

Whitehall Choir Committee  
MINUTES of the  
meeting held on 18 January 2016  
St Peter's Eaton Square

**Present:** Jonathan Williams (Chair), Paul Spicer (Music Director), Patrick Haighton (Treasurer), Joanna Tomlinson (Secretary) Julie Dyg (Alto Rep), Kate Goulden (Soprano Rep) Richard Grafen (Webmaster), Mark Graver (Librarian), Martin Humphreys (Publicity), Daniel Lambauer (Bass Rep), Penny Prior (Business Manager), Alastair Tolley (Tenor Rep)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
Minutes 14/9/2015	Note: the meeting scheduled for 2/11/15 was cancelled. Amendment bottom para. p.2: change "interview" to "video"	
Choir Tour: Vienna; 28 April-2 May 2016	<p>Currently 34 singers: 10 sop; 9 alto; 6 tenor; 9 bass. Flights and accommodation to be finalised very shortly. PH was going to make list of each individual's contribution according to what they were buying into. DL thought the rule was simply that one group would pay the full price and one group would not pay for flight and hotel. He was concerned it could become very complicated otherwise. JW emphasised that it must be fair.</p> <p>It was AGREED that the whole choir would cover the costs of rehearsals and musicians, not just the tour choir. "Hangers On" would not pay for these costs.</p> <p>There was some finalising of the programme to do and decisions on joint choir pieces.</p> <p>DL/JW to liaise on the social programme choices which would need to be booked by the end of January.</p> <p>Rehearsal times needed to be firmed up: when to rehearse with the other choir; when to rehearse on the Saturday.</p>	<p>PH</p> <p>PS/JW</p> <p>JW/DL</p> <p>DL/JW/PS</p>
Finances (PH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>If</u> audience numbers were good and costs reduced we were on track for a small surplus of £5,000..</li> <li>● Athalia audience 324</li> <li>● Future programming was critical</li> <li>● the lack of BIS support would cost £600 in printing costs as things stood. <b>Programmes:</b> currently 20/30 tickets needed to be sold to cover programme printing costs. Usually about half the audience bought a programme. They needed to be cheaper and more concise: 4 pages needed to be cut. Other ideas from the committee: shorter biographies; colour only on the front; go to print earlier - use full choir list therefore, not the list of those actually singing at the concert; advertisements. However, it was thought important to include the words of the pieces being sung. Questionable whether A5 format worked if the words were too small to read. Further ideas please.</li> <li>● <b>Carol Concert proceeds:</b> currently these stood at £117 and would improve a bit. PH thought giving £60 to St Peter's was not adequate and proposed giving them £250 (there was no fee for the use of the church). This was agreed.</li> <li>● <b>Ticket pricing at St John's:</b> PP reported that for the first time ticket sales at the top level had fallen. The committee was not</li> </ul>	<p>All</p> <p>PH</p>

