

Whitehall Choir
(Draft) Minutes of the
meeting held on 9 May 2016
St Peter's Eaton Square

Present: Jonathan Williams (Chair), Paul Spicer (Music Director), Patrick Haighton (Treasurer), Joanna Tomlinson (Secretary), Kate Goulden (Soprano Rep), Richard Grafen (Webmaster), Mark Graver (Librarian), Penny Prior (Business Manager), Alastair Tolley (Tenor Rep)

Apologies: Julie Dyg, Martin Humphreys, Daniel Lambauer

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
Minutes: matters arising	<p>Vienna Tour: it was a great success. JW to set up a Dropbox for choir photos. PH to send out a questionnaire. A piece should go onto the Website. Some final odds and ends on expenses. Rayburn wanted feedback. JW: if we wanted a Tour in a couple of years time, planning should begin soon. Tours did not have to be abroad, but could also include doing repeat concerts in other UK venues.</p> <p>Use of crockery at St Peter's: JW/JT to look into this. Use of the dishwasher would mean someone missing rehearsal time or staying late after rehearsals.</p>	<p>JW PH</p> <p>JW/JT</p>
Finances: PH	<p>PH stressed that not enough money was being generated from our concerts. Only 135 seats were sold at the April concert. We must take a firmer line on this. Imperative to generate more income. Every choir member needed to sell a minimum of 2 tickets and we needed more email addresses for targeting publicity. Message not getting across to choir. Needed to spell out how the choir is funded. He was concerned that subscriptions would have to be raised. Fundraising via Amazon and easyfundraising.org.uk should be promoted and used: a very easy way to raise money. PH and RG would set up a database from contacts through online sales. JW suggested asking each member for 20 contact names.</p>	PH/RG
<p>Review: 21 April HTSS An English Choral Landscape</p> <p>Choir Morale: Re-auditions</p>	<p>PS: 21 April: it was "all right" but he was very unhappy at the lack of engagement during the afternoon rehearsal. The tuning in the Parry was awful. It was symptomatic of what was happening in the choir and it had to be reversed. He was disappointed as there had been plenty of rehearsal time and not all the music was new to the choir. Partly the problem of moving from our dry weekly rehearsal space to a very large space. This led to a discussion of choir morale.</p> <p>Points made in a wide-ranging discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : a small number of choir members were no longer up to the choir's standards and contributed to new members not wanting to stay. These people should have been moved on at last year's auditions. It would be unpopular to re-audition but it might work. : those who had been asked to develop their voices should be followed up. : a fall in numbers would mean a drop in income and other knock on effects (size vis a vis orchestra for example). <p>PS would review what he had said to each member after the auditions. : way forward needed on auditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : level of engagement is poor. 	PS

<p>Recruitment</p> <p>Student schemes</p> <p>Choir engagement and running of the choir</p> <p>Summary</p>	<p>:rehearsals needed to be enjoyable. A desire to sing more during rehearsals and to have a more varied approach.</p> <p>:Paul and Ian had to safeguard their reputations.</p> <p>PS: There had been useful conversations in Vienna about how to turn things around. Whitehall Choir is unusual in London because of its size and set-up. It used to regenerate every year but recruitment impetus had been lost and this had to be dealt with. One idea was to contact universities and invite graduates coming to London to join the choir. PS suggested bursaries for good young singers. He said that something major had to be done - perhaps the choir needed a new MD.</p> <p>: Lucilla Poston had suggested a partnership with Royal Holloway and/or King's College in order to find new young singers. There could be competitive free places for a year for full-time students - maybe 2 per part. PS suggested 3 levels: bursary level, free places for "leaders" and the main choir. He also thought the website should look more immediately interesting with bullet points for example. General discussion: It was considered that there could be 8 "special cases". However, a bursary scheme would cost about £750 per person and might in fact make the choir <u>less</u> engaged. Any improvement had to be sustained. Not necessarily a benefit to the choir. The choir needed to progress faster, have a better quality, have younger voices. It was decided first to try a student scheme with 2 free places per part and if that didn't work to consider a bursary scheme. Direct contact could be made with the Music Directors. It would be ideal if a group of students joined the choir together. It would need to be done within a fortnight - before the end of term.</p> <p>Martin Humphreys, via JW, thought that poor communication between committee and choir was a cause of poor morale. MG suggested asking sections what would help them feel more engaged and confident. There was a concern that fewer people were doing more work. More people needed to come forward to help. PH said that on the whole people don't volunteer and that a more permanent group of people should be available to help behind the scenes at concerts in particular, with programme selling, refreshments. Also help needed setting up and clearing up on concert days.</p> <p>Student scheme would be tried; revisit auditions to tidy up the choir.</p>	<p>JW</p>
<p>Workshop: Saturday 11 June, St Mary le Bow</p>	<p>Doors open 10.30am. 11am to 1pm 2 pm - 4pm.</p> <p>Facilitator to be Alison Ling (Brooks) a very experienced workshopper who would lead warm-ups and singing techniques. PH to work out the cost which would depend on how many of the choir attended.</p>	<p>PH</p>
<p>14 July: St James's Piccadilly: Chantez!</p>	<p>Michael Higgins would be accompanying and playing some piano pieces(PS to contact him). No interval or refreshments. Monica had promised JW some photos for the flyer. KG would follow up contacts.</p>	<p>PS KG</p>
<p>Come & Sing: Saturday 8 October Dvorak Stabat Mater Church of the Holy Spirit: Clapham</p>	<p>Venue Church of the Holy Spirit, Clapham 10.30am - 1pm 2pm - 4pm Dvorak Stabat Mater. A very big piece. Student soloists needed. Run through at end? Yes, it was felt it would fall flat if there wasn't a run through. Lots to be done on this: publicity, cost, organisation on the day,</p>	<p>PS</p>

