

WHITEHALL CHOIR

WHITEHALL CHOIR – NOTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING – 9TH MARCH 2006

Members attending:

Samantha Foley (Chairman)
Ken Holmes (Hon Treasurer)
Miranda Douce (Business Manager)
Moira Purkiss (Alto Rep)
David Pite (Tenor Rep)
Laurence Grace (Librarian)
Jen Brzozowska (DTI Liaison) (part)

Apologies received from:

Paul Spicer (Conductor)
Ruth Eastman (Publicity)
Martin Humphreys (Publicity)
Andrew Hyde (Bass rep)
Jonathan Williams (Hon Sec) was
intending to attend but got stuck on a
train – lightning at Waterloo

In attendance: Tamsin Cousins, Philip Pratley.

1. **Website** – Tamsin Cousins and Philip Pratley presented the findings of the Team set up in January 2006 (with Moira, Sam and Laurie) to put together a design brief for revamping the Choir website.

The brief was sent to 10 companies initially. Six companies were invited to tender but only 3 actually did. One company apologised for delay to the deadline, promising a response prior to the meeting, but nothing arrived.

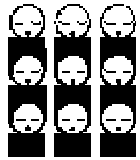
The tenders were marked against various criteria by the team. Technical ability was weighted with a lesser proportion of the marks (if they had it, it showed), but understanding Choirs needs and future enhancements were considered essential.

Moira identified a potential link to Amazon, which could raise funds for the Choir. At least one of the tenderers knew about this potential. Sam also noted that we needed a firm who would optimise the new website for search engines etc.

The three sites were discussed with examples of their work shown: SiteWright, Onepoyle and Track 5. SiteWright and Onepoyle were clearly ahead of the third on marks; SiteWright's quote was nearly double Onepoyle's in money terms, but some costs could possibly be trimmed. Onepoyle was a one-man band – seen as a potential drawback by a number of the Committee. However it was very choir oriented.

Discussion concluded that Tamsin would contact SiteWright and Onepoyle for some clarifications eg future technical support, necessity of all items quoted for; responses would then be balanced against the general criteria, however SiteWright were looking like the clear favourite so long as their costs could be trimmed. It was decided not to wait for the fourth potential quote. The deadline for instigating the work is Monday 13th March.

Action – Tamsin to contact tenderers and report back to website team; Sam/Ken to approve final bid. (Subsequently Sitewrights have been awarded the contract).



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Sam thanked the Team for their work.

2. Attendance/Recruitment/Retention

Attendance has been rather disappointing this term, and both Sam and Paul Spicer were concerned at the overall effect this was having on the Choir. Sam/part reps reminded the Committee that the Choir is actually in the nice position of having a waiting list of those wishing to join, and that if places in the choir were being taken by those unable to attend on a regular basis, then this was obviously an issue. Time-keeping is also a problem, causing regular disruption to rehearsals by the ringing of the doorbell repeatedly etc. Retention was discussed, and concluded to also be dependent, in a significant way, on the attendance/time keeping issues – ie that repeatedly disrupted rehearsals put people off the choir. (Wider question of recruitment – particularly to the tenor/bass parts – to be discussed next term, linked to the launch of the new website.)

Committee re-confirmed the Choir’s “policy” on attendance (eg, the requirement to attend at least two thirds of rehearsals each term, and the conductor’s discretion on whether members might not be invited to sing in a concert if their attendance was too poor). In addition, the Committee discussed a variety of ways in which the impact of the continuously ringing doorbell could be mitigated; this included the possibility of a trial period for next term, of the church door only being opened at specified times after 6.35pm (perhaps every 15 mins), to avoid the problem of the disruptive bell; and to explore once again with the Church the possibility of using the main church doors, which don’t involve the bell. Action – Sam to explore options and advise.

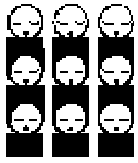
In addition, persistent latecomers would be approached individually in the first instance. Action – part reps.

3. Finances

The current financial position was discussed. The Committee agreed that the general reserves were broadly at the correct levels, but could increase by about £2k for complete safety. Discussion of future publicity budget concluded that an increase should not be necessary (given the overspend for the Spring term), however the need to have a more formal publicity strategy in advance of future concerts was agreed. (Action Martin/Ruth). Committee also agreed that a reduction in the number of hard copy flyers for the future was appropriate, given the increasing applicability of e-communication.

4. AOB

Sam explained that, disappointingly, there are problems with the proposed St Mathew Passion concert at Easter 2007. Our booking with SJSS is firm, but the Hall had taken at least 2 further bookings for Bach Passions to be performed within days of ours (by professional groups we understand), which



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is very disappointing (but out with our control). Also, the stage capacity for such a performance at SJSS has proven to be a problem, given that the choir has increased in size since the booking was made. We now find that we could not accommodate all the current membership (around 80) plus the size of orchestra, and multitude of soloists at this venue.

The Committee explored the options and concluded that we either a) went elsewhere for this concert (with a loss of booking etc fee at SJSS, which would be quite significant) - however, finding an alternative was proving difficult and likely to be very costly, or b) changed the programme but retained the SJSS booking (Friday before Easter, which is a good "slot"). Actions - Sam to explore with Paul Spicer options for other pieces we might perform (St John Passion being a front runner); Jonathan to continue to pursue other venue options, and confirm financial loss we might anticipate from cancelling at SJSS. (UPDATE – we are now looking into performing the Bach *St Mark's Passion*, a relatively new addition to the music scene, recreated for performance from Bach's original music.)

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

JB/SF 17Mar06