

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

### **Minutes of a committee meeting held at Hawkedon School on 22 February 2024**

#### **Present:**

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

**Officers:** Christopher Peck (CP) Health & Safety Officer;

**Minutes:** Steve Andrewes

#### **01/24 Apologies were received from**

NS (Stage Manager)

#### **02/24 Minutes**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the events which took place on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

#### **03/24 Matters arising from the minutes:**

CP confirmed that he had spoken to Paul Buckle regarding the need for H&S considerations at concerts and had e-mailed all first aiders in this respect.

CP had produced a banner which could be used for display purposes. This will be the subject of further discussion along with 'pull ups'.

**ACTION: AE to give consideration to this matter and raise for further discussion**

The committee discussed views regarding the Choir performing unsupported at the Minster at Christmas. CW wishes to consider the matter further, giving consideration to audience preferences and choir exposure over the Christmas period. Also, concerns regarding crowding on stage and safety of members getting on/off stage.

**ACTION: CW to review and feedback to committee**

MB confirmed that he is not invited to the planning process prior to the Minster concert.

Section leaders should prepare appropriate line-ups for their section by the Friday prior to a concert.

**ACTION: Section Leaders to note**

AB is due to receive 50 Years Award in the near future.

**ACTION: RL to speak to AB re special presentation of award**

The availability of downloads via Spotify and amazon etc., for Choir music was considered to be desirable.

**ACTION: AE to pursue with providers**

JC circulated his document regarding strategy for concerts and the sale of tickets.

**ACTION: Committee members to read strategy document and consider way forward for next meeting**

The need to reconsider the spread of dates for future committee meetings is to be discussed at the next meeting in June.

**ACTION: Dates to be agreed at June meeting**

### **04/24 RMVC Chairman's Report**

Chairman Report: 22-2-24

It has certainly been a challenging start to 2024 with Clive's enforced absence for the whole of January and the Christchurch concert on the 3rd February. It was very good to know that Clive is now on the mend and ready to join us again at our rehearsal on 9th February and he has already outlined a list of new and 'resurrected' songs which will be introduced in the new year.

We were extremely grateful that Hayley was seamlessly able to 'step into the breach' and maintain our rehearsals. Her professional and committed approach ensured we were thoroughly prepared for the concert - we are indeed very fortunate to have such a talented individual as part of our professional team. We were also able to benefit from Hayley's extensive network to secure the services of an accompanist Ikuko - what a talent. So it was no surprise that we performed well to an appreciative, capacity audience at Christchurch which ensured a successful financial outcome to the Parkinsons UK.

#### Young Singers' Competition:

Entries for the 2024 competition are now closed (although we will accept late entries). To date we have 18 entries ( 21 were received in 2023) and the auditions will take place on Saturday 9th March at the Abbey School. This is an agenda item where further information will be provided re: entries and on-going timescales - see separate attachment.

Decisions will need to be made about the future of the YS competition (e.g. moving to a biennial event) and whether the committee would like to consider other initiatives involving young singers during the interim years.

#### **Builth Tour:**

This is fast approaching and it will provide us with an excellent opportunity to demonstrate our musical talents across the border in the 'Land of Song' - so no pressure then!! There is on-going communication between Clive and Adrian Morgan (Builth MD) and planning is well underway for our performance in the nave of Brecon Cathedral on the Friday followed by our concert with Builth on the Saturday. We are taking away a good sized, balanced choir and it should prove to be an exciting tour with the opportunity for RMVC to host a return visit to Reading at a future date.

RL stated that it is great to have CW back with us. CW responded that it was also great to have confidence that the Choir is in such good hands with Hayley, if he is unable to attend.

### **05/24 Section leader's reports:**

#### **Tenor 1 Report**

All the T1s continue to attend rehearsals and perform at concerts except when prevented by health or other commitments. We have had a couple of members who have not returned to practice since the Christmas break as they are dealing with health challenges that are taking time to get over; we remain hopeful they will be back singing soon.

Mike Jearey

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

Nothing of any import to report.

T.A.Howell

#### **Baritone Report**

Simon Walker has now moved across to the basses.

AE raised a letter of complaint from a member of the Baritones who felt that there was too much stop/start in rehearsals and could CW consider singing right through a song before reviewing errors or improvements. The complainant also felt that this was particularly in evidence during CWs first rehearsal following his illness.

CW responded that he considered his method as the best way to instruct the choir in new pieces but that he was always ready to listen to the views of the members.

