland Awaiting reply from John Kay on discussion with contact in Welsh choir.

Update on this I have been in touch with Builth MVC and their committee meeting is this week, hopefully by the time we have our meeting there will be an answer, but at time of writing this no answer.

Martin Butler

Secretary Report

13th February 2023

Future Concert Bookings

RL advised that the majority of choirs are struggling to find bookings and that this is not only RMVC.

Among ideas floated were:

Be prepared to travel further, within reason

Appoint a separate concert secretary to relive the load on MB
 Set up discussions with charities to get them on board with how they can help us help them
 Ask the choir to contact charities with whom they have contacts before passing them to secretary
 Set up a small team to take these forward. RL and MJ agreed to be a part of this team. JA and KB (Kevin Bolye) to be added to the planning team.
 JK suggested that we may even sing for no charge. Concert money does not form a large part of our income.
 There may be a possibility of singing in Ascot priory. This to be investigated.

10/23 Young Singers Competition

RL expressed his gratitude to all of the planning team and emphasised that he is very confident that this will be looked upon as a very polished and well organised event.
 There are 22 singers taking part and their timetable is detailed below.
 Rehearsals commence at 9.45am and the performances at 10am running through until 4.45pm.
 Participants will all receive a certificate and winners a cheque and a framed photograph will be presented at the Gala evening event.

ALL ATTENDEES MUST REGISTER AT THE ENTRANCE DESK

RL expressed particular thanks to Chris Carr for his work on the website.

RMVC Young Singers Auditions

11 March 2023

Rehearsal	Audition	Name		Accompanist	
9.45	10.00	Sophie	17-21	Hayley	
10.00	10.15	Parvathy	14-16	Ian Westley	
10.15	10.30	Joey	17-21	Hayley	
10.30	10.45	Millie	14-16	Ian Westley	

(15mins)

11.00	11.15	Tanusha	14-16	Ian Westley	
11.15	11.30	Aadhira	10-13	Hayley	
11.30	11.45	Harry	14-16	Own accompanist	
11.45	12.00	Tin Yan	14-16	Own accompanist	
12.00	12.15	John-Ellis	14-16	Hayley	
12.15	12.30	Beatrix	10-13	Sally	

(45 mins)

13.15	13.30	Molly	17-21	Hayley	
13.30	13.45	Oregon	10-13	Sally	
13.45	14.00	Isabella	17-21	Hayley	

14.00	14.15	Ellie	14-16	Sally	
14.15	14.30	Caitlin	14-16	Hayley	
14.30	14.45	Ben	14-16	Sally	

(15 mins)

15.00	15.15	Sebi	14-16	Hayley	
15.15	15.30	Thomas	10-13	Sally	
15.30	15.45	Charles	10-13	Hayley	
15.45	16.00	Joshua	14-16	Sally	
16.00	16.15	Sophia	14-16	Hayley	

11/23 Health and Safety update

RMVC Health & Safety Report – February 2023

Annual maintenance: All complete until September/October 2023.

Covid Risk Management: Members continue to be asked not to come to rehearsals if they have cold, flu or Covid symptoms.

Health & Safety Documentation: The updated 2022 documents were uploaded to the new RMVC website at the end of January. Thank you Steve Richardson.

Members were made aware of this at a recent rehearsal and those involved in transport, erection and dismantling of staging were asked to read the new Good Practice Documents.

First Aiders: We now have 5 members trained in emergency first aid:

o Alan Crisp, Alan Broodbank, Christopher Peck, Peter Woodward, Kevin Boyle.

RL thanked all First Aiders for their support.

Choir Accidents and First Aid Incidents: No accidents or incidents have been reported since November.

Risk Management: We ask Section Leaders to continue their vigilance in keeping up to date with their Section Members accessibility needs; 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. They need to keep the Musical Director, Stage Manager and Secretary updated of new developments or temporary needs prior to concerts.

Section Leaders were requested to ensure they are aware of their choristers special needs.

Christopher Peck (Health & Safety Officer), 17 Feb 2023

12/23 Social Media and Website

Thanks were expressed to AE, SR and JG (Jim Grufferty) for their work on the website.

ACTION. AE to send out details of web site team and to speak to SA re downloading of minutes.

Action AE

Date of next meeting 8th June 2023