

Reading Male Voice Choir

Minutes of a committee meeting held at Hawkedon School on 5th December 2024

Present:

Members: John Kay, (JK), Chairman; John Carr (JC) Deputy Chairman; Mike Jearey (MJ) Treasurer
Steve Richardson (SR) Secretary; Section Leaders (SLs): Arnie Howell (AH); Andrew Evans (AE);
Paul Moir (PM)

Officers: Christopher Peck (CP) Health & Safety Officer; Nigel Shaw (NS) Stage Manager

Minutes: Steve Andrewes

Musical Director Clive Waterman (CW)

01/24 Apologies were received from

Martin Butler (MB), Concert Secretary; Bob Hill (BH), Section Leader 1st Tenors; Jon Saverton (JS)
Social Secretary

02/24 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record of the meeting which took place on 12th September 2024

03/24 Matters arising from the minutes:

AE advised that he had not yet had the opportunity to progress matters regarding the Video and liaison with the Borough Architect but will take these forward shortly. Also, he anticipates completing the Instagram access imminently.

With regard to the storage of numerous items, CW will put together a list.

CW confirmed that his daughter is happy to share her knowledge and AE will speak to her in respect of Social Media matters.

ACTION POINTS:

AE to complete Recruitment Video and Instagram access.

AE to speak with CW's daughter re social media

CW to put together a list of items in storage for AE to investigate.

AE confirmed that we now have 976 followers in Facebook.

CP confirmed that all required testing, e.g. PAT tests etc, have been completed.

04/24 RMVC Chairman's Report

JK advised that the concert in Wokingham had raised just over £900 for Kaleidoscopic and the concert for RNLI's 200th anniversary had raised £3,568. New pieces have been added to the repertoire with more new songs in the pipeline for the New Year.

The Committee has ratified the decision taken last year to present Long Service Awards during the course of the year, when anniversaries occur rather than to wait until the AGM. We have also

reviewed and strengthened the Good Practice – Concert Guidelines and established a Music Advisory Team (which has yet to meet!).

The Choir is now preparing for the Christmas season which includes two informal performances for the Oddfellows and the Pangbourne WI; the Christmas dinner and culminating with the Christmas Concert on 21st December.

Looking further ahead, JK also advised that arrangements for our Cornwall ‘mini-tour’ in early April 2025 are progressing well and we have a full concert programme for the season thanks to the effort of the Concert Secretary! JK expected that we will be learning new pieces after the Christmas Break and requested that Section Leaders encourage their sections to use Noteworthy and any other available learning aids as much as possible to learn the notes and thereby avoid spending too much precious time ‘note-bashing’ during rehearsals.

4a. Music Advisory Team

The Committee has established a Music Advisory Team which will report their activities to the Committee at each meeting. Terms of Reference for the MAT are posted in the Members Area of our website.

4b. Recruitment and Retention Working Group.

JK referred to the Committee’s decision taken at the last Committee meeting to set up a Recruitment and Retention Working Group and advised that, although he had developed and distributed Draft Terms of Reference for the Group, further action on this initiative had been deferred to this meeting.

Decision: Following further discussion, the Committee reconfirmed the decision to set up a Recruitment and Retention Working Group and requested that a face-to-face meeting be arranged to progress this in the New Year.

ACTION: JK to resend TOR and arrange a face-to-face meeting in January

4c. Proposal for Collaboration between RMVC and Berkshire Music Trust Singing Day and Gala Concert.

JK had distributed details of a proposal to support a BMT project focussed on encouraging boys to sing. This support would be both financial and practical involving some RMVC members participating in a singing workshop on 22nd June 2025 and a RMVC performance at a Choir Festival on 6th July 2025. He stated that this proposal had been initiated last year by the past Chairman. Planning for this initiative is at an early stage so few details are available at present.

Decision: Following discussion, it was agreed in principle that RMVC would continue discussions with BMT to determine details of how we could support and participate in this important initiative. The Committee further agreed to allocate unbudgeted funds of £250 to support the two events. Final and full approval of practical support will be subject to consultation with, and availability of, appropriate choristers and our MD.

ACTION: JK to take forward in liaising with BMT and update the Choir at next week’s rehearsal..

05/24 Section leader's reports:

Tenor 1 Report

BH was unable to attend but had sent a written report. He advised that there were 17 1st tenors of which 2 were on long term sick leave. Of the remaining 15, average attendance at rehearsal and concerts is 13.

John Adams will represent the 1st Tenors on the Music Advisory Team and he has asked all the T1s for their input already.

Tenor 2 Report.

