

Reading Male Voice Choir

Minutes of a committee meeting held at Hawkedon School on 12th September 2024

Present:

Members: John Kay, (JK), Chairman;

Steve Richardson (SR) Secretary; Martin Butler (MB) Concert Secretary; Section Leaders (SLs): Bob Hill, (BH); Andrew Evans (AE);

Officers: Christopher Peck (CP) Health & Safety Officer; Jon Saverton (JS) Social Secretary; Nigel Shaw (NS) Stage Manager

Minutes: Steve Andrewes

Musical Director Clive Waterman (CW)

01/24 Apologies were received from

John Carr (Deputy Chairman), Arnie Howell (SL, 2nd Tenors); Paul Moir (SL Basses): Mike Jearey (Treasurer)

02/24 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record of the matters which took place on 13th June 2024. **(Please see postscript below.)**

03/24 Matters arising from the minutes:

AE is progressing, with Time Core, our requirement to place CDs and/or other items on line.

They make an annual charge equivalent to \$15 and require access to our artwork.

AE will discuss with Chris Carr, specific tracks to be linked to the website as CDs may produce some copyright issues.

ACTION: AE to progress with CC.

The document regarding concert strategy, produced by John Carr was again deferred as JC was unable to attend. Also, MB will not be in attendance at our next meeting so this item will be deferred until both parties are available.

The production of a recruitment video will be ready by the end of next week.

The introduction by CW will be filmed prior to the rehearsal tomorrow (13th Sept).

The matter regarding certain items of interest to the Borough Architect, and contained in our lock up, is to be progressed.

ACTION: AE to discuss with John Adams which documents are likely to be of most interest.

The action point regarding digital storage of programmes was deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION: CW to liaise with AE

04/24 RMVC Chairman's Report

JK welcomed the Committee to a new season and welcomed Bob Hill as the new Section Leader for the Top Tenors, replacing Mike Jearey who becomes our Treasurer. He also welcomed 'Sav' Saverton as Social Secretary. A warm welcome too to Tim Small who becomes Equipment Moves co-ordinator.

Thanks were also recorded to Ryland Lee, outgoing Chairman, for his outstanding leadership throughout our 50 years anniversary year celebrations; the COVID pandemic and, of course setting up the Gwyn Arch Young Singers Competition which has been run successfully for the last two years.

JK referred to the data submitted by some Committee Members via a 'SWOT Analysis' during the summer break. It appears that the Choir has many strengths and faces some challenges in the future, particularly in relation to :

- Recruitment and Retention
- Community Engagement
- Marketing and Technology
- Innovation (including our Repertoire)

Details of the analysis and JKs summary are available from Section Leaders.

The Committee discussed the setting up of various 'workgroups' to consider the implications of this analysis. Overall, the Committee agreed with the approach to devise a change strategy to incorporate JK's suggestions. It was recognised that this could not happen overnight and, as a starting point, it was agreed to set up an initial working group to focus on Recruitment and Retention. JK undertook to produce 'Terms of Reference' for this group. The Committee would take the lead on these initiatives and would be free to 'co-opt' other choir members where their expertise would help the process.

ACTION JK

05/24 Section leader's reports:

Tenor 1 Report

This is my first report as Section Leader of the First Tenors.

The 1st tenor section has 2 long term sick members at the moment.

Clive Willey, who is waiting for a second operation on his ankle. He thinks it will be at least a year before he will be able to attend rehearsals again.

John Adams is in regular contact with Pat Connell. Pat seems on an even keel but it's unclear when or if he'll come back.

Individual sung music lines are a good thing. I have found them very beneficial at other choirs.

However, I myself have neither the technical know-how nor the equipment to be able to record them.

Also Noteworthy sadly does not work with Apple systems.

Regarding the repertoire, the general feeling is that some pieces could be updated to give the choir more appeal.

Bob

Tenor 2 Report.

Nothing to report other than the strong possibility of a new recruit joining the choir in the near future.

Baritone Report

Nothing to report

Bass Section Leader's Report

Re: John K's SWOT analysis. I am sorry I won't be at the meeting to talk about this, as I will be on holiday, but I have discussed the issues facing the choir with John and could tell that we both had much the same view. There is a well-known management phrase: "If you keep doing the same thing you will keep getting the same result." If we want to ensure the viability of the choir in the future then something has to change.