In response to comments that we have to handle too many pieces of music, it was suggested that choristers only bring along those items which CW advised we would tackle at the rehearsal.

#### **Bass Section Leader's Report**

The bass section has increased its number by one. Simon Walker has joined the section from the baritones. We are giving him help and assistance to ensure will feel confident enough to sing with us at concerts.

There have been no other significant changes to the rest of the section since the last committee meeting.

Paul Moir

## 06/24 Treasurers report:

### TREASURER'S REPORT

#### CURRENT BALANCES

Here is where we stand financially as of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024, and my projections for 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024

Balance at the end of:	MAY 23	31 Jan 24	May 24
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	PROJECTED
<u>ACCOUNT</u>	£	£	£
Assets	18	18	18
Debtors	-	-	-
Metro Bank Current Account	9,478	10,665	5,340
Metro Bank Reserve Account	17,554	17,684	17,684
Cash & Cheques	0	186	0
Creditors	-	-	-
TOTAL	27,050	28,553	23,042
RESERVES (net current assets)	27,032	28,535	23,024

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, currently, the choir is holding £13,400 of members funds allocated to the upcoming trip to Builth Wells.

#### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2023/24

The forecast for the financial year is that Expenditure will exceed Income by £4,008. This compares with budgeted deficit, approved by the AGM, of £1,949. Net Core Expenditure would be £2,745 and net non-core expenditure would be £1,263. Our Reserves would

reduce to £23,024 which is about £4,124 above our long-term target of £18,900 (£17,500 at 2022 prices). Bear in mind that included in the Reserves is c. £2,500 attributed to the YS programme.

Staged payments for the trip to Builth Wells in April are being received

Since my report in November:

- The Christmas concert held at Reading Minster cost RMVC £19.00 after paying for the Concert folders and receiving £350.00 as our 'fee'.

- The Committee has agreed a revised Concert Fee structure as follows:

- Our fixed fee for a concert will be £200.
- In addition, RMVC's expectation is that the host charity would be able to attract an audience of 100 or more and will charge a fee of £2 per ticket sold for the first 100 tickets, irrespective of the ticket price charged by the host charity. Revenue from Ticket Sales for tickets over 100 sold will accrue to the charity in full.
- For non-ticketed concerts, our fee will be a minimum of £200 plus 20% of the retiring collection to a maximum fee of £400.
- Should the host charity expect an audience of less than 100, then RMVC reserves the right to decline the booking.
- The host charity will be responsible for providing and (if necessary) paying for, an appropriate venue.
- Should a Guest Artist be required (recommended), this will be charged at actual cost (usually £50) and this will be agreed beforehand with the charity organisers.
- Concert Costs and Expenses incurred by RMVC at the request of the host charity (e.g. printing flyers/programmes, tickets etc.) will be charged to the host charity at cost.
- Transportation costs for the Choir's equipment will be borne by the Choir.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

JK reported the following:

He has **received** £1.8k from HMRC regarding our **recent Gift Aid claim.**

Following expenses, e.g. Ikuko's costs, we were left with a profit of £30 from the Parkinsons Concert

The Annual Report to the Charity Commission has been submitted

Details of all new Trustees have been submitted to the Charity Commission

The new Concert Fee model is now in use.

The video of our rehearsal and concert recently taken by JKs Grandson has encountered problems in A cost of around £300 was agreed and AE agreed to undertake the video.

A suitable rehearsal will need to be organised (storyboard) and a timescale agreed for this to take place.

John Kay

Treasurer

**ACTION: CW, AE, JK, RL to take forward**

MB enquired why we had not progressed the suggested Open Evening. It was considered that this should be agreed by July to enable it to be taken forward next Season.

### **07/24 Musical Directors Report**

Since my last report we have completed several significant events including a concert with 'The Occasions Singers' in Ascot Priory, and our annual Christmas Concert in Reading Minster.

#### **But first:-**

Sadly we lost another choir member of past years – Tony Compton. We were invited to sing at his funeral which a significant number of our current choristers attended.

### **ST EDMUND CAMPION**

Our first major concert of the season was held in the Church at St Edmund Campion, Maidenhead. We had to be sensitive to the fact that there was going to be a mass right at the time we were setting up. The Church was full for this as well! In the end this was no problem, and all went very smoothly thanks to the co-operation from all concerned.

Special thanks must go to John Carr and his family and friends together with the Priest who all did much to ensure this concert's success.

All in all, a great start to the season which heralded a very busy period!

### **New files for choir members**

I have requested and purchased new 4 ring files – one for each choir member – so that Christmas music, and indeed any other music we use can be stored / changed / adapted as necessary. This will enable us to dispose of the 'Christmas booklets' that we have been using these past few years, which are now no longer in good repair.

### **ASCOT PRIORY [With 'The Occasions Singers']**

[Two slightly shorter performances – one at 4 the second at 7]

This new venue was an exciting proposition, but it posed us with new problems to resolve. Getting the right positioning for everybody proved to be more of an issue than I had thought. The issue was not with the seating of the RMVC, but with getting the positioning right for Occasions in order to achieve the correct balance between the groups. There are just 10 of them as opposed to 60+ of our Choir, and achieving the right balance was so important! Suggestions came thick as fast as to how best to achieve this, and seating them the way we eventually did, was so right! Suddenly everything came together, and the building helped us to achieve the rest! My thanks to all for your patience while things were sorted – it was really worthwhile as everything flowed from that moment.

The singing was as lovely as I had hoped. No matter where choir members stood, their voices contributed so positively to the wonderful sounds that all could hear!

From the moment we sang Gaudete I know that this was going to be a memorable day.

The first concert did last too long – the combination of a late start and more than enough material added a lot of extra time. This said, the audience showed no real signs of being in their seats too long and hopefully enjoyed all they heard.

We were all then treated to a meal of ham, eggs and chips, and then ice cream. Later even platters of delicious sandwiches appeared! This, and the sensible break between the two events allowed us to prepare for the second concert and further enjoyment.

I decided to slim down the programme for the second concert which seemed to work ok – fitting the time we had agreed more closely.

The Priory Staff were so kind and hospitable. This was the first time a public concert had been given in the Priory in this way. There had been many other events but not one of the kind we performed. The audiences were very appreciative and were visibly moved by some of the singing. It was a special experience for all concerned and one that I am sure the Choir will fondly remember for some time to come.

Before we left the building I was told that our efforts had raised in excess of £1000 which will be used to support the Priory and its use.

### **THE MINSTER CONCERT**

This was the first time we had been able to position the Choir 'out front', and the benefits were obvious. The arrangements we made for seating and singing seemed to work well and enabled us to achieve a good flow to the programme. The afternoon rehearsal went smoothly. The positioning of each group did pose a few issues – things were quite tight – but in the event all seemed to go well. The balance between the groups was tricky to achieve – 60+ men against 9 members of Occasions was always going to be a delicate matter – Occasions were also one member short on the day which

didn't help! I have to say that I really enjoyed having the Band there to play for and with us. They added yet another dimension to our concert. Somehow a brass band seemed very appropriate!

My thanks to all the staging crew who do such a good job for us, often in quite tricky circumstances. Despite the timing concerns and difficulties of access, all was made ready in very good time. Once the rehearsal had finished, we had time to rest.

There had been concerns about audience numbers, but we need not have worried. As we returned to the Minster to be ready for the start, the building was already nearly full and by 5pm there was hardly a seat to be had. Well, what a wonderful evening it turned out to be! All the preparations we had made came together, and the evening flowed really well. The huge audience was enthusiastic and in festive mood and a great time was had by all! Many have said that our concert was a really special occasion for them, a wonderful event that really began their Christmas celebrations. High praise indeed! There was something in this concert for everyone – lovely singing, great readings, a band, fun and variety. A good mixture that seemed to go down well.

#### ***AND THEN:-***

For the first time in all the 50+ years of service to the Choir, I was taken ill and remained very poorly for several weeks. My special thanks of course to Hayley, and her Japanese friend Ikuku who filled the accompanist's role for stepping into the breach. Hayley led 4 rehearsals and conducted the first concert of 2024 (at Christchurch, Woodley) in my absence. I understand the Choir had a very enjoyable time at rehearsals, and the concert was a great success! It is truly fortunate that we have such willing and capable folk who can deal with situations such as these!

My thanks also to Steve Richardson for dealing with the piano equipment during this spell – and subsequently!

#### **SO WHAT NOW?**

We have a few weeks before any event, so it is my plan to get new material into the repertoire as soon as possible. The one good thing about my covid-like recent existence is that I have had time to thoroughly review my plans to deal with all that we will be facing this season.