AH stated that there were 12 2nd Tenors that were 'match-fit' plus 4 members who were experiencing medical issues. AH was concerned we may lose more T2s – which could then become an issue.

He also reported that most of the section continues to meet socially

He was concerned The Second Tenor section continues to lose people. John Oversby says he will be back soon, but for how much longer is moot. David Ewens and Jim Grufferty continue to attend rehearsals but no longer attend performances. Fred Holloway appears to be back in vertical mode, but he isn't always forthcoming about his state of health. In short, we currently have twelve members who are match-fit. Lose any more members due to illness or moving away (or indeed anything else) then it might become an issue.

The section continues to meet socially on occasion for tea and buns and there are usually about eight or nine of us, which is okay. I have asked them about their opinions of the music repertoire but the problem is that if you get ten choristers together you get at least twelve opinions.

Baritone Report

AE stated that the section had been saddened to hear of the recent death of Robin John's wife. Gaynor was a staunch supporter of RMVC and came to nearly every concert and tour. Her support via Facebook was also much appreciated. AH added that our deepest condolences are conveyed to Robin. Also, he stated the section's appreciation to Robin for finding the time to attend all rehearsals during Gaynor's illness.

Bass Section Leader's Report

PM reported that the Bass section has gained a new member in Mike Fox. This was particularly welcome as we lost two Bases at the end of last year. Mike has sung with choirs before, and I feel he will be a benefit to RMVC once he has settled in.

One Bass member has had to 'pull out' of next year's trip to Cornwall on health grounds.

06/24 Treasurers report:

1. CURRENT BALANCES

Here is where we stand financially as of 30th November 2024, and my projections for the year to 31 May 2025.

Balance at the end of:	31 May 24	30 Nov 24	31 May 25
	Actual	Actual	Projected
Account:	£	£	£
Assets	18	18	18
Debtors	-	-	-
Metro Bank Current Account	7,241	22,954	6,590
Metro Bank Reserve Account	17,755	17,837	17,900
Metro Bank Tours & Events Account	14	4	-
Cash and cheques		1,087	-
Creditors	-		
TOTAL	£25,028	41,881.46	24,490
RESERVES (net current assets)	£25,010	£41,863.46	24,472

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 addition to the above, currently, the choir is holding £13,460.93 of members funds allocated to the upcoming trip to Cornwall in April 2025 and the Christmas Dinner on 12 December 2024.

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 30 November 2024 with the approved budget and a forecast to May '25.

I highlight the following items on the report:

- All Member's Subs for the 24-25 choir year have been received, totalling 8,673.00.
- 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 (apart from 1) travelling and or staying in the hotel have paid their initial payments so that we can start to pay hotel costs in January.
 - We are holding £11,352.06 in member's funds for the Cornwall trip.
 - Further staged payments for the April '25 trip to Cornwall will be scheduled for February 2025 with a small final payment after we return and have captured any sundry costs while on tour.
- We are holding £2,315.00 in member's funds for the Christmas Dinner.
- Income from the Reading Community Lottery to date in this FY is £478.00
- I am forecasting spending to exceed the budget by £651.00

Net Core Expenditure is forecast to be - £2,680, exceeding net non-core expenditure by £651.

Our Reserves would reduce slightly to £24,472 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.

Mike Jearey

Treasurer

5th December 2024

Budget Report

Reading Male Voice Choir Budget Report 03/12/24

Class	Approved 12 month budget	Actual	Over/under	%	Remaining Budget	Forecast May '25
x0 TRANSFERS		-30	-30		30	30
f0 FUNDS GENERATED						
f1 Members' subscriptions	7,954	7,493	-461	-6	461	7,954
f6 Members' tuition fees	1,240	1,180	-60	-5	60	1,240
				-		
f2 Tax refunds on Gift Aid	1,830		-1,830	100	1,830	1,830
f3 Weekly choir raffle	1,200	372	-829	-69	829	1,200
f4 Sponsorship		400	400		-400	400
f5 Donations, legacies	100	150	50	50	-50	150
c0 CHOIR ACTIVITIES					0	
c1 Concert fees	2,800	237	-2,563	-92	2,563	2,800
c2 Sales: concert tickets	1,850	1,873	23	1	-23	1,850
c3 Sales: programmes	175	338	163	93	-163	175
c4 Sales: CDs, tapes	100	46	-54	-54	54	100
c5 Concert tours and events	26,781	11,413	-15,368	-57	15,368	26,781
c6 Social events		2,880	2,880		-2,880	2,880
c7 Refreshments (net)		-100	-100		100	-100
i0 OTHER INCOME		100	100		-100	100
i1 Bank &c interest	150	57	-93	-62	93	150
i2 Contributions: uniform					0	
i9 Sundry income	528	412	-116	-22	116	528
g0 COSTS OF FUNDRAISING					0	
g1 Fundraising, publicity	-520	-119	401	-77	-401	-520
d0 COSTS: CHOIR ACTIVITIES					0	