The issue of concert positions being in place for the final rehearsal before a concert has been discussed. I know I am not alone in feeling that safety on the staging is also an issue. I have compiled a diagram for the bass section showing everyone where they will be standing and where they should be heading when walking on. This can be used at pre-concert rehearsals.

The bass section has lost two members due to increasingly poor health since the last committee meeting with the departure of Paul Buckle and Richard Bolton. I have spoken to both and wished them well.

I discussed the production of singalong tracks as a learning aid with the section. The responses varied from disinterest to hostility. The general view was that Noteworthy wasn't broken so it didn't need fixing. If other sections find them useful then good for them, but I won't take the matter further with the basses.

Paul Moir

06/24 Treasurers report:

1. CURRENT BALANCES

Here is where we stand financially as of 31st August 2024, and my projections for the year to 31 May 2025.

Balance at the end of:	31 May 24	31 Aug 24	31 May 25
	Actual	Actual	Projected
Account:	£	£	£
Assets	18	18	18
Debtors	-	-	-
Metro Bank Current Account	7,241	9,241	7,021
Metro Bank Reserve Account	17,755	17,809	17,989
Metro Bank Tours & Events Account	14	4	0
Cash and cheques		-112	
Creditors	-	-	-
TOTAL	£25,028	£26,960	£25,028
RESERVES (net current assets)	£25,010	£26,942	£25,010

The balance as at the end of May 2024 are 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 £3,500 of members funds allocated to the upcoming trip to Cornwall.

2. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2024/25

The Budget approved at the AGM last year balanced income with expenditure.

Please see attached Budget Report comparing actuals to 8 September 2024 with the approved budget.

I highlight the following items on the report:

- Cornwall Trip costs expenses and member's payments
 - These were not included in the approved budget, and they will net to zero in the accounts
 - All members travelling and or staying in the hotel have paid their deposits and we are holding £3,500 in member's funds for the Cornwall trip
- All winners of the Young Singers Competition have now cashed their cheques and the final accounting for the competition are detailed below.
- We have received about 60% of the expected member's subs for the year 2024-25
- Income from the Reading Community Lottery (recorded under class i9 – Sundry Income). Due to the good response by members to the request by the committee last year, we are now receiving around £100/month, which is about double what we used to receive.

- As it is still early in the year, I am forecasting spending to match the budget

Net Core Expenditure is forecast to be - £2,143, balanced by net non-core expenditure.

Our Reserves would stay at £25,010 which is above our long-term target of £18,900 (£17,500 at 2022 prices).

A reserve of c. £2,500 is attributed to the YS programme.

Further staged payments for the April '25 trip to Cornwall will be scheduled with the members at the end of this calendar year.

3. Updates

Since the July AGM:

- We have received deposits from all members travelling to Cornwall in April 2025 and have paid deposits to secure the hotel and coach bookings.
- The Young Singers Gala concert had an income of £1,321 and costs of £811, net £510.

Finally, I intend to close the Tours & events account as

- a) it did not provide the expected separation of the funds related to the choir's core charitable activities from those related to our tours, and
- b) as a second "current" account it attracts substantial transaction fees and bank charges.

I will leave the account open while we receive the annual member's subscriptions (in case someone deposits to the wrong account) and will then ask Metro Bank to close it.