My initial plans include:-

#### ***New or recycled material:-***

I am resurrecting **I DREAMED A DREAM** – removed from our repertoire some years ago due to legal issues. Gwyn's arrangement has now been published – we have copies which will be given to Choir.

**PRAYER OF THE CHILDREN**

**ISIS AND OSIRIS [PRIESTS CHORUS]**

**GYPSY CHORUS**

**THE PASTURE**

**COME FLY WITH ME**

**DANA DANA**

**CARRICKFURGUS**

**DEUS SALUTIS**

**GOD'S CHOIR**

**THE WIND BENEATH MY WINGS**

**WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT MY MUSIC**



We also have our Wales trip to look forward to. There are one a few things we need to prepare for that:-

THE WELSH NATIONAL ANTHEM

We shall sing two joint items with the Builth Choir:- **Morte Criste & Speed Your Journey** [which we need to revise!]

We are also singing in **Brecon Cathedral**. Remember that I shall not have Hayley for this event! However, there is a wonderful grand piano in the Cathedral for me to play.

***Possible items for that sing include:-***

Morte Criste

Ave Maria

The Pasture

True Love

Come All Who Thirst

Evening Prayer

You Raise Me Up

The Rose

Be Still My Soul

Shubert Sanctus

I Dreamed A Dream

*I am currently liaising with Adrian Morgan, the conductor of the Builth MVC regarding our contributions to the events there. Hopefully all will be finalised soon.*

CW advised that the Choir need to ready for each particular venue at which they are performing, e.g. Brecon Cathedral (Grand Piano). He is looking at the more straightforward songs to achieve this. We also need to be well prepared for Morte Christe and Speed your Journey, which will be performed together with Builth Choir with CW conducting. The songs selected for the Wales Trip give us good choice for the season.

CW advised that A440 have requested to be our support for our June concert. This was agreed on the basis that they are joining us as a support act and will be reimbursed as such.

Clive

**08/24 Secretary's report:**

Business as usual, nothing to report

Steve Richardson

SR has circulated a Document setting out what we are required to retain and whose responsibility this should be.

He requested approval for the following areas and this was approved by the Committee.

Financial Documentation      Treasurer

Committee AGM records      Secretary

Trustee details	More research required
Policy documents	Secretary
Serious H&S incidents	H&S officer
Donations	Treasurer
Member records	Treasurer
Learning tracks	Section Leaders

Programmes to be digitised/photographed or destroyed

**ACTION: All relevant committee members to take forward**

### 9/24 Concert Secretaries Report

[Reading Male Voice Choir 2023 – 2024 season](#)

#### Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

Plans in place, visited Abbey School and will send out document to all with new details for this year. There are slight changes to last year.

#### Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Walkers Memorial Service, Reading Minster 4.00pm

We are NOT singing at this event this year, please remove from your diaries

#### Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April until Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> and back late afternoon on 28<sup>th</sup>.

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April - Lunchtime concert @ 1pm in Brecon Cathedral

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April- Evening concert @ 7.30pm The Pavilion, Llandrindod Wells (couple of minutes walk from hotel)

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April Church service @ 10.30am Holy Trinity Church, across the road from hotel  
(This has to be confirmed)

#### Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Concert Trinity Church Lower earley 7.00pm

Raising funds for Trinity Church funds.

Currently in discussion with Time to sing choir to join us

At the moment I have had no email or phone response from the organisation team to discuss this concert, since booking us. Discussed with David Paine at Friday's rehearsal to get them to contact me.

#### Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2024

### Gala Concert for Young Singers Abbey school 7.00pm

celebrations concert of Young singers competition winners and others guests

Last concert of the season.

Note changes to car park arrangements, use of area for choir, singers and refreshments.

This will be explained nearer the time.

### [Reading Male Voice Choir 2024 – 2025 season](#)

Notable dates for you diary

#### Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024 @ 7.00pm

All Saints Church, Wokingham

Support act – A440 choir

Charity - !!!!

So this date has been provisionally booked now for months, However I have had no response at all from Kaleidiscopie Charity (Clive's award winner friend) after months of phone calls and emails. Now Clive is back have asked him to reach back out to her.

Without having a charity this is a non starter as church is too expensive for us to book for ourselves.

TO BE CONFIRMED

#### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 @ 7.00pm

Falkland Islands Chapel, Pangbourne College

Celebration of 200 years of RNLI

Charity – RNLI

Support act – The Senior Songsters (Sea Shanty group)

For those that have never been to the Falkland Islands Chapel it is an amazing venue and seats 600 people.