d1 Concert expenses	-300	-988	-688	229	688	-988
d2 Producing programmes	-140	-359	-219	156	219	-359
d3 Travel, accommodation	-26,781	-960	25,821	-96	-25,821	-26,781
d4 Recordings					0	
d5 Social events		-440	-440		440	-2,880
s0 SUPPORT COSTS					0	
s1 Musical Directors	-9,597	-3,199	6,398	-67	-6,398	-9,597
s2 Hire of rehearsal hall	-3,500	-1,126	2,374	-68	-2,374	-3,500
s3 Music	-500	-485	15	-3	-15	-500
				-		
s4 Uniform	-500		500	100	-500	-500
s5 Equipment, transport	-900	-386	514	-57	-514	-900
s6 Depreciation					0	
e0 MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRAT'N						
e1 Administration	-500	-987	-487	97	487	-987
e2 Trustees expenses	-100	-150	-50	50	50	-150
				-		
e3 Insurance	-170		170	100	-170	-170
e9 Sundry expenses		-256	-256		256	-256
y1 Gwyn Arch Young Singers	-1,200	-600	600	-50	-600	-600
Income	44,708	26,950	-17,758	-40	17,758	-651
Expenditure	-44,708	-10,187	34,522	-77	-34,522	
Cash Flow	-0	16,763	16,763			
Net Core	-2,143	3,097				-2,680
Net Non-Core	2,143	13,696				2,030
						-651
Income without Cornwall & Christmas Dinner costs	17,927	12,657				
Expenditure without Cornwall & Christmas Dinner costs	-17,927	-8,786				

MJ mentioned that, whilst there are substantial credit balances in the report, these refer to funds which will shortly paid out in respect of the Christmas Dinner and the trip to Cornwall.

All subscriptions have now been paid and we are receiving £100 per month from the from the Reading Lottery.

MJ clarified a number of queries raised by the Trustees.

07/24 Musical Director's Report

CW stated that, having completed our concerts for October and November, his focus had turned to the forthcoming Christmas events.

The programme for the Minster concert has been agreed and choir members have folders containing all the required items. These folders will be revised and used for future festive performances, reducing work and expenditure.

This year's concert will include Occasion Singers, Thomas Parks (the youngest of the three 'Young Singers' winners) and the Five T's brass group once again, who will add their special brass sound to our Christmas concert. CW stated that, as we have fewer choirs taking part, there will be more available room. RMVC will be positioned in the choir stalls so no need to worry about getting off and on staging. CW advised that he is planning to visit the Minster in the near future. He hoped that the grand piano will be available and he anticipated that we would be able to produce a slick and well managed event.

MEMBERSHIP

CW was pleased to note that possible new members are still appearing! The latest, Mike Fox seems keen, able and ready to join the basses. New choristers are always welcome!

REPERTOIRE

CW noted that new music was being added to the repertoire which would make programmes and events easier to prepare with more variety. New pieces include:

Sailing & Swansea Town – learnt for the RNLI concert;
Last of the Summer Wine - Ronnie Hazelhurst, arr Mike Sammes

In addition, the following brand new pieces are currently being prepared;

Why We Sing – Greg Gilpin and
What Would I Do Without My Music - recently purchased
These items will be added to the repertoire soon.

A new music review group:-

John, our chairman, is setting up a group that will have input to future inclusions of repertoire items. This group will hopefully have a brief meeting before the Christmas break, then meet on a regular basis throughout the year. This group can feed in ideas and views from choir members which can then help to shape the decisions taken.

Finally, CW confirmed that he had received many very positive comments from Crosfields School following the recent concert.

08/24 Secretary's report:

SR stated that he had been in communication with Ross, the School co-ordinator, following the recent lock out incident. The school has now installed a Key Safe and we will shortly receive instructions for its usage.

SR reported that 63 tickets have been sold for the Christmas Dinner, bringing us virtually to break-even point.

Menus, Singer, and place cards are now all in place.

9/24 Concert Secretaries Report

MB advised that his wife had been admitted to hospital and was likely to be there for some time. In addition, it is likely that he will be off work and in hospital himself very early in the New Year. He has almost completed arrangements for the concerts in February and March. MB stated that he would keep in touch with JK and MJ and will ask for help if required

MB said that he intended to continue as Concert Secretary for the foreseeable future and he appreciated the offers of help which he will call for if necessary.

