

## ***Reading Male Voice Choir***

### **Minutes of a committee meeting held at Hawkedon School on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

#### **Present:**

**Members:** Ryland Lee (RL), Chairman; John Carr (JC) Deputy Chairman; Martin Butler (MB) Concert Secretary; Steve Richardson (SR) Secretary; John Kay (JK), Treasurer; Section Leaders (SLs): Arnie Howell (AH), Mike Jearey (MJ); Andrew Evans (AE); Paul Moir (PM).

**Officers:** Clive Waterman (CW), Musical Director (joined meeting later), Chris Peck (CP) Health & Safety Officer; Nigel Shaw (NS) Stage Manager

**Minutes:** Steve Andrewes

#### **01/23 No Apologies were received.**

**02/23 Minutes:** JK advised that there was an error in the minutes of the meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The reference to a new account being opened was recorded as Young Singers, and should read Tours and Events. Otherwise the minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the event.

**ACTION – SA to amend**

#### **03/23 Matters arising from the minutes:**

MB advised that there was still no response from Builth Wells to a request for an organist to play in Brecon Cathedral. PM mentioned that his wife may be able to play the piano at this event, and we can look this again and other options if no response is received in the near future.

CP confirmed that he is preparing a roster to confirm who is responsible for ensuring that the first aid kit is available at concert venues. Also, that he will speak to PB and 1<sup>st</sup> Aiders regarding the need to call for a paramedic in the event of an accident taking place at a concert.

**ACTION – CP to follow up**

#### **04/23 RMVC Chairman's Report**

So, to a new choir season and it will certainly be a busy one. We have a full concert programme; a tour to Builth Wells in April and the Young Singers' 2023-24 competition which will be launched in mid October.

#### **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 choristers and identify any issues.

The importance of rehearsal registers has also been highlighted by Chris Peck (H&S Officer) 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.

#### **Recruitment**

Although choir membership is currently steady there is a need to have an ongoing programme

of recruitment activity (this will be an agenda item) Already this term, we have confirmed a new member Tim Small in T1 section and a potential member in the Baritone section.

Please Note:

It is important that we 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, are added to the choir mailing list and provided with the members handbook (or signposted to the relevant section on the choir website). I have attached a copy of the 'Process for inducting potential new members' - this will be discussed further at the meeting.

### **Young Singer**

As a result of the success of the 2022-23 YS competition, it was agreed to run the initiative for 2023-24. (details will be outlined under the meeting agenda item). It was also agreed that (any) future YS competitions would be run on a biennial basis.

### **05/23 Section leader's reports:**

#### **Tenor 1 Report**

Most of the T1s are back in the new choir year.

Sadly, David Lloyd has decided to retire from the choir, after 42 years, and we will miss his contribution (and determination to get it right) very much. We are hoping he will continue to join social events that the T1s convene so we can stay in touch.

Keith Knee-Robinson has now resigned from the Choir. He has confirmed that he felt unable to continue in view of other commitments.

On a happier note, Tim Small visited the choir and joined up in very short order. I have a feeling he will add considerably to our singing.

It was also very pleasing to welcome back Frank Neale (back after his hip replacement operation over the summer holidays) and Tony Dunne (after his time out to care for Liz) back at rehearsals in the new choir year.

Mike Jearey

#### **Tenor 2 Report.**

There are currently sixteen members of this section. Our newest member is David Moon who is now looking forward to joining us when we perform publicly. I would recommend that this request be considered.

David Ewens is now back amongst us and has settled in again quickly. His vision is impaired to the point where he can hardly read at all unless the print is exceptionally big.

Ossi Ravel has not attended any Friday sessions yet this term. He appears to be very busy with work. I have been in touch with him by e-mail but what he is doing and what he intends to do about RMVC is more than vague.

John Oversby continues to receive treatment for cancer but holds up well in spite of the frequent invasive surgery he has to undergo.

T.A.Howell

Section leader.

NS suggested that the choir be requested to stand at rehearsals when signing through songs. (Not when note bashing!) This received general support from the Committee and RL will discuss with CW.