	<p>in favour of raising prices which was thought to be counter-productive. PH stressed that the three options were: higher audience numbers, higher prices or higher subscriptions. JW emphasised that we were only on the edge of a surplus and funds were needed to put on our larger concerts, recruitment and retention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Easyfundraising.org.uk:</b> PH asked the committee to look at this website. By making online purchases through them, a donation would go to the choir.</li> </ul>	All
Review of SJSS: Athalia 17 November	PS: Huge success. Underlines how well suited we are to singing Handel. Very good group of soloists. Athalia herself (Eve Daniell) a “knockout”. Good to perform a rare Handel work. PS would like to make it something of a specialism for the choir.	
Christmas Concert	PS: also very good and with the 3 rehearsals was performed to a good standard. Lovely to be in St Peter’s: warm, light and a decent organ. KG mentioned that it was rather too warm - to be noted for future years. JW had received conflicting views from the choir on the use of just one reader. Some liked the consistency, some missed the variety. A very difficult acoustic to read in.	
21 April: Holy Trinity Sloane Square	<p>The flyer was coming on well. <b>Database:</b> this could be built up using applications for tickets to the website and details that PH already had of past soloists etc. When PP sent out the tickets she could include an explanation of what details about forthcoming concerts/newsletter would be received and an easy-click opt-out procedure. JW: a procedure was needed for this. Also care concerning data protection. PH would hold the database.</p> <p>MH outlined his publicity plan for the concert including a promotional video, editorials/advertising in This is London and Pimlico Eye, distribution of flyers (2,000), 10 websites. We could also send a recording into “Meet my choir” on Radio 3 (see Radio 3- The Choir for examples).</p>	<p>JW/PH/PP/ RG</p> <p>MH</p> <p>All</p>
Choir Workshop: 11 June: St Mary le Bow	PS would find a facilitator. The music would not be based on concert music. We would probably use the European Sacred Music book as everyone will have a copy. The charge for the day would enable it to break even, but hopefully be £15 maximum. PH to advise. JW would remind the choir of the date at the next rehearsal and that regular workshops are part of the strategy for the choir and that everyone should participate. Timings would be something like: Arrive 1030pm for 11-1pm and 2-4pm.	<p>PS</p> <p>PH</p> <p>JW</p>
14 July: St James’s	MG would liaise with PS - having difficulties sourcing some music.	MG/PS
22 November: St John’s: Blackford/Mozart	PH/PS would source the orchestral music. Brandenburg Sinfonia would probably have the Mozart Divertimento. Which edition for the Coronation Mass?	PS/PH
Implementation of Choir Strategy	<p>Review of the four priorities for action (JW):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Choir development:</b> Workshop and Come &amp; Sing and Tour in 2016</li> </ol>	

3 Year Plan	<p><b>2. Repertoire Planning:</b> 3 year plan on the table with minimum of one orchestral concert p.a.(see below)</p> <p><b>3. Rehearsal Development:</b> not yet a schedule or feedback from PS for this term. Part reps could be more involved in this, particularly informing those who were absent as to what was covered.</p> <p><b>4. Audience Development:</b> see item above, under 21 April.</p> <p>Review of Focus Group discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember to put some focus on organ music</li> <li>Intranet: MH will try again to get choir help with government intranet.</li> <li>Katherine Herzberg was happy to take the proposal for an annual choir party further. Maybe after the AGM? JW would ask her.</li> <li>Feeling that committee is hidden away. MH suggests a regular survey with a standard questionnaire - useful for comparisons over time. One question could be why did you join us and has it turned out as you'd hoped? JT to alert Part reps as to when draft Minutes go onto website. Part reps to be pro-active in giving information.</li> <li>MH would like to do a competitive analysis with other choirs: subscriptions/programmes/ticket prices/audience/publicity. He would start work on this.</li> </ul> <p><b>3 Year Programme:</b> PS tabled a programme for 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19. JW had added suggestions as to venues. Comments: nothing pre-baroque. PS thought earlier repertoire would not suit the choir; is there enough for Ian at rehearsal and concert? Yes; should the summer concert always be at St Peter's after this year? possibly; March 2018: the possibility of performing Paul's Easter Oratorio or An Unfinished Remembering in collaboration with another choir. Paul would first ask Birmingham Bach Choir although they already had a 3 year plan. Twickenham or Wimbledon Choral could then be approached. It was agreed to pursue this idea. The committee was happy with the 3 year programme. PS suggested doing a YouTube clip on the 3 year plan. JT would start booking venues</p> <p><b>Come &amp; Sing:</b> This was in the diary for Saturday 8th October 2016 at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Clapham. It was AGREED to do the Dvorak Stabat Mater.</p>	<p>PS JD/KG/AT/ DL</p> <p>MH</p> <p>JW</p> <p>MH</p> <p>PS/JW</p> <p>PS/MH JT</p>
Any other business	<p>If we wanted to rehearse in the main body of the church we simply had to ask - it is agreed that we can use it once or twice a term. Recruitment flyers could go into the BIS canteen Should we retrieve our piano from BIS? it would cost a lot to move.</p>	

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

THE NEXT MEETINGS: MONDAY 7th MARCH; 9th May; 20 June; 19 September; 7th November