MB provided the following details on future bookings to date:

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.

So far this season 2 successful concert have raised the following and awaiting result of the third concert from last weekend for Crosfields school charity.

All Saints Wokingham raising £903.22 for Kaleidoscopic UK

Falkland Islands Chapel raising £3,568.00 for RNLI

What's coming up

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 has tickets on sale.

8th February 2025 7pm

Christchurch Woodley for Parkinsons Reading support act Time to sing Choir

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

NO times or ticket details available for these yet

26th April 2025 7pm

Venue will NOT be Dorchester Abbey - awaiting venue 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 7.30pm

Venue St Edmund Champion Church. Mevagissey will be in Reading for Concert with RMVC as visit choir.

Mevagissey MVC are travelling to Reading on Friday and likely to be staying at hotel at Select car leasing stadium. I am looking to see if we could do some type of social event to meet with them by inviting along to our rehearsal Friday night, I will write a plan to present to next meeting. Saturday will be free for them to do what they want with a concert in the evening. Followed by after glow possibly at Shire Horse on A4 Maidenhead. Sunday they will be leaving early to perform in Salisbury on way back to Cornwall.

1st November 2025 7pm

Venue St James Church, Newbury Charity Parkinsons Newbury Support TBC

No other dates are confirmed at this time and would be good to discuss at the next committee meeting ideas.....

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 were due beginning of December then another payment due by middle of February. Mike 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 directly with Mike Jearey to discuss.

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

From original booking just 1 drop out – David Adby (health reasons) I need to adjust rooms as David was in a twin (I will discuss with hotel

I need to speak with Mike Fox (new) as to if he wishes to join

Hotel Rooms

Double (2)	54 people (27 rooms)
Twin (2)	11 people (6 rooms)
Single	7 people (7 rooms)
TOTAL	72 people (40 rooms)
Travel	
Coach	52 and driver 1
Drive	18 (9 cars) + Train 1

Choir People

Choir	40 + 3 MD 2
Top Tenor	12
2 nd Tenor	11 + 1
Baritones	9 + 1
Basses	8 + 1
Total	40 + 3

TOTAL	72 people	Supporters	29 + 3 Driver 1
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10/24 Social Media/Website

Nothing further to report, apart from the action points agreed under matters arising.

11/24 Health and Safety Report

Annual maintenance:

- PAT testing of electrical equipment completed 5 Oct 2024.
- Staging equipment inspection completed 5 October 2024 – no major concerns.

Fire Safety:

- Annual fire safety briefings for Hawkedon School rehearsal venue given to Choir Members on 22 Nov 2024 and to Friends of Choir on 01 Nov 2024.

First Aid

- The Contents of the First Aid Kit were checked in October and some items removed as out of date. A burns gel was added to cater for possible scalds at rehearsals, and some microporous tape. The kit now contains an up-to-date contents list.
- The rota of First Aiders was prepared for the proposed concerts in the 2024-25 season and issued to the Concert Secretary and First Aiders on 17 Oct 2024.
- The new rota sheet also contains information about known Defibrillators (AED) at or adjacent to each venue.

Choir Accidents and First Aid Incidents:

- An incident occurred at the concert at All Saints Wokingham on 12 Oct 2024.
- A Choir member came close to fainting on stage towards the end of the concert.
- An Investigation Report was completed and circulated to the Committee on 15 Oct 2024. The most likely cause was the length of time that the choir members were on stage for the last section of the concert and raffle (over 30 mins).
- Further actions to mitigate the chances of this happening again were implemented:
 - Plan concerts to avoid standing/singing for longer than 20 minutes,

- Designate colleagues to assist those at higher risk,
- Chairs close to the stage to be made available for members to be able to take a break from standing, as needed,
- Members encouraged to discuss any concerns with their Section Leaders or the Stage Manager,
- Section Leaders to check on 'at risk' colleagues during the concert and encourage them to take a break if needed.
- This required an update to the Health & Safety Good Practice Document for Concerts, which was agreed with trustees and officers, and reissued on 28 Oct 2024.

Risk Management

- The Health and Safety Policy and Good Practice Guides were updated in September 2024 and uploaded to the website.

Christopher Peck (Health & Safety Officer), 28 Nov 2024

CP thanked the Committee for their positive response to recent changes.

CP now has specific information for each of our venues regarding the availability of defibrillators.

12/24 Meeting date for 2025

20th March, 19th June, AGM 4th July