### Baritone Report

AE confirmed that RJ is currently unable to attend regularly in view of his wife's serious illness. It was expected that he may attend tomorrow (13 Oct) when we can establish how to proceed when new recruits require choir uniform.

### Bass Section Leader's Report

PM advised that PB is currently unwell and has been advised to 'take it easy' for the time being.

### 06/23 Treasurers report:

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

#### CURRENT BALANCES

Here is where we stand financially as of 30th September 2023, and my projections for the year to 31 May 2024.

Balance at the end of	May 23	30 Sep 23	May 24
	Actual	Actual	Projected
<u>Account:</u>	£	£	£
Assets	18	18	18
Debtors	-	-	-
Metro Bank Current Account	9478	10833	8597
Metro Bank Reserve Account	17554	17613	17613
Cash & Cheques	0	1271	0
Creditors	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27050</b>	<b>29735</b>	<b>25128</b>
<b>Reserves (net current assets)</b>	<b>27032</b>	<b>29717</b>	<b>26210</b>

The balance as at the end of May 2023 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. In addition to the above, the choir is holding, currently, £1,175 of members funds allocated to the upcoming trip to Builth Wells.

### **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2023/24**

The current forecast for the financial year is that Expenditure will exceed Income by £823. This compares with budgeted deficit, approved by the AGM, of £1,949. Net Core Expenditure would be £1,621 and net non-core income would be £798. Our Reserves would reduce to £26,210 which is about £7,310 above our long-term target of £18,900 (£17,500 at 2022 prices). Bear in mind that, included in the Reserves, is c. £3,000 attributed to the YS programme.

**Subscriptions:** Membership subscriptions and Tuition Fees for the current season are now due. Most members have paid – the status is as follows:

Top Tenors: 16 paid; 2 outstanding. 2nd Tenors: 12 paid; 4 outstanding. Baritones: 15 paid; 2 outstanding. Basses: 13 paid; 2 outstanding. Details of those outstanding will be provided to the section leaders.

### **BUILTH WELLS**

Members participating in this trip next spring have paid their deposits (£50 per head). 43 choristers have signed up for the trip plus 35 supporters. Non-refundable deposits have been paid to the hotel and coach company. The total cost of the trip is likely to be c. £21,000. I anticipate that those travelling as a couple on the choir bus will be required to pay an additional £480 (c. £350 if travelling independently). Single travellers will be required to pay c. £286. These figures are in addition to deposits already paid.

As these payments are significant, the Committee will need to decide when these payments are to be made, (determined by e.g., when the balances are due to the coach company and hotel and, of course staged payments before and after Christmas) and how this should be communicated to the men.

Please consider this and be prepared to discuss at the meeting.

Since my last report (June 2023):

- The Young Singers concert raised £869 net (YSP 'account' is £3,100 in credit).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

John Kay 7th October 2023

JK advised that the total cost of the choir visit to Builth Wells is £21,000. To date initial deposits total £3,700. In view of the current economic climate JK set out when further funds need to be collected and emphasised that after due dates for payment no refunds will be available. Choir members were advised to consider taking out insurance to cover any losses in this respect.

For couples travelling by coach: £400 is due by 31<sup>st</sup> January

For couples travelling themselves £300 is due by 31<sup>st</sup> January

For singles £200 is due by 31<sup>st</sup> January.

A further sum of £30-£40 will become due by 31<sup>st</sup> March.

There was a question of the security of Choir funds deposited with Metro Bank. JK advised that we are covered up to £85,000 which is sufficient for our needs.

## **07/23 Musical Directors Report**

### **MUSICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT AUTUMN 2023**

#### **The new season begins:-**

I am heartened by the appearance of a number of new faces who have joined the ranks to give the Choir a try. Each rehearsal is well attended, and the choir grows seemingly week by week! I hope that we can continue to attract new members and that they find the organisation to their liking!

We already have a full and varied programme of planned events. A few have had to have their dates adjusted for a number of reasons, but all seems to be settled now.

Our first concert of this season will be held at St Edmond Campion, Maidenhead and will now take place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November.

