

Whitehall Choir
Minutes of the Committee Meeting
held on 21 September 2017 at 6.30pm,
St Peter's Eaton Square

Present: Joanna Tomlinson (Music Director), Jonathan Williams (Chair), Patrick Haighton (Treasurer), Ruth Eastman (Secretary), Kate Goulden (Soprano Rep), Jane Mackay (Alto Rep), Philip Pratley (Tenor Rep), Daniel Lambauer (Bass Rep), Richard Grafen (Webmaster)
Apologies: Martin Humphreys (Publicity Manager), Alison Williams (Librarian)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
Minutes of last meeting: matters arising not on Agenda	<p>Accepted save for listing RG as an apology. Duly amended.</p> <p>Photos will be taken for website using funds previously earmarked for Joshua ads in the national press (these ads are not deemed very effective). Martin has contacted our web designer, Charles Tomlinson (Jo's brother), who recommended Leon Puplett. Leon is lined up for the Christmas concert but subsequent permission has come through from St John's Smith Square for photography. Leon is not available for St John's but will still be photographing the Christmas concert. If available, Charles Tomlinson will take pictures at SJSS in which case there will be two sets of new images for our website.</p>	MH
New member auditions, choir numbers, 'free place' scheme	<p>The choir is growing! Jo reported a mixed attendance after the first three weeks of rehearsals but 16 new members turned up for the Open Rehearsal and, of those, 15 would be auditioning*. Given the success of the Open Rehearsal Jo suggested we revive and promote the recruitment flyer and have a similar event next term. (For admin reasons, RE having explored it with the church subsequently, this is likely to take place in the Parish Hall.) *Numbers subject to change.</p> <p>The committee reviewed the need for a choral scholarship and decided not to carry on with it.</p>	JW MH RE
Update on budget for the 2017-2018 season inc future tickets and Paul's leaving present (last term)	<p>Reporting on the June concert at St Peter's, PH said door sales were 'fantastic' while online sales were not.</p> <p>There had been some small adjustments to the figures in his Treasurer's Report at the AGM arising from an insurance claim following the 2016 tour to Vienna, which we hope to benefit from, and the cost of the new website design, but this could be written off over the next three years. PH would be sending the final accounts to the auditor within the next three weeks but only after committee approval (since given following some minor clarifications).</p> <p>Choir policy is we spend what we need to spend to do things to a high standard. The choir shouldn't have to subsidise the cost of music any more than is necessary. We try to obtain music for the members to pay for at a better price than they could get it for themselves, and share the discount. To illustrate this, he pointed out that the sheet music for <i>O Oriens</i> in the Christmas concert costs £1.95 plus £3 P&P and members are only being charged £2 a copy. We do need to cover extra copies and the Librarian's expenses. We should also keep reminding the</p>	PH

	<p>choir of the benefit of using EasyFunding and the Amazon link on our website (both generates extra income at no cost to the consumer) – and make clear that its use is anonymous. The Treasurer simply receives a donation from time to time, without any detail of how it has been generated.</p> <p>Ticket sales are vital – with Subscriptions the biggest source of funds. To this end we need a box office in rehearsal for our next concert in collaboration with tickets allocated by SJSS. (In the absence of a business manager and four volunteers from the choir have kindly come forward who will be selling tickets for <i>Joshua</i>.) For non-SJSS concerts, tickets can be sold through Eventbrite which Patrick will be arranging. Audiences can buy tickets directly online (there is no need for us to print tickets) and choose their own seats through a link on our publicity material; we can either absorb the commission or Eventbrite can add it to the ticket price as a transaction fee. In any event, the choir gets exposure on the Eventbrite site which publishes concert opportunities. Win, win.</p> <p>A sum of £800 is left over from donations to Paul's present (a garden seat). About £50 of this will be spent on two brass plates, inscribed with Paul Spicer and Whitehall Choir logo (on the front) and the names of all those who contributed (on the back); the rest of the money will go, more substantively, to a water feature in his garden.</p>	
Friends' scheme	Penny Prior has offered to take over running the Friends' scheme from Ken Holmes (for members who may not know them, PP & KH are recent trustees and former members). PH will be visiting Ken, who unfortunately is not well, and taking the paperwork to Penny. The scheme will continue in its existing form for another year, though at slightly augmented prices. After that it is going to change. JW will ask for ideas from the choir as to how it can be improved.	PH JW
Choir President/Patrons	Continuing the discussion held at the AGM, Sir Martin Donnelly has now retired but remains our President until a new appointment is made. The support we receive from the Department has declined over recent years so having the Permanent Secretary as our President is not so pivotal. However, as the Whitehall Choir, we should not lose sight of our Government connections. A different idea would be to have a small group of Patrons, for example eminent musicologists, senior civil servants, public figures, accomplished performers, who would be willing to be named on our publicity, support choir events and increase our influence generally. JW will do some research into this and provide further ideas to the committee for discussion. We would need to modify the nomenclature of the Friends'/Patron scheme to extract the term 'Patron'.	JW
St John's Smith Square concert, Friday 17 November 2017	Soloists and orchestra confirmed. PH to finalise contract with SJSS (done). Ticket sales through SJSS box office and choir. Publicity is key (promotion plan circulated by MH). It was agreed to put the SJSS ticket link on social media (done). We have to sell this concert, so it's up to every member to promote! (Subsequently JW created an e-flyer, which part reps have distributed, urging members	MH All

