

Whitehall Choir Committee Meeting: Thursday 27th February 2020

Venue: 8-10 Great George Street

Attendees: Philip Pratley (PP) - Chair; Patrick Haighton (PH) - Treasurer; Anne Courtney (AC) - Alto Rep; Simon Hunter (SH) - Tenor Rep; Sarah Rollinson (SR) - Treasurer Elect; Joanna Tomlinson (JT) - Music Director; Richard Grafen (RG) - Webmaster; Alison Williams (AW) - Librarian; Joanna Dacombe (JD) - Secretary

Apologies: Antonia Romeo (AR) - President; Ian Williamson (IW) - Bass Rep; Laura Lowenthal (LL) - Business Manager; Martin Humphreys (MH) - Publicity Manager; Kate Goulden (KG) - Soprano Rep.

Meeting Summary

PP opened the meeting, asking for any comments on November's minutes and January's summary and declared them approved. JD shared progress against key items on the actions log.

Item 1: Constitution amendments - progress update

SH reminded the committee of the two key issues; that the constitution does not make clear who the trustees of the charity are, and the way the Jubilee Fund is set up with its signatories puts the choir's assets outside of the control of its trustees. SH advised that a draft had been shared with the signatories and a productive meeting was held in January to discuss the amendments. SH confirmed that the final version was close to being agreed and this would be shared in advance of April's committee meeting, accompanied by a note highlighting and explaining the key changes (**Action 1**).

SH confirmed that this will ensure the choir has a more compliant financial policy and PH suggested that, once this work is complete, the committee should consider creating an investment strategy for the choir.

Item 3: Actions update - for 2020's concerts

A brief update was given on progress on the Rachmaninov concert in March. The majority of the remaining actions were related to the after-party; PP confirmed that we were still looking for someone to lead on this and we would be speaking to members of the new catering group (**Action 2**). PP advised that a similar format would be followed (a concert followed by a drinks reception) for the summer and Christmas concerts, and we would discuss and confirm for November's Monteverdi concert closer to the time.

PP confirmed that there would be no formal open rehearsal at the beginning of the Summer term as we are at complement. JT emphasised that, while we aren't actively recruiting, we will still welcome strong singers, particularly sopranos. AW confirmed she had made provision for c.10 spares for any new joiners next term, but that music availability for the Monteverdi could be an issue if large numbers were to attend at the start of the Autumn 2020 term.

Item 4: New role - Concert & Events Manager

PP confirmed that the Events & Concert Manager post has now been filled by Aileen Stanton. Historically there has been a lack of clarity over tasks and owners relating to event management so a draft RACI

document has been created for the committee to review and confirm. PP took the committee through the paper and amendments were discussed regarding missing actions, those that required alteration and those where the owner needed changing. The ambition is to finalise the document for the committee to approve, then establish a shared master spreadsheet with tabs for each role's responsibilities **(Action 3)**.

Item 5: 2021/22 Schedule

It was agreed that the current plans for the Autumn term open rehearsal should be amended to move it a week later to 8th September and market it on social media as a 'taster session with a social' rather than an open rehearsal **(Action 4)**.

PP shared that Diana Tsung had volunteered and been appointed Tour Lead and she was in the process of forming a small group to make up our tour committee. JT said she would share her availability for the tour to be passed on **(Action 5)**.

PP advised that following the last meeting a visit had been made to St Andrews, Holborn for consideration as our March 2021 concert venue. JT confirmed that the venue was ideal for this concert's staging requirements and a booking had been pencilled in **(Action 6)**.

Further to the recent communication of the intention to do a Passion in March 2022 in St John's Smith Square, JT advised the committee that she recommended it be the St John Passion (due to the length of the St Matthew Passion, and the logistics of organising a children's choir). Committee approved **(Action 7)**. AW asked if the St John's Passion would be suitable for the planned Come & Sing on 15th January 2022 and JT confirmed.

JT advised the committee that for the November 2021 concert she had been exploring a programme of Swiss composers, including the Frank Martin Mass for Double Choir, and was researching contemporary female composers.

The committee discussed the possibility of a recording in 2021/22. While it can be expensive and CD sales are negligible, JT advised that these are beneficial for the choir as there is always a marked improvement during a recording term. It was suggested that the committee consider a recording during the Summer 2022 term, using it for promotional purposes **(Action 8)**.

Item 2: Financial Update

PH flagged that item 2 had been missed and PP apologised for the error, requesting PH provide the committee with the update. PH shared a summary of the financial update documents, reminding the committee that there was provision for one large concert per year, such as those at St John's Smith Square. He highlighted that there are 2 concerts with small orchestras planned for the 2020/21 season so tickets should be sold early and the finances kept under close review.

SH commented that a recording in 2022 as well as a Passion in St John's Smith Square may not be ideal, so this should be taken into account during future discussions. PH confirmed that, given the fairly substantial surplus that has now been built up, the committee could still consider a project such as a recording or commission.

PH highlighted that the 2018/19 annual report had been delayed as David Tyrell had been unavailable for 6 weeks, but that there were no concerns. SH advised that he would be talking to David next week. The expectation was that David would sign off the accounts with some small suggestions. PH suggested

that a SGM be convened for the rehearsal on 31st March for the choir to vote on the accounts (**Action 9** - *afternote: moved forward to 17/03 rather than 31/03*).

AOB

- In KG’s absence, JD raised that a member of the sopranos was impressed with Constanza’s fundraising and asked if we could do more in that area. JT advised that the amount raised was less than we had given to St Peter’s for distribution across their charities, and it may be that theirs is more visible to members as they collect at concerts (**Action 10**). JT shared an ambition to commission a piece at some point and that we could consider fundraising specifically for this.
- JT asked if the recent photos had been put on the website; PP advised that the files would be shared with the social media team (**Action 11**).
- AW shared that she will be standing down from her post as Librarian later this year and subsequently leaving the choir after Christmas. PP and the committee thanked AW for her work in the role (**Action 12**).

Actions Summary

Ref	Action	Owner
1	Constitution amendment document to be finalised with summary note and distributed prior to April’s committee meeting	SH
2	Confirm lead for the March concert after-party	PP & JD
3	Events RACI spreadsheet to be updated with all of the committee’s amendments and reshared for review and sign off	JD
4	Update the schedule, cancel the church for 01/09/20 & rebook for 08/09/20	JD
5	Send JT’s availability to Diana for the Tour Committee to include in their planning	JD
6	Confirm the pricing & booking with St Andrew’s for 25/03/21; check if staging is required	JD & SR
7	Share with the choir that the intention is to do the St John’s Passion in March 2022	PP
8	Pencil in a recording to the 2021/22 schedule; committee members to consider any repertoire requests for JT and to discuss further at a future meeting	JD
9	Send a message for part reps to cascade confirming a SGM	PP
10	Share our charitable giving more publicly with choir members, and on social media	PP, MH
11	Share the recent photos with the social media team and make more use of them on social media and on our website	MH
12	Confirm a replacement for AW as Librarian and plan a handover	PP, AW