We shall enjoy some new venues, notably Ascot Priory, where we are to perform two concerts on one evening in order to maximise the benefits of this beautiful building. We share this occasion with Occasions who will join forces with us during the concerts.

Our annual Christmas Concert in Reading Minster will be slightly different this year as the A440 Choir is unlikely to be available. Jacqui Voller and I are investigating a new format and arrangements which will hopefully make it as successful as previous years, if not more so!

Later we are set to enjoy the second Young Singers Competition, perform for Walkers at their Memorial Service and then to enjoy a visit to Builth Wells, where are to perform concerts at several venues,

including a sing in the Cathedral. We are currently working hard to add further new music to our repertoire and to prepare appropriately for all the events to come. It is beneficial to have this slightly longer period of detailed rehearsal time early in the season to learn and to consolidate our repertoire. It also helps the number of new prospective members to absorb the music already known and to feel more comfortable with those who have been in the ranks for some while.

I look forward to the season ahead and the challenges and opportunities that are set before us.

CW joined the meeting and RL raised the above matter regarding the choir standing at rehearsals when singing through a whole song. CW said that he does this where possible but will take on board the committees views on this matter.

CW advised that we will have a 5 piece band joining us for the concert in the Minster, together with Occasions. He also confirmed that choir members are expected to sing at both concerts, which will last a maximum of 1 hour 15 minutes each. There will be food and drinks available in a comfortable area between the two concerts.

Section leaders confirm to members that they are expected to attend and sing at both concerts.

Action Team Leaders

Clive Waterman

MD

### **08/23 Secretary's report:**

In summary – It's all going very well.....

Regular updates for members and newsletters for ex-members etc. have been sent.

The choir documents, Constitution, Handbooks etc. are all on the website members' area and are due for confirmation (annual review). Trustees - Please look through the documents and bring any proposals for amendment to Committee for discussion.

Lost uniform items – One member has lost his long service pin, replacement cost is £35. Question for Trustees – should RMVC replace this, should the member pay for a replacement or a combination of both.

For info - The Member Handbook is clear about music and uniform as these remain RMVC property:

3.0.2 Members are responsible for keeping the property of the Choir safe and are liable for the full cost of replacement should loss or irreparable damage occur.

A choir member has mislaid his long service pin and queried who is responsible to pay for a replacement. The Committee agreed that if members lost their pin they should pay for their own replacement.

Tony Compton's funeral was confirmed as taking place on 23 October. Section Leaders to obtain names of those attending and advise CW to ensure that a balanced choir is available.

**ACTION: Section Leaders to establish numbers and advise CW**

Steve Richardson

### **9/23 Concert Secretaries Report**

#### **Reading Male Voice Choir 2023 – 2024 season**

Saturday 18th November 2023

Concert St Edmund Campion Church - 7.30pm

Raising church funds or what they choose to raise for

Guest artist – Charis Luke

This concert will be at 7.30pm as there will be a service in the church prior to concert. Rehearsal will take place in the school opposite and plans for staging timing to be confirmed.

Saturday 2nd December 2023

Concert Ascot Priory - 4.00pm & 7.00pm

Raising funds for Ascot Priory

With the Occasions singers

This day is an unusual and unique offer that came our way.

This will be the first time ever that the priory has been used for external singers to come along and perform and a special place it is too.

It is not huge but they have people interested in coming along and partners coming would need to decide which of the concerts to come too.

So 2 concerts (both the same) in 1 venue in 1 day. Between each there will be time and space for the choir to rest and enjoy refreshments provided.

Tuesday 12th December 2023

Oddfellows, Oxford Rd - 2.00pm

Informal singing for Oddfellows members.

Saturday 16th December 2023

Christmas Concert - Reading Minster 5.00pm

Raising funds for Reading Minster Music outreach programme.

Plans are currently underway as to ways to make this another concert to remember. NOT with A440 but with Occasions singers +

Thursday 14th December 2023

RMVC Xmas dinner – Sonning Golf Club 7.30pm

3rd February 2024

Concert Christchurch Woodley - 7.00pm

Raising funds for Parkinsons (Reading)

Guest artists – The Barberettes

As with other years one of best supported concerts raising funds for Parkinsons. This year the Barberettes will be joining us as they too have members with Parkinsons or relatives with so is a very very apt combination for us to again sing with them

Saturday 9th March 2024

Young singers auditions Abbey school 9.00-5.00pm

RMVC members and ladies support will be required to make this a success again.

Saturday 20th April 2024

Walkers Memorial Service, Reading Minster 4.00pm

To be Confirmed

Thursday 25th April until Sunday 28th April 2024

Trip to Builth, Wales 2 concerts

Hotel and Coach is now booked and further details for payments will come when required. Expectation to leave on the morning of 25th and back late afternoon on 28<sup>th</sup>

Friday 26th April - Lunchtime concert @ 1pm in Brecon Cathedral

Saturday 27th April- Evening concert Holy Trinity Church Llandrindod Wells

\*\* See Notes \*\*

Saturday 8th June 2024



Concert Trinity Church Lower Earley 7.00pm

Raising funds for Trinity Church funds.

Currently in discussion with Ma Bessie who has offered to sing with us for free at one of our concerts in 2024 (from Walkers memorial service 2023)

Saturday 6th July 2024

Gala Concert for Young Singers Abbey school 7.00pm

celebrations concert of Young singers competition winners and others guests

Reading Male Voice Choir 2024 – 2025 season

Mevagissey Male Voice Choir visit to Reading

Friday 11th – Sunday 13th October 2024

We are looking at possibly 2 concerts in 2 evenings with a joint concert on both

Friday – have been approached by RNLI. 2024 is 200 anniversary and requested sea faring songs and sea shanties, which Megavissey choir do sing. Possibly at Pangbourne college or Douie Abbey.

Saturday – have provisionally booked All saints church in Wokingham (recently revamped)

I have given Meva the details of hotels in Reading, Artur is a member and has told me that the vote from the choir was yes to coming to Reading

RMVC return visit to Cornwall

Thursday 24th – Sunday 27th April 2025

2 concerts lined up for the Friday evening and Saturday evening at the moment. (this is the weekend after easter)

Friday evening in concert with Truro MVC in church next to cathedral, I have met with the Chairman to discuss and they are happy to host.

Saturday evening in concert with Mevagissey choir in the church they rehearse in, Have met with all the church and chairman and musical Director and they would love for us to visit them as a return.

2025 – young singers competition is not in the plans for this season (Ryland)

Possible other concerts contacts for interest for 2025 .

Aldershot military wife's choir

Mixed voice choir that Bob Hill belongs to.

PACT – charity still interested in booking

Charity in Wokingham (Clive) see if interested for 12th October concert

Avenue a Capella would like to sing with RMVC again

Taplow court

Promotion of concerts

Website - We need to start the season off with having the website showing the whole season ahead from the beginning and get this ready in the summer holidays.

I had everything in place but nothing happened until partway through September.

Ticketsource – I am going to approach all concerts for the whole season and put the tickets up for sale for the whole season ASAP so we don't hinder any possible way the sales.

Flyers/Tickets – Flyers are being asked for up to 2 months in advance of a concert so need to action these sooner than we have been.

All men need to take responsibility for promoting flyers about the whole town/area.

Ideally require a Promotions Team. That would also be responsible to promote on social media, press, gossip girls, radio interviews etc.....

Signage – use of our staging backing

When I was in Cornwall in the summer and sat in the audience waiting for them to start this was the image I saw.

I was a very effective way to show

CD's on sale, how to follow on social media.

Was very easily fixed onto the staging and was made by a member.

Could this be looked at for RMVC.

Also require a new update date banner for outside venues and pull up banners.

MB suggested we put together a Concert Promotions Team who would be able to provide support advertising concerts in the area local to forthcoming concerts.

**ACTION: RL to raise at rehearsal update**

An enquiry has been received regarding a possible visit to Luxembourg to perform in the 'Choirs in Mines' event.

The effectiveness of choir advertising on staging was raised.

**ACTION. MB to discuss cost and effectiveness with AE**

MB mentioned that he has received an enquiry regarding the possibility of the Choir performing at a Masonic Ladies Night.

The format of Christmas Concert at the Minster will be different this year with RMVC being moved forward and taking a more prominent role. This event will not be a 3 Choirs Concert.

RL stated that he felt that, in the future, RMVC could perform the concert themselves and he will discuss the MB.

**ACTION: RL to discuss future Christmas concerts with MB**

### **10/23 Young Singers competition/concert**

RL confirmed the success and professional approach of this year's Young Singers Competition. In view of the financial success of this event we have in excess of £3,000 in sponsorship remaining. RL has advised last year's sponsors that no sponsorship is needed for this year and, as a thank you for their support, we will reflect their names in our advertising campaign which will be launched on 30<sup>th</sup> October, although they are very welcome to continue to support the event financially if they wish to do so.

The timing of the following event will be discussed after the 2024 competition.

RL addressed the views that some felt the contest was elitist. He confirmed that every school/educational college etc., in Berkshire was invited to apply.

### **11/23 Health and safety update**

Annual maintenance:

☑ PAT testing of electrical equipment due in October.

☑ Staging equipment inspection to be carried out in October.

☑ It is reported that the library moisture collection tubes were full of water. New tubes have been ordered.

Fire Safety:

☑ Annual fire safety briefing given to Choir Members and to Friends of Choir on 6th Oct.

Choir Accidents and First Aid Incidents:

☑ No accidents or incidents have been reported since start of September.

## Risk Management

☑ Section Leaders are requested to update their records for those with impaired mobility or medical conditions that may affect concerts.

**ACTION. Section leaders**

CP requested a replacement for JA, who assists with the annual kit check but has now stepped down from this role. NS said he was willing to do this and felt that he ought to be involved in view of his role as Stage Manager.

SR mentioned that he is shortly due to undertake his annual PAT checks at CW's and rehearsals.

MB cited a recent incident where coffee was spilt on him and on the floor at rehearsal. CP to look into safety procedures in the event of such an incident

**ACTION: CP to investigate safety procedures**

Christopher Peck (Health & Safety Officer), 07 Oct 2023

## **12/23 Social Media/Website**

The information regarding subscriptions is incorrect as are some of the links provided for ticket source

**ACTION: AE and SR to amend incorrect social media on website**

## **13/23 Recruitment**

### **Process for inducting potential new members**

First night attendance

- inform MD, Chairman and Secretary at the beginning of rehearsal
- Secretary to issue 'Welcome Letter' (see attached)
- Section Leader:
  - ask librarian for music pack, to be collected in at the end of rehearsal and re-issued at subsequent rehearsal
  - allocate a 'mentor' to provide music support during rehearsals
  - Get contact details and follow up after first visit

After 3 - 4 rehearsals

- Section Leader

- Ascertain interest in becoming a choir member at the BEGINNING of rehearsal and inform the MD - who will conduct a 'voice test' DURING THE INTERVAL to confirm section placement
- Inform the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian (who will allocate a music number and issue a full music pack)
- Issue copies of the following documentation
  - \*Acceptance Letter with 'gaps to complete (section and SL

name) - see attached

\* Application & Gift aid Form - see attached. Hand completed copy to the Treasurer (who will pass a copy to the Secretary and Membership list coordinator)

\* Members Handbook - see attached

\*Uniform information - see attached

Readiness to participate in concert

- Section Leader to consult with MD to agree on readiness. Inform Wardrobe Master re: Allocation of uniform

RL emphasised the need for a more structured approach and some ideas were mentioned, e.g. bring a friend night, advertise, come and join us, open evening, singalong etc.

#### **14. A.o B**

MB advised that DE had not yet booked Aneesha for the Christmas Dinner. It was mentioned that he may have sharply raised her fee.

**ACTION – SR to check situation with DE**

#### **15/23 Proposed meeting dates for 2023/24**

30<sup>th</sup> November 2023, 22 February 2024, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024, AGM 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024