	to drum up good audiences. Printed copies available at rehearsal for dissemination by choir members as well.)	
Christmas concert, Tuesday 19 December 2017, St Peter's Eaton Square	Whoever does the readings (we didn't have them last year), they need to be audible! Readers chosen are JT, PP, the vicar of St Peter's, Revd Ralph Williamson, and Roger Eastman, wife of Ruth (Roger, who was proposed for his audibility and reading experience, says he would be honoured). The vicar has subsequently accepted the invitation and has said he will be reading the birth of the Messiah from St Luke. Other readers will liaise about choices. Jo wants to finalise running order by 20 November. There will be a post-concert party after as usual; volunteers from the choir will be sought at a later date. Patrick to arrange tickets with Eventbrite.	JW PH
Brandenburg Festival concert, spring 2018	There was a suggestion based on emails between the organiser and Jo that the choir would have to foot the bill for soloists and orchestra. That has never been the case before. JW was going to investigate. Suggestion proved correct. We will not be taking part in this festival!	
Spring concert, Thursday 22 March 2018, St James's Piccadilly	Brahms <i>Requiem</i> . Michael Higgins has confirmed that he will be joining Ian Tindale in the four-hand one-piano accompaniment. JT has booked soloists – Helen Semple, soprano, and baritone Stephen Kennedy. The rest of the programme, is Brahms 5 Gesänge, Schubert Gott ist mein hirt, Schubert Zum Sanctus and a Brahms piano duet. Ticket prices, tentatively at £20 and £15, have been circulated to Martin and Richard for publicity and ticketing purposes, but TBC at next committee meeting.	
Summer concert of American music including Bernstein's <i>Chichester Psalms</i>	JT has confirmed that in addition to <i>Chichester Psalms</i> (organ, harp, perc, solo treble/countertenor) the concert will include the following: Runestad's <i>Alleluia</i> ; Lauridsen's <i>Lux Aeterna</i> (with organ); Ives's <i>Crossing the Bar</i> (with organ) and <i>Variations on "America"</i> (organ solo); and Gjeilo's <i>Ubi Caritas</i> . Soloists and instrumentalists to be sourced. JW, in discussion with PH and MH, will propose ticket prices to align with our business plan for confirmation by the committee at the next meeting.	JT JW PH MH
Proposed visit by Cantus Novus Wien 2018	Cantus Novus Wien is the excellent choir Whitehall sang with in one of its performances on the Vienna tour. DL, who hails from Vienna, is hoping to arrange an exchange visit in the summer. JT will send DL proposals for repertoire (some of it culled the many ideas offered by members on choir survey?) and what form the concert would take: shared concert, separate items? We also need to think about accommodation – cheap hotels, b&bs, choir hosts?	JT DL All
Future meetings	JW asked RE if committee members could be reminded of meeting dates. (Done.) Future meetings are scheduled for 2 November 2017, and 25 January, 8 March, 26 April and 14 June 2018.	
AOB	PH said that we have three domain names: whitehallchoir.org, whitehallchoir.org.uk and now Whitehallchoir.London (obtained recently as free for two years). There is some evidence of confusion – at least on YouTube - with the Whitehall Choir in Missouri. We have to decide which to promote and for what purposes.	PH All

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm.