

Whitehall Choir Committee Meeting: Thursday 3rd October 2019

Venue: 8-10 Great George Street

Attendees: Philip Pratley (PP) - Chair; Patrick Houghton (PH) - Treasurer; Kate Goulden (KG) - Soprano Rep; Anne Courtney (AC) - Alto Rep; Simon Hunter (SH) - Tenor Rep; Ian Williamson (IW) - Bass Rep; Laura Lowenthal (LL) - Business Manager; Alison Williams (AW) - Librarian; Martin Humphreys (MH) - Publicity Manager; Joanna Dacombe (JD) - Secretary

Apologies: Antonia Romeo (AR) - President; Sarah Rollinson (SR) - Treasurer Elect; Joanna Tomlinson (JT) - Music Director; Richard Grafen (RG) - Webmaster.

Meeting Summary

Item 1: Committee post review & update

- PP tabled a proposal for a review and update of the roles and responsibilities, especially those where people have taken on additional duties to their roles. This was approved by the committee and recommended that some new roles be created, including a membership manager, social/catering manager and a concert and events manager (**Action 1**). PP emphasised that the intention was not to increase committee numbers but to recognise and create some non-committee posts to redistribute the current workload more efficiently, clearly and fairly.
- It was recognised that IW and KG in particular have taken on significant additional workload and activities and the committee thanked them, especially KG's recent efforts managing the re-auditions and new joiners.
- PP shared that RG has advised he will continue as website manager but likely attend only relevant committee meetings going forward, as the focus is increasingly around content and MH's and Felix's social media strategy. PH raised the fact that Felix had been requested to create an 'younger members' group to assist with this work and asked that the committee approve his access to contact details of those under 35. The committee acknowledged and approved.
- Some roles are becoming increasingly urgent, notably the event manager and programme editor(s), and it was recommended that the part reps conduct a skills audit of choir members (**Action 2**). SH reminded the committee that the choir's constitution limits the possible committee member numbers to between 10-14, and that it would be worth reviewing the power of the committee to delegate.

Item 2a: Future schedule

- The committee approved an amendment to this season's schedule (cancelling the rehearsal of 14th April 2020 as JT will be unavailable) and the schedule for the 2020/21 season, including the open rehearsals and Come & Sing (**Actions 3 & 4**).

Item 2b: Financial update

- PH took the committee through the draft annual report he prepared for the year ending 31st August 2019. He emphasised that this report shows the public view, in line with charity

guidelines, and so is different to the management accounts that the committee had already seen. Members were asked to provide any comments and suggestions before the final version is submitted for independent review (**Action 5**).

- PH reported that two thirds of this season's subscriptions were now in hand and also outlined a specific issue (for which the committee voted to maintain a previously-offered rate to one individual). This raised a general discussion around the current subscription rates and categories and it was suggested that some changes be proposed at the next AGM (**Action 6**).
- PH reminded the committee of the 2 risks identified by the independent examiner last year: that only trustees should make financial commitments on behalf of the choir (**Action 7**); and, ensuring the security of the Jubilee fund. SH emphasised that the constitution should be updated urgently and he and PH advised that some draft amendments would be shared at the next meeting (**Action 8**). PH reminded the committee that the 'friends scheme' arrangements need to be finalised as well.
- PH advised that he would also be circulating the forward financial plan for next season (**Action 9**).

Item 3: Tour planning

- A discussion was had around options for the tour, including lessons learnt from the last tour e.g. regarding costs and tour operators. It was proposed that a sub-committee of 4-5 people be created to plan the tour, with one main point of contact for negotiations and suppliers. SH recommended that the location be confirmed and the sub-committee then be established with members with relevant links, knowledge and/or language skills (**Action 10**).

Item 4: AOB

- AC asked the committee if members were comfortable with the choir's Twitter account content being included for secure archiving and this was agreed.
- MH reiterated the urgent need to canvas choir members for skills, brand management, flier design & social media in particular (see action 2).
- IW reminded the committee that a suggestion was made at the AGM to increase the price of hot drinks in the break in order to supplement the choir's revenue, and suggested a poll of members to get their views (**Action 11**).
- IW advised the committee that the choir's gambling licence expires at the beginning of November and offered to hold another raffle prior to this. The committee agreed and a raffle will be held in late October in advance of this deadline.
- PP thanked PH for his work on the annual report and forecasting. PH advised that he and SR were commencing the handover of the Treasurer role. PP enquired if this could be complete by Christmas and PH advised that he wanted to ensure SR felt comfortable prior to taking up the role. In their absence JD confirmed that SR and JT had advised they would be content with this timeline.
- AW shared John's offer to contribute to a music sale and advised that she also had some accumulated stock. The committee approved holding the sale (**Action 12**).

Actions Summary

Ref	Action	Owner
1	Each post holder to create a task list of all duties within their role to be compiled, reviewed by the committee for sign off (including the newly identified posts)	ALL
2	A survey to be taken of choir members' skills and interest in supporting activities and roles identified in Action 1's outputs	Part reps with support from PP & JD
3	Venue bookings to be made for the 2020/21 season	JD
4	Conduct a review of the lessons learnt from the latest Come & Sing before the next	PP, IW, LL & JD
5	All members to submit any comments on the annual report to Patrick by 5th October	ALL
6	Prepare a draft proposal to amend the subscription categories, to be reviewed by the committee prior to the AGM	PP, JD
7	Once the new trustees are set up, write to the temporary signatories and remove them from the account	PP, PH, JD
8	Include an item in November's agenda for SH & PH to present the paper on the proposed amendments to the constitution, including protections for the Jubilee Fund signatories	JD
9	Review and send any comments on the next season's financial plan once shared	ALL
10	Poll to be issued to choir members to confirm tour location preference (between Scandinavia, Italy and the Iberian Peninsula)	PP, JD, Part Reps
11	Poll to be issued to choir members to gauge response to increasing the price of hot drinks	IW, JD & Part Reps
12	Organise a music sale with contributions from choir members who wish to be involved, once an inventory & price list has been completed	AW & Part Reps