It is the perfect setting for RNLI to host a concert, but is very costly, As a choir our songs will be any that we have in our repertoire with the sea in mind. I have met up with one of the singers from The Senior Songsters who are based locally (former RMVC member used to belong to it!!) they are an acapella 8 piece group that ONLY sing sea shanty's.(need to confirm)

CONFIRMED

#### Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2024 @5pm

Christmas Concert

Reading Minster, Reading

I have spoken with Jacqui Voller and confirmed this as the date and will follow same format with a band with RMVC and Occasions singers.

## CONFIRMED

January/February 2025 – Nothing booked

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 @7.00pm  
St Mary's Church Purley on Thames  
TO BE CONFIRMED

Saturday March 8<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> 2025  
Young singers????? Auditions?????  
Abbey School, Reading

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025  
Choir trip to Mevagissey Cornwall

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Truro Methodist choir @ 7.30pm – Joint concert with Truro MVC

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025

St Andrew's Church Mevagissey @ 7.30pm – Joint concert with Mevagissey MVC

CONFIRMED

May/June 2025 – Nothing booked as awaiting what is happening with Young singers competition.

## Reading Male Voice Choir 2025 – 2026 season

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> Sept – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025

We will host the visit of Mevagissey MVC

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> Sept 25 to meet and greet

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 25 (any suggestion for venue welcome) for a joint concert

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Sept 25 - I have already approached Reading Minster about the choir singing their on the sunday which is favourable Choir leave after this.

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## To be discussed at meeting

- Young singers for 2025 – yes or no? If no what else instead
- Difficulties of getting bookings or at least getting confirmed
- Mevagissey Trip in 2025 - any requirements or do I start on this straight after Built Trip
- Mevagissey visit to Reading - Budget and small group to make arrangements
- Foreign trip for 2026 - suggestions

### **Builth trip**

Pick up on Thursday around 10.30am

Rehearsal for the Pavilion concert to be 6.30-7.15pm (Dinner at 5.30pm Saturday)

Trinity Church to confirm our attendance on Sunday. MB to advise that we wish to attend.

RL enquired if we should have a gift for Builth Choir and this was agreed.

**ACTION: AE to prepare**

The hotel has to be paid by 1<sup>st</sup> March.

There will be an Afterglow after the Pavilion Concert and we need to be prepared for what we will sing at this event.

### **Further information about upcoming events:**

8<sup>th</sup> June – Trinity Church – Charity FAITH

October concert charity – Kaleidoscope

November charity RNLI, with a sea shanty group

Mevagissey next year. MB requests a small group to assist and consider a budget

2026 – Consider if we want a foreign trip. Ireland was suggested

### **10/24 Young Singers competition/concert**

Young Singer's Competition 2024 update

Now that the closing date for entries has passed (late entries will be accepted) see below an update for this year's YS competition.

- Entries: (see below) We currently have 18 entries spread across all 3 age groups - you will notice a few familiar names! (last year we received 21 entries):

- Timescales:

- Auditions: Saturday 9th March

- Initial confirmation of invite to audition - Monday 5th February requesting:

- confirmation of attendance

- an RMVC accompanist (copies of music to be submitted by Monday 26th February

Responses to above to be received by Sunday 1February

- Individualised messages rehearsal and audition times to be sent on Friday 16th February.

We now have 16 participants and the event is coming together nicely.

RL feels that a biennial event is more appropriate after this year, and this was agreed by the committee. This also avoids a clash of events with Abbey School which allows us to amend the timings.

### **11/24 Health and safety update**

CP raised concerns about stage crowding at concerts and it was confirmed that this matter was considered when agreeing bookings.

It was suggested that it may be appropriate to place a row of chairs in front of the choir to accommodate those who find difficulty standing or coming on and off stage.

#### **12/24 Social Media/Website**

CC is managing a calendar of concert sites and RL expressed his thanks to CC for his work regarding the Young Singers and other work he undertakes on our behalf.

All committee members need to consider committee roles prior to the next meeting in June where we plan the AGM

**ACTION: All members consider committee roles by next meeting**

A reminder that the next 2 rehearsals will be at Christchurch Woodley.

**ACTION: RL to mention at rehearsal 23 Feb**

**A.o .b.**

#### **14/24 Proposed meeting dates for 2024**

**6<sup>th</sup> June 2024, AGM 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024**