

Whitehall Choir  
Minutes of the meeting held on  
25 January 2018 at 1830 hours  
St Peter's Eaton Square

**Present:** Joanna Tomlinson (Music Director), Jonathan Williams (Chair), Patrick Haighton (Treasurer), Jane Mackay (Alto Rep), Philip Pratley (Tenor Rep), Alison Williams (Librarian), Bridget Gardiner (for Martin Humphreys - Publicity), Kate Goulden (Soprano Rep)

**Apologies:** Ruth Eastman (Secretary), Daniel Lambauer (Bass Rep), Martin Humphreys (Publicity Manager), Richard Grafen (Webmaster),

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
Minutes of last meeting: matters arising not on Agenda	<p>i) We should be making use of the <b>photos</b> taken last term on our website. RG should make initial suggestions and clear with MH. Also put photos in a gallery which members could view.</p> <p>ii) Use of <b>Eventbrite</b> for ticket sales had proved a success. No complaints reported in respect of the booking fee. Use to continue.</p> <p>iii) There had been no response to the call for <b>non-choir volunteers</b> in our programmes. BG suggested we explore a link with a local school (young adults over 18). This would become an issue at St James's where ushers were required (see below).</p> <p>iv) JW was content to prepare the next two <b>programmes</b> but not beyond. We would put out a call to choir volunteers.</p>	<p>RG/MH</p> <p>PH</p> <p>JW/All</p> <p>JW</p>
New members	<p>8 new members had successfully auditioned this term bringing membership to 60. Another 4/5 were due to audition in 2 weeks. If all joined we would be close to our performing strength/target. Ideally we should aim for membership of 75, giving 65 on stage after allowing for absences. We should continue with open rehearsals: at £50-60 for refreshments the extra rehearsal cost was not prohibitive. Given the low cost of flyers, if they brought one member they were worth it. AW would order 15 extra copies of music to allow for possible new member influx next term.</p>	<p>AW</p>
Finances:	<p>PH reported the current state. Four documents were circulated in advance: Income and expenditure (I&amp;E), concert returns, cash flow forecast, and history of concert returns.</p> <p><b>I&amp;E:</b> The budget for the year aims at generating a surplus of about £2,500. The current projection for the year – actual results to date plus forward projections based on last year's experience, suggest breakeven.</p> <p>The budget already assumes a level of subscription income which we should achieve with the current increase in members. The budget assumes stronger ticket sales for the Spring and Summer concerts (about 50 more) than last year. Strong ticket sales will help achieve the budget.</p> <p>Major income sources are subscriptions and ticket sales – the challenge is to increase the latter rather than raise subscriptions. The committee remains against setting ticket sale quotas. The trade-off between ticket prices and subscription rates needs careful presentation at the AGM.</p> <p>It is important to generate a sufficient surplus each year, not least to replace the £4000 drawdown still outstanding from the Jubilee Fund's support of the last CD recording.</p> <p><b>Cash Flow forecast:</b> there are two potential weak points where short term Jubilee Fund cover may be required.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>PH</p>

<p>St John's Smith Square, Joshua, 17 November 2017</p>	<p>The concert had been very successful. Feedback from audience, including previous choir members, had been enthusiastic and they had noticed the difference in the choir's sound and performance level. We had received a good review and compliments from the soloists and band too. PH: as shown on the concert return report, we had a good audience over 300. The deficit of £5,500, funded by the choir, approximates to the cost of the orchestra. The venue costs of SJSS have increased substantially – including a 15% commission on all ticket revenue – so our top ticket price of £25 is insufficient for an orchestra concert. BG mentioned that early research she and MH were doing on other choirs' finance model showed that others shared the view that 'concerts do not pay'. A number had links with local schools, patronage and undertook separate fundraising activities. We would seek to appoint a fundraiser from within the choir. BG would prepare a job spec and would be content to advise/ supervise, but could not take on the role herself.</p>	<p>BG</p>
<p>St Peter's Eaton Square, Christmas concert, 19 December 2017</p>	<p>Jo had been very pleased with this concert and the audience numbers had been excellent. Rehearsal time (lack of) had been an issue however and next year the concert should therefore be on the Thursday or an extra rehearsal inserted. The use of readings (rather than a soloist) had been good but needed better co-ordination. Shorter reading, and consequently possibly one more. Ideally we would reduce the amount of filing on/off. It would be good to have access to the church earlier in the term and to avoid dimming the lights quite so far as, for some, this had made the music unreadable. PH: return was excellent – £1,700 surplus (which we share with the church). Audience 134. Pre-selling tickets via Eventbrite rather than door-only sales, made a big improvement.</p>	
<p>St James's Piccadilly, Brahms etc, 22 March 2018</p>	<p>St James's requirements meant that we would need 2 programme sellers (1 non-choir), 2 ushers (non-choir) and 2 box-office volunteers (non-choir). JW would call for a choir member (from the survey/volunteer list) to co-ordinate these non-choir volunteers. They would not need to be a committee member but should be briefed by the committee and perhaps attend the final pre-concert meeting. PH agreed that it was reasonable for those likely to miss out on part of the concert (i.e. box-office but potentially others) to receive free tickets. <u>Complimentary</u> tickets should generally be limited to two each to conductor, accompanist, soloist, press (when we have any) and church (when using St Peter's). <u>Rehearsal</u> would be 1500-1800 (max). Arrival at 1430 to line up at 1445. St James's needed some publicity text for their website. PH agreed to prepare some.</p>	<p>JW  RE  PH</p>
<p>St Peter's, Concert of American music, 28 June 2018</p>	<p>Music and soloists were in hand. Brahms flyer has received mixed reviews. Committee discussed the idea of a house style for a 'designed' flyer which we can then use repeatedly with small variations. We would probably need to pay, but should ask choir if they know a professional designer who might do it for reduced rate. (Both MH and RE have since said they might have contacts). The after-concert party would be discussed at the next meeting, but might have an American theme.</p>	<p>JW MH/RE</p>
<p>Committee Roles</p>	<p><u>Chair</u>: JW had spoken to a number of people who were either not prepared to stand or, more encouragingly, not for the moment for personal/work commitment reasons. He has a few more names to approach. Committee members were asked to</p>	

	<p>approach other candidates and send suggestions to JW. We recognised that some of these candidates could also be potential Treasurers. PH confirmed that whilst he wishes to hand over at some point, it should not coincide with a change of Chairman or Secretary.</p> <p><u>Other roles:</u> Job specs were all on the website. Most were fine but others needed refining especially to link to some of our processes. Treasurer role had acquired a number of additional elements which did not really sit there e.g. organisation of Eventbrite and ticket sales while the Business Manager position remained vacant. PH would revise and match jobs and processes, and run past job holders, before job specs were put to the choir.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>PH</p>
Patrons and Friends schemes	<p>JW had circulated a paper summarising discussion to date. The committee agreed the principle of appointing a/some <u>Patron(s)</u>. Discussion centred on how many and whether they should be a figure-head with cachet or more hands-on. We valued a link with the civil service (perhaps Martin Donnelly could advise) but also valued a link to the performing arts. We agreed to revisit once MH/BG had finished their research with other choirs. Separately, we discussed having different levels of 'Friend' with level of reward depending on the level of donation.</p>	<p>MH/BG</p> <p>All</p> <p>PH</p>
Next Season	<p>Given time pressures we dealt briefly with this agenda item.</p> <p><u>Cantus Novus</u> (CN) visit was now agreed with a concert on 24 November at St Peter's, a rehearsal the day before and a social event. Jo was in touch with Thomas (CN conductor) about music but this would include a number of pieces by female composers and, at CN's request Paul Spicer's 'Dappled Things'. A choir member would be asked to help CN with accommodation and practicalities in London. CN would also like to sing Mass in a church: the challenge would be finding one which did not have music covered by its own choir.</p> <p><u>Christmas</u> concert at St Peter's on Friday 14 or Tuesday 18 December to allow for rehearsal time (see review of Christmas 2017 above). RE would be asked to check dates with the church.</p> <p><u>Creation</u> St John's Smith Square, date t.b.c. PH had already been in touch with Peter McCarthy.</p> <p><u>A very British Summer</u> Jo had proposed a mixed programme but with few different composers to lessen the (historical?) challenge that such programmes seemed to pose the choir. The summer term traditionally suffered from more absences. It was important that the choir could feel confident as this led to greater ticket sales. If appropriate the concert could include a piece by one of our new Patrons. The committee would give thought to finding a venue with an outside space for a party (with strawberries and cream) and parking.</p>	<p>JW/All</p> <p>RE</p> <p>PH</p>
AOB	<p><u>Attendance</u> Both DL and JM had asked for clarification of Jo's 80% attendance rule for each project. Jo confirmed that anyone missing more than 20%, or aware that they would miss a lot of rehearsals, should let her know as soon as possible. The last Tuesday rehearsal and rehearsal on the day were compulsory.</p> <p><u>Data protection</u> New legislation meant that we needed to register with the ICO by 25 May 2018. PH had confirmed that our email list of previous members and those who had actively agreed to be added was compliant. He planned to write up our position/policy for choir members to be reassured. We also needed to have a statement of our privacy policy on the website.</p>	<p>Part Reps</p> <p>PH</p>

Dates of next meetings	8 March, 26 April (at 8-10 Great George Street as St Peter's unavailable), 14 June and 3 July (AGM).	RE/PP

The meeting ended at 21.00 hours.