Mike Jearey

Treasurer

See below:-

1. Budget Report
2. August Bank Statements for Current, Reserve and Tours & Events account

1. Budget Report

Reading Male Voice Choir budget		08/09/2024						Forecast
Class	Approved 12 month budget	Actual To Date	Over/ under	%	Remaining Budget	Forecast	Over/ Under	
x0 TRANSFERS		-30	-30		30	0		
f0 FUNDS GENERATED								
<i>f1 Members' subscriptions</i>	7,954	3,175	-4,779	-60	4,779	7,954	-	
<i>f6 Members' tuition fees</i>	1,240	500	-740	-60	740	1,240	-	
<i>f2 Tax refunds on Gift Aid</i>	1,830		-1,830	-100	1,830	1,830	-	
<i>f3 Weekly choir raffle</i>	1,200	122	-1,079	-90	1,079	1,200	-	
f4 Sponsorship		400	400		-400	0	-	
f5 Donations, legacies	100		-100	-100	100	100	-	
c0 CHOIR ACTIVITIES								
c1 Concert fees	2,800		-2,800	-100	2,800	2,800	-	
c2 Sales: concert tickets	1,850	1,360	-490	-26	490	1,850	-	
c3 Sales: programmes	175	38	-137	-78	137	175	-	
c4 Sales: CDs, tapes	100		-100	-100	100	100	-	
c5 Concert tours and events	26,781	3,561	-23,221	-87	23,221	26,781	-	
c6 Social events		-200	-200		200	0	-	
c7 Refreshments (net)		-100	-100		100	0	-	
i0 OTHER INCOME								
i1 Bank &c interest	150	25	-125	-83	125	150	-	
i2 Contributions: uniform								
i9 Sundry income	528	287	-241	-46	241	528	-	
g0 COSTS OF FUNDRAISING								
g1 Fundraising, publicity	-520	-27	493	-95	-493	-520	-	
d0 COSTS: CHOIR ACTIVITIES								
d1 Concert expenses	-300	-828	-528	176	528	-300	-	
d2 Producing programmes	-140	-40	100	-71	-100	-140	-	
d3 Travel, accommodation	-26,781	-2,945	23,836	-89	-23,836	-26,781	-	
d4 Recordings							-	
d5 Social events							-	
s0 SUPPORT COSTS								
<i>s1 Musical Directors</i>	-9,597		9,597	-100	-9,597	-9,597	-	
<i>s2 Hire of rehearsal hall</i>	-3,500	-924	2,576	-74	-2,576	-3,500	-	
<i>s3 Music</i>	-500	-100	400	-80	-400	-500	-	
s4 Uniform	-500		500	-100	-500	-500	-	
s5 Equipment, transport	-900	-104	796	-88	-796	-900	-	
s6 Depreciation							-	
e0 MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRAT'N								
<i>e1 Administration</i>	-500	-972	-472	94	472	-500	-	
<i>e2 Trustees expenses</i>	-100	-150	-50	50	50	-100	-	
<i>e3 Insurance</i>	-170		170	-100	-170	-170	-	
e9 Sundry expenses		-144	-144		144	0	-	

y1 Gwyn Arch Young Singers	-1,200	-600	600	-50	-600	-1,200	-
Income	44,708	9,467	-35,241	-79	35,571	44,708	-
Expenditure	-44,708	-7,164	37,544	-84	-37,874	-44,708	-
Cash Flow	-0	2,303	2,303		-2,303		

Net Core Expenditure: - £2,143

Net Non-Core Expenditure: £2,143

24-25 Income without Cornwall Payments £17,927

24-25 Exp. without Cornwall costs -£17,927

07/24 Musical Directors Report

We have a full schedule for the spell up to Christmas with several events that will demand our attention. These are as follows:-

- October 12th Concert with the A440 Choir at All saints Church, Wokingham.
I am preparing the programme for this and negotiating the possible joint items we shall sing. I hope to complete this during the next few days. We shall revise 'Voice Of The Child' especially for this concert.

Joint items will be:-

Ave Maria – Arcadelt / Evening Prayer / Rhythm of Life

(I wish the Committee to know that Anita and I have recently resigned from the A440 Choir in order that I may focus my full attention on RMVC, and to give me a little more space for the work that is needed.)

- The next concert engagement is on November 2nd at the Falklands Church, Pangbourne. This is to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the RNLI. This will be a very significant event and we are currently working on the programme for this which will include:-
Sailing / Swansea Town / and the specially written Sea Shanty for this occasion.
I shall be visiting the Church in the next week or so.
- An additional concert has been requested by Crosfields School that may take place in All Saints Church, Reading. This would feature the School Choirs as well and negotiations are taking place regarding programme concert, timings etc.
- In addition to the above, we have been asked to attend two smaller events –
"Oddfellows Club" on Tuesday 12th November, and Pangbourne W.I. on Tuesday 10th December.
- Finally, this term, we have our annual Reading Minster Concert on Saturday 21st December. Preparations for this are already underway, necessary because Jacqui

Voller who arranges this event with me will be abroad for some time before this concert.

I am investigating the possibility of the young winner of our Gala Concert [Thomas Parkes] taking part in this concert.

The programme for this concert is currently being put together.

This term is going to be a full and demanding one but should be very enjoyable.

CHRISTMAS DINNER for RMVC is to take place at Sonning Golf Club on Thursday 12th December. I may not be able to attend this as Occasions have been asked to sing in Dorchester Abbey in support of the Air Ambulance. Hopefully I will be able to call in before this event is over to share some 'Christmas spirit' with those there!

PLEASE NOTE:- that sometime after Christmas I may be summoned to the RBH for a small operation which may impact on what I am able to do for a while. Hopefully this will not affect a great deal!

REPERTOIRE

The concert programme we have demands that we focus on certain pieces especially for those events. During the break I have been researching new music for the choir to sing and we have, or are about to purchase the following:-

Last of the Summer Wine - Ronnie Hazelhurst, arr Mike Sammes

Why We Sing – Greg Gilpin

These items will be added to the repertoire together with 'What would I do without my music (previously bought) and the items being especially prepared for particular concerts.

My thanks to all for your support!

Clive

08/24 Secretary's report:

- Updates continue
- Newsletters continue

Choir Documents

These are held on the website and are subject to annual review. Committee members are asked to look through these documents and bring any comments/amendments etc to the Committee meeting for discussion and potential agreement to change.

The welcome letter will have to have John Kay's name added so don't tell me that...

- Borrowing Equipment from Reading Male Voice Choir
- Catering advice for charity and community groups providing food
- Choir Officer Handbook
- Constitution
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

- Informal Singing Requests

- Member Handbook
- MEMBERSHIP FORM AND GIFT AID DECLARATION
- Data and Data Protection
- Privacy Statement
- Safeguarding Policy
- Section Leader Handbook
- Trustee Handbook
- Welcome letter

9/24 Concert Secretaries Report

2024 /2025 Season

You will see from all below we are now fully booked for the whole of 2025 and now am takings only booking for 2026.

We have had a request for an extra concert/informal @Crosfields school theatre for Reading Food bank. To discuss at meeting if possible to fit anything in

12th October 2024 7pm

All Saints Wokingham for Kaleidoscopic Charity with A440 Choir

Posters are already out as produced by charity not us, ticket link been sent. Steve has collected the physical tickets which I will have on sale at all rehearsals until the concert £12 each. Limited space for choirs to put belongings so come ready dressed. Very limited parking by church so car parking in public car parks, suggestion of car share where possible.

2nd November 2024 7pm

Falkland Islands Chapel for RNLI (200th Anniversary) with The Senior Songsters

I have been having monthly meetings since June for this concert, will become a 2 weekly meeting from next week. Have visited the Senior Songsters and heard them singing sea shanties, some will be for audience participation.

This Week RNLI are producing posters and tickets and starting promotion asap.

Tickets cost £15 and will include wine. Local pub is supporting with drinks. They currently have sponsorship for £600 confirmed and close to receiving another £600 to cover costs. An 8 page programme will be produced. I need to have a meeting with Clive ASAP to confirm songs, running order etc, will be a talk also at end of first half by someone for RNLI

Looking to sell the maximum tickets available of 500 and looking to raise in excess of £5000. Tickets on sale very soon through eventbrite and also from Garlands Organic shop in Pangbourne This will be our biggest concert of the year by far and is very time consuming so need the support of all to get all in place. Nigel and Clive need to visit Pangbourne college – Falkland island's chapel with or without me.

Tuesday 12th November 2024 2pm

Oddfellows Reading Informal concert

Seek more information from David Paine who was the link for this.

Tuesday 10th December 2024 2pm

Pangbourne WI - Informal concert

Last went to this went prior to Covid and they are happy to have us returning

21st December 2024 5pm

Reading Minster Christmas for Music Outreach project with Occasions Singers

This Carols by Candlelight will also feature the brass band from last year.

Jacqui and Clive to discuss the running order and Jacqui will prepare posters.

8th February 2025 7pm

Christchurch Woodley for Parkinsons Reading support act Time to sing Choir TBC

1st March 2025 7pm

St Mary's Church, Purley on Thames for church Support act TBC

Trip to Cornwall Thursday 3rd April – Sunday 6th April

4th April 2025

Truro Methodist Church with Truro Male Voice Choir

5th April 2025

St Andrews Church, Mevagissey with Mevagissey Male Voice Choir

26th April 2025 7pm

Venue Dorchester Abbey TBC Charity Parkinsons Oxford support TBC

Friday 16th May 2025 7pm

Venue All Saints Church, Downshire Square Reading for Royal Berks Charity support act The Barberettes

28th June 2025 7pm

Venue St Nicolas Church Taplow Charity Thames Hospice support act Downley Descants Choir

2025 /2026 Season

27th September 2025 7pm

Venue TBC Mevagissey will be in Reading for Concert with RMVC

1st November 2025 7pm

Venue St James Church, Newbury Charity Parkinsons Newbury Support TBC

20th December 2025 5pm

Reading Minster Christmas for Music Outreach project with Occasions Singers

I will also be looking for some dates where we can sing in either or both Woodley Precinct and or Broad Street Mall during next season, most likely would be on a Saturday morning/lunchtime - TBC

Trip to Cornwall

All the bookings are now in place for both hotel and coach for the Trip to Cornwall on 3rd April 2025. Thank you all for those going that have sent in the first deposit of £50 per person. The room bookings are now confirmed with little room for any changes.....

The next payment will be due **BEFORE Christmas** in middle of December and will be somewhere between £150 - £200 per person, then another payment due by middle of February. once we have our next committee meeting Mike and myself will confirm the payment requirements with dates and amounts for you can plan for when to pay. if you wish to make a monthly payment please speak direct with Mike Jearey to discuss.

Numbers are below, on top of these 3 choir members and their partners are joining us for concerts but travelling and staying independently.

Hotel Rooms		Choir People	
Double (2)	54 people (27 rooms)	Choir	41 + 3 MD 2
Twin (2)	12 people (6 rooms)	Top Tenor	12
Single	7 people (7 rooms)	2nd Tenor	11 + 1
TOTAL	73 people (40 rooms)	Baritones	9 + 1
Travel		Basses	9 + 1
Coach	53 and driver 1	Total	41 + 3
Drive	18 (9 cars) + Train 1		
TOTAL	73 people	Supporters	29 + 3 Driver 1

MB advised that there was very little parking at All Saints Wokingham and advised choristers to car-share where possible.

The Falklands Chapel, where our November Concert will be staged, seats 600 and looks to be a very big event. RNLI have already received substantial sponsorship funds.

A request has been received for a Concert at Crosfields School. The event is to include the school choir in some capacity. An initial date of 30th November has been suggested and MB/SA will liaise to take matters forward.

JK highlighted that there are many costs for the members to be paid in December.

i.e. Subs (if still outstanding), Christmas Dinner and further deposits etc for the trip to Cornwall.

10/24 Social Media/Website

AE is progressing the provision of an Instagram account for the Choir. It was suggested that we do not need to hold onto our Twitter account.

CW mentioned that his daughter is very well versed regarding social media and may be able to assist us where necessary.

ACTION: CW to speak to his daughter with a view to advising Committee in this respect.

The Young Singers Concert video will be ready for issue next week and AE will collect final orders tomorrow (13 Sep). The quality of the video is very good.

CW suggested that he would like to invite Thomas Parks (the winner of the youngest section of the event) to sing Once in Royal David's City at the Christmas Service at the Minster.

ACTION: CW to speak to Thomas Parks

11/24 Health and Safety Report

A number of documents need to be updated to reflect the change of Chairman.

There are also some updates in respect of Good Practice etc.

All relevant equipment will have been PAT tested prior to our first concert in October.

These will take place when CP undertaking other routine checks.

MB emphasised the need to further stress the safety requirement to follow rules when walking on or off stage. MB will report regular offenders to their Section Leaders.

There will shortly be a fire briefing and a request to read all relevant documents.

ACTION: CP and SR to carry out all above tests and changes as required.

12/24 Christmas Dinner

This event will take place at Sonning Golf Club on 12th December at an estimated cost of £50 (dependent upon numbers). There will be a guest performer.

A show of hands will be requested at tomorrow's rehearsal (13 September).

BH requested that when his village choir perform at our June Concert, they will be joining us to sing. CW confirmed that this will be the case.

The Voice will; be available at tomorrow's rehearsal.

13/24 Proposed meeting dates for 2024/25

5th December, 20th March, 19th June, AGM 4th July.

'Postscript to Committee Minutes of 12th September 2024

Long Service Awards

Under item 12/24 c of the Committee Meeting on 13 June, the Committee had a discussion relating to timings of presentations of Long Service Awards and the consensus was that these presentations should be made on, or as close as possible to, the anniversary date of the member joining Reading Male Voice Choir. This should be done during a weekly choir rehearsal and not at the AGM.

This discussion was not formally recorded in the minutes of the 13th June Committee Meeting and the purpose of this postscript is to record that the Trustees have now formally confirmed and endorsed the decision to present Long Service Awards at the first available rehearsal after the anniversary date. This was done by email voting after the current Committee Meeting and the endorsement was unanimous.

This amendment will be included in the Members' Handbook. In addition, the recognition of long serving members anniversaries, during the preceding year, will continue to be included in the AGM proceedings, normally as part of the Chairman's Report.'

Many thanks and regards

John