

Whitehall Choir
Minutes of the meeting held on
9 January 2017 at 1830 hours
St Peter's Eaton Square

Present: Jonathan Williams (Chair), Patrick Haighton (Treasurer), Richard Grafen (Webmaster), Mark Graver (Librarian), Martin Humphreys (Publicity Manager), Philip Pratley (Concert Manager), Julie Dyg (Alto Rep), Kate Goulden (Soprano Rep), Penny Prior (Business Manager), Jacky Erwtman (pro tem Secretary).

Apologies: Paul Spicer (Music Director), Daniel Lambauer (Bass Rep)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
Minutes of last meeting: matters arising not on Agenda	<p>i) PH had not yet spoken to Deb Dowdall about progress she was making with the application to the Lottery Fund.</p> <p>ii) PH said there was now an email database of some current 200+ contacts – people who had attended previous events, had sung with the choir, expressed interest, or bought tickets through the website. Mass circulations had been carried out before the last two concerts – only one person had asked to ‘unsubscribe’. The purpose was to build this email database through contributions from members of the choir, and so help develop audience sizes, instead of requiring members to buy a minimum number of tickets, as happened in other choirs. KG made the point that she would wish to alert her contacts personally rather than through the choir, so it was agreed that such alerts/messages would also be circulated to choir members to send on with their personal messages.</p> <p>iii) It was reported that the choir’s twitter account had not been updated since July. JW agreed to speak to Ruth Eastman/Alastair Tolley about the ownership of the twitter feed.</p> <p>iv) It was decided to try St Sepulchre for a Come and Sing in October this year. PeP offered to contact the Church, to check dates and availability of an organ.</p> <p>v) So far no-one had expressed an interest in taking over as Librarian. MG would make another announcement on 10 January. KG said that the next two terms offered a good opportunity for shadowing as the summer programme could prove complicated. MG also offered to source the November concert music should it prove necessary – that was much appreciated.</p> <p>JW reported that JE had offered to undertake roles 1) (minute secretary) and 3) (Choir secretary) as set out in the minutes of the last meeting but was unable to be venue secretary because of other commitments. PH, however, felt strongly that it was very important to have a choir secretary, as was specified in the choir’s constitution which was approved by and lodged with the Charity Commission. It was crucial that the secretary took on the full responsibilities of a Trustee and the role as described in the job description.</p> <p>JW would also announce on 10 January that at the end of the season PeP would be standing down as business manager; and JD would be standing down as alto rep.</p> <p>vi) November 2017 concert: PH confirmed that he would complete the contract in October.</p> <p>The consideration of another tour and contacting Cantus Novus was held over to the next meeting</p>	<p>PH</p> <p>PH</p> <p>JW</p> <p>PeP</p> <p>MG</p> <p>All</p> <p>JW</p> <p>JW</p>
St John’s Smith Square	Musically good; poor audience. Poor ticket sales and coincided with Southern rail strike.	

22 November 2016		
Christmas Concert: 13 December 2016	Musically OK; good format although some comments about the music being less Christmassy than usual. Also, concert was longer than previous years. Again poor audience and again coincided with Southern rail strike	JW
Finances: PH	<p>PH reported that the last two concerts had not improved the choir's finances, primarily due to due to small audiences. He would be applying for gift aid now to support the choir's finances and would be warning Ian Williamson that he might have to ask the Jubilee Fund for a temporary loan. He highlighted the importance of good ticket pricing and sales; within the next few weeks the St John Smith Square autumn brochure would go to press and a decision would have to be taken on our tariff for November. He asked Committee members to compare our ticket prices with those of other performers at St John Smith Square and suggest a competitive rate higher than the £25 charged November 2016. PH would also discuss the matter with Richard Heason, Manager at St John's.</p> <p>PH reported that the auditor had agreed the accounts and proposed 21 February, when PS would be away, for a SGM to present the accounts to the choir. Notice would be given 10 January.</p>	All PH
Spring concert Tuesday 6 April 2017 Venue: St Margaret's Westminster	<p>Flyers and publicity available for Bach concert. 'A' Board outside the venue on day of concert. Organise advertising outside the Church for the concert.</p>	JW MH PH
Summer concert Thursday 6 July 2017 St Peter's Eaton Square	<p>PS's farewell concert with post concert party. PS had provided a programme with an interval but JW was hoping to have the concert go straight through to have more time for the party afterwards. JW to speak to PS JW has been in touch with various guests and friends – some to come free others to pay! Originally the term was going to start with PS on 2 May as PS would be in France on 25 April – that would give only 10 weeks rehearsal. It was decided to have a stand in conductor and start the term on 25 April.</p>	JW JW
Recruitment of new Musical Director	<p>PH and JW had collated the 31 responses received to the advertisement for a new MD and prepared selection criteria. JW had acknowledged each applicant, advising that he would be in touch once a short list had been prepared. He asked the Committee to identify those who were or were not definitely worth considering and then those who were borderline. The aim was to have list of a maximum of eight candidates to interview from whom a maximum of four would be selected for audition by the choir. The paper sift yielded a short list of nine candidates.</p> <p>The committee discussed the composition of the interview panel: JW, PH + two members of the choir, preferably female and representing the younger generation (? Sam Foley & KG if free). Neil Ferris had offered to assist the process and if there was no conflict of interest would be invited to sit on the interview panel or otherwise recommend another musicologist.</p> <p>Regarding the audition with the choir, each candidate would be</p>	MH PH MG

	<p>invited to the first half, take the choir through a warm up, part of the Duruflé and a piece of their own choosing which the choir had not seen before. Each choir member would complete a feedback sheet on each candidate and after all the auditions, would complete a ranking form.</p> <p>PhP tabled a vote of thanks to JW and PH for the extensive and excellent preparation of the applications' paperwork which had allowed the Committee to consider the 31 applicants so effectively.</p> <p>MH proposed that the Choir should be advised the progress that had been made in recruiting a new MD. This was agreed, JW would make an announcement 10 January.</p>	JW
AOB	<p>Due to lack of time it was agreed to consider November 2017 concert and forward plan 2016/7 season and risk management at the next meeting.</p> <p>JE said that in future, so as to get the minutes on the website asap as requested by members, the following process had been agreed with JW:</p> <p>typed draft minutes passed to Chair and Treasurer for checking; amended draft minutes circulated to all committee members present at meeting for agreement by given date. No response by given date will be considered acceptance.</p> <p>by given date minutes, no longer a draft, passed to RG to put on website.</p>	JW All
DONM	<p>Previously arranged for 20 March which JW is unable to make. It was agreed to confirm the date of the next meeting once interview date of new MD and auditions dates have been arranged.</p>	JW JE

The meeting ended at 2050 hours.