

Reading Male Voice Choir

Minutes of a committee meeting held at Hawkedon School on 08th June 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)

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

Minutes: Steve Andrewes

01/23 Apologies were received from Andrew Evans

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

03/23 Matters arising from the minutes: JK confirmed that the Bank Account for the processing of funds for Tours and Events had been opened.

SR confirmed that the relevant choir documents relating to policy, good practice etc., were now available to view on the web site

Section Leaders also confirmed that they were regularly monitoring any learning difficulties for both new and existing members and encouraging the use of noteworthy.

04/23 RMVC Chairman's Report

RMVC Chairman's Report 6th June 2023

Recruiting

David Moon successfully passed his 'voice test' and is now a member of the T2 section

Concerts

Since our last committee meeting in February, we have performed in three concerts - Purley, The Minster and Christchurch. For both the Minster and Christchurch concerts there was initial concern regarding audience numbers, particularly in terms of the number of tickets sold by the organisers. Although the audience numbers were much better than initially anticipated, it is still a matter of concern that venue organisers often fail to effectively promote and publicise their event and attract larger audiences (and income). A small group, from the committee, met to discuss ways of working more effectively with venue organisers to help them promote and publicise their concerts - it should not be the sole responsibility of RMVC to promote concerts and ticket selling. One of the suggestions that came from this meeting was to consider the role of Secretary and whether additional help was required. This could potentially allow more time to develop and enhance future concert opportunities and organisation.

Please refer to agenda item below.

Gwyn Arch Young Singers' competition

It was generally agreed that the inaugural event had been an unqualified success in terms of sponsorship (**funding spreadsheet attached**) entries and organisation. We received 23 entries and the standard of the entrants was exceptionally high - particularly the three winners.

Planning is now well underway for the winner's concert at the Abbey Senior school on June 10th (**copy of programme attached**), which hopefully will be well attended to provide a well deserved public platform to display the talents of the young performers.

The YS planning group has recommended that the competition be run in 2023-24 subject to committee approval.

Builth Wells tour 2024

We have received a good response re: the tour: 78 in total with 43 choristers - balanced across the four sections. Planning is now underway to ensure a successful tour . Some concern has been raised regarding the unavailability of Hayley for the proposed Friday lunchtime concert at

Brecon Cathedral

Please refer to agenda item below.

There were no queries or questions regarding the Chairman's Report

05/23 Section leader's reports:

Tenor 1 Report

The T1s continue to maintain a presence of 11 to 16 at rehearsals and 12 to 13 at concerts in the last quarter.

Some T1s have had some significant heart related challenges this past quarter but thankfully they both seem to have recovered well.

Tony Dunne has requested a "leave of absence" from the Choir; he has been struggling with a respiratory condition and is caring for his wife who has a challenging health issue. I check in with him regularly and hopefully he will be back in the new choir year.

Frank Neale has also asked to start his summer choir break early; he is in considerable pain from his hip and is hoping to get a replacement in the next few months, but no firm date has been offered yet. I will also check in with him from time to time through the summer.

Mike Jearey

Tenor 2 Report.

Report of Tenor 2 section for 8th June 2023.

The section currently has 15 members. Our newest member is David Moon, who joined us after attending the Purley St Mary's concert as a member of the audience.

John Oversby continues to attend practice and performances in spite of his ongoing problems. Geoffrey Million is now back in action and seems, on the surface, to be no worse off for his experience. David Ewens has decided to take the rest of the season off as he is unable to stand up for long periods and feels happier taking a break until September when, he assures me, he will return to the fray.

T.A.Howell.

Baritone Report

No report received

Bass Section Leader's Report

Nothing to report

RL recommended that, unless there were important changes, reports received for this meeting would remain appropriate for the AGM

06/23 Treasurers report:

READING MALE VOICE CHOIR
COMMITTEE MEETING 8th JUNE 2023 TREASURER'S REPORT

CURRENT BALANCES

Here is where we stand financially as of 31st May 2023, and my projections for the year to 31 May 2024.

Balance at the end of:	May 22	31 May 23	May 24
	Actual	Actual	Projected
Account:	£	£	£
Assets	18	18	18
Debtors	-	-	-
Metro Bank Current Account	27,070	9,478	7,554
Metro Bank Reserve Account	229	17,543	17,568
Cash and cheques	0	0	0
Creditors	-	-	-
TOTAL	27,317	27,039	25,140
RESERVES (net current assets)	27,299	27,021	25,122

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.

In November 2022, the Committee agreed to increase our long-term Reserves target to £17,500. In addition, the Committee agreed to set aside £2,500 'protected funds' to ensure the continuation of the Gwyn Arch Young Singers competition in future years. **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2022/23**

The Choir have performed in 6 'regular' concerts plus the Minster '3 choir' Christmas Concert and an informal performance at Oddfellows, Reading. In addition, RMVC launched the first Gwyn Arch Young Singers competition which produced 3 outstanding young singers who will perform, with RMVC and Abbey School Choir, at their Gala concert in July.

There was a total of 70 paying members during this year generating a combined subscription/tuition fee income of £8,800 (£130 below budget).

The result for the FY22/23 is that expenditure exceeded income by £278 compared to a 'loss' of £1,395 anticipated in the budget approved by the AGM in July last year. Bear in mind, however, that we expect an invoice from Hawkedon school for c. £1,100 for this year which will now be paid next financial year. Consequently, the outturn this year is expected to be at, or close to, our budgeted deficit. Net Core expenditure was £-3,274 and Net Non-Core income was £2,996. These results are subject to examination by our Independent Examiner, scheduled for 30th June.

Main variance -v- budget were as follows:

Income: Sponsorship and donations were £2,189 above budget due to generous sponsorship agreements achieved relating to the Gwyn Arch Young Singers Competition.; Concert fees and ticket sales were £1,000 below budget but programme sales were £457 above budget. £705 relating to last year's Cornwall trip was received during this FY and Sundry Income was £690 over budget mainly due to income from the Reading Community Lottery.

Expenditure: Publicity and Concert Expenses were £1,618 above budget arising from the Memorial Concert in Reading Concert Hall; Administration was £1,384 over budget due mainly to YSC and First Aid Training.

PROPOSED BUDGET 2023/24

I have attached a draft budget for the year to 31st May 2024 for approval by the Committee and subsequently the AGM. You will see that this proposes a budget deficit for 2023/4 with a projected outturn that expenditure will exceed income by £1,949.

Significant assumptions in this budget:

- We will perform 3 fee paying concerts at £400 each in addition to our YS Gala Concert Concert in July which I have assumed will be self-funding.
- Subscriptions will increase by 7.7% to £140.00 full and £97.00 concession, both including a tuition fee of £20.
- MD/Accompanist Honoraria would increase by 8%
- Any income from 'informal' performances (e.g., Oddfellows/Walkers) would be in addition to this budget as would any income from our participation in the Minster Christmas Concert

At this level, our Reserves would reduce to £25,122, about £6,222 above our longterm target of £18,900 (£17,500 at 2022 prices). Net Core income would be £631, net non-Core expenditure would be £2,580.

POSSIBLE BUDGET 2024/25

I have attempted to develop a possible budget for the year ending 31st May 2025 to look at what a balanced budget might look like – see attached.

Significant assumptions in this possible budget:

- We will perform 8 fee paying concerts during the year and that our fees will remain at £400.
- We would also perform a concert for our own funds.
- Subscriptions would increase to £150.00 including £20.00 Tuition. Concession rates would increase to £104, both including £20 Tuition Fee.
- No further significant expenditure is anticipated in this financial year.

At this level, our Reserves would remain at £25,122, about £5,277 above our long term target of £19,845 (£19,467 at 2022 prices assuming 3% inflation for the year). Net Core expenditure would be £1,820, offset by net non-Core income of £1,820, delivering a balanced budget.

John Kay

4th June 2023

JK requested that that the circulated documents are considered and accepted in order that he can present these to the AGM having received this agreement to proceed.

The 3 documents requiring acceptance are:-

Trustees Annual Report

Receipts and Payments accounts

Budget for next year.

JK explained that, based upon the fact that there are, at this stage, only 3 paying concerts planned, there will be a shortfall in income for the next season and it would be prudent to increase subscriptions by £10 per member, to ensure that any further shortfall the following year would not result in a much larger increase. The Committee agreed the recommended increase and the Budget proposal, along with their satisfaction with the other documents presented.

RL thanked JK for his work in maintaining and presenting the accounts and reports.

07/23 Musical Directors Report

MUSICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT [June] 2023

CONCERT AT READING MINSTER

There was very little time to prepare for the concert that quickly followed the Walker's Memorial Service. Indeed, we were not even able to rehearse much at all, yet it still all came together to allow us to perform yet another very fine event!

Much of the quiet singing was particularly good and the Choir really connected with the fine and enthusiastic audience that turned out to hear us.

I made contact with two men who may well come to give us a try. One, called Jeremy seemed particularly keen. The other, who lives in Basingstoke is to be 'encouraged' by his wife who I used to teach more years ago that I care to remember!

It just goes to show that the Choir has real appeal – you can touch folk with your singing and the Choir's friendly ways.

The songs we sang with Aneesha were beautifully done, full of commitment and feeling. She is a great singer and a lovely person to work with and I am sure we would be very happy to welcome her back for some future concert.

It is always a pleasure to be able to sing in the Minster, and now that they have a very fine piano for Hayley to play it is even more of a treat!

CHRISTCHURCH, READING

Yet another really enjoyable concert. I seem to be able to say the same things after each event, all good and positive. We have certainly enjoyed many fine occasions this season.

Another good audience – we are lucky to attract so many! I am sure it is all through the very positive efforts of many of our members. Having a good audience makes such a difference to a concert, especially when you can see they are really enjoying the occasion.

Charis (our young guest soloist) is a lovely find – what a super voice she had – so easy and musical. I normally don't like singers singing to backing tracks, but Charis is very capable with this format and it was delightful to listen to. My thanks to Geoff for tackling the 'technicals'!

Space was a little limited at the front, especially for poor Hayley. Luckily I did manage to find a long bulky cushion for us both to sit on as we had to operate from the front pew. All worked well in the end!

There were no questions raised for CW, who requested that next week's rehearsal, 16th June be cancelled, as both he and HT would be unavailable.

RL to announce at 9 June rehearsal

ACTION RL

CW advised that he had received a request for the Choir to perform at the Oddfellows next season.

MB to gauge members interest

ACTION MB

08/23 Consider downsizing of collection of sheet music (JA)

JA requested that consideration be given to downsizing the members music collection files.

There was general agreement.

CW to review prior to next season

ACTION CW

09/23 Secretary's report:

So for our first full season following a few years of faltered starts because of Covid.

It was difficult to say whether we had suffered on audience lose because of the resistance of people to mix with others, though as the choir year went on did improve.

We held successful concerts at Greyfriars, All Saints, St Mary's Purley, Christchurch Woodley, Christchurch Reading, Reading Minster and Abbey School. Also singing in February in Broad St Mall shopping centre. So very much have been a year of only Reading performances and something we need to address for future years to get further afield in Berkshire.

As reported in the annual report financially this has proved very good for the charities we have supported and 1 concert supporting Red Cross Turkey/Syria earthquake appeal and Reading Minster music outreach programme.

There are currently 67 members (19 Top Tenor, 16 Second Tenor, 17 Baritones, 15 Basses) plus Clive and Hayley. Weekly updates have been sent and where possible mid-week update have continued throughout to ensure everyone is kept informed at all times.

I am currently in contact with some of Male Voice choirs these include Mevagissey Male Voice Choir who are potentially wanting to visit Reading in 2024 and performing with us to then return to them the following year. We do have some charities still interested in booking RMVC – these include PACT and Headway and also have some artists wanting to perform with us too. Included in this is Ma Bessy, who we performed with at Walkers annual memorial service in April 23.

It has been a difficult year for getting a plan together for new concerts for next season, but this is now completed after negotiating dates around Clive's diary and each organisation to make a date that works for all, whilst working around the plans for year 2 of the Young Singers competition and our plans to visit BuiltH Wells are now underway with costings for coach & hotel now sought and numbers of members and ladies gathered.

Please find below the proposed dates for the 2023/2024 season

Reading Male Voice Choir 2023 – 2024 season

Friday 1st September 2023

Start of season rehearsal

Saturday 28th October 2023

Concert St Edmund Campion Church 7.00pm

Raising church funds or what they choose to raise for

Tuesday 14th November 2023

Oddfellows Hall Oxord Rd

Informal singing

Saturday 2nd December 2023 TBC

Concert Ascot Priory 7.00pm

Friday 15th December 2023

Last rehearsal of term

Saturday 16th December 2023

Three Choirs Christmas Reading Minster 5.00pm

Raising funds for Reading Minster Music outreach programme

Monday 19th December 2023

RMVC Xmas dinner – Sonning Golf Club 7.30pm

Friday 5th January 2024

Start of new term

Saturday 3rd February 2024

Concert for Parkinsons, Christchurch Woodley? 7.00pm(venue to TBC)

Saturday 9th March 2024

Young singers auditions Abbey school 9.00-5.00pmm

RMVC members and ladies support

Friday 22nd March 2024

Last rehearsal of term

Break for Easter

Friday 12th April 2024

Start of new term

Saturday 20th April 2024

Walkers Memorial Service, Reading Minster 4.00pm TBC

Thursday 25th April until Sunday 28th April 2024

Trip to Builth, Wales 2 or 3 concerts

Saturday 8th June 2024

Concert Trinity Church Lower earley 7.00pm

Raising funds for Trinity Church funds

Saturday 6th July 2024

Gala Concert for Young Singers Abbey school 7.00pm celebrations

concert of Young singers competition

Friday 12th July 2024

AGM – Last day of term 7.30pm

Hawkedon Primary School

JK advised that to provide funds for the deposits shortly required for the Builth Wells trip/concerts, those going would need to provide a deposit of £50 per head by the end of the month. Also, that this would need to be paid into the new Tours and Events account to separate funds from the main choir account.

MB to advise members during rehearsal update

ACTION MB

An accompanist is required for us to perform in Brecon Cathedral.

MB to establish if Builth Choir can assist and glean any further available information.

ACTION MB

10/23 Young singers competition/concert (2023 costs and programme attached)

RL advised that the Young Singers Concert planned for 10th June needed to be slick and professional in all respects, and requested further admin related assistance to help achieve this.

The planning group have met and expressed their view that the competition resulted in a good outcome for all involved.

RL requested the committee's agreement to continue the programme for next year. All were in agreement.

11/23 Health and safety update

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 current documents were updated 25 February 2023 and uploaded to the Website.

First Aiders

- **To be updated at the meeting.**

Choir Accidents and First Aid Incidents:

- There have been two accidents:
 - 20 May 2023 – at Christchurch during the pre-concert rehearsal. One Choir member received a minor cut to their hand following a slip when dismounting from the staging. Actions were taken to prevent further slips during the concert. **Proposed Further Actions:**
 - ✦ Stage manager and Erectors to try to ensure there is a wide enough gap between the front corner of the staging and the fixed podium at the venue.
 - ✦ The Van Driver should ensure that the First Aid kit is kept at the front of the concert stage (beside the keyboard), so that it is easily accessible.
 - 26 May 2023 – At Hawkedon School prior to the weekly rehearsal. A member in a wheelchair was thrown out of the wheelchair when the front wheel stuck in a drain gully in the footpath, stopping suddenly. Possible bruising. Also possible injury to the untrained members who assisted in lifting the user back into the wheelchair. **Proposed Further Actions:**
 - ✦ Those using wheelchairs need to keep an eye out for the drain gully and avoid it.
 - ✦ We need to discuss what trained personnel and or equipment we need to have available to assist if a person has to be lifted from the floor into a chair or a wheelchair.

Risk Management

- Take note of the proposed further actions following two accidents.
- We need to be constantly alert to new hazards arising in our rehearsals and at concert venues and draw these to the attention of the Health & Safety Officer.

Christopher Peck (Health & Safety Officer), 31 May
We now have 10 trained first aiders.

To ensure that the first aid kit is available at venues it is essential that this is taken from the van by the designated first aid officer.

A roster is to be prepared so that MB is aware of who is responsible for this.

CP ACTION

Following an incident when Paul Buckle fell in his wheelchair, it was decided that in the event of similar future incidents it would be prudent to assess if a paramedic should be called.

CP to speak to PB and First Aiders regarding taking control of the situation in this event

ACTION CP

12/23 Social media and website

It was confirmed that all of the available minutes were now available to view on the website

13/23 AGM Friday 8th July 2023

- a) Consider nominations
- b) Approve draft agenda
- c) Consider those eligible for long service awards

There are 5 vacancies to be filled and nomination forms will be issued prior to AGM.

Also, a number of members are due for Long Service Awards

MB to provide nomination forms for completion prior to AGM, and to progress process for Long Service awards

ACTION MB

The Draft Agenda for the AGM was approved

14/23 Concert secretary role (Consultation paper attached)

It was generally agreed that the current job spec for the Secretary was far too onerous and also did not provide any cover in the event of the secretaries absence.

The Committee agreed that the role should be split between Administrator and a Concert Secretary. In addition, in view of the nature of the roles it was unnecessary for the Concert Secretary to be a Trustee. This negates the need for a change to the Choir Constitution to be amended to accommodate an additional Trustee.

MB to develop new Job Specs. RL to issue nomination list/forms via email.

ACTION MB

A.o B

JK advised that the video of the choir rehearsing and singing Calon Lan required further editing and following this will be available after the summer break.

15/23 Proposed meeting dates for 2023/24

12th October 2023, 30th November 2023, 22 February 2024, 6th June 2024, AGM 5th July 2024

