

North Kingston Choir
Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday 11th March 2016
8.00 pm The Cardinal Dining Room

Present

Jem Goddard (JG) – Chair
Jessica Bate (JB) – Musical Director
Daisy Morris (DM) – Events Officer
Vanessa Hartley (VH) - Treasurer
Alan Waterman (AW) – Membership Officer
Emma Richards (ER) – Social Secretary
Tristan Bate (TB) – Communications Officer
Simon Thomas (ST) - Secretary

1. Welcome
2. Apologies – none
3. Actions from previous meeting
 - a. HD: send AGM agenda, marked up Constitution and AGM Reports to TB for website, summarise main points in the Chair's Report - COMPLETE
 - b. JB: contact Chorus Line (done), contact Southbank Chorus Festival (done), contact Singing it Back choir director - COMPLETE
 - c. VH: update Treasurer's Report explaining the increase in fees (done), look into charitable status requirements – ONGOING.

VH to research the eligibility for and merits of charitable status.
TB to clarify with Making Music that we are not subject to the £5000 charitable status limit
 - d. MR: contact 2 members to see if they are joining, finalise spaces for the term - COMPLETE
 - e. EG: contact Marie Curie – COMPLETE (we are not doing this)
 - f. TB: upload AGM documents to website - COMPLETE
4. New committee actions
 - a. Organise new bank signatories – ONGOING (VH is in charge, VH, JG and AW will be the signatories)

VH to arrange new signatories
 - b. Organise new Tudor Hall key holder – COMPLETE (ER and JG are both key holders. Decision that ST will be backup key holder for instances when ER/JG unavailable.

JG to induct ST in key holder role

ER to induct a female back-up key holder of her choosing, especially for sectionals
 - c. Organise social event on 4th March - COMPLETE
 - d. Make a decision about the Southbank Chorus Festival on 19th March – COMPLETE (we are not doing this)

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e. Analyse survey results – COMPLETE (see separate 'Survey' item below)

f. Create a FAQ section on the website – ONGOING

AW to review membership officer inbox to identify relevant questions

TB to draft responses then circulate to committee for review

g. Decide about music folders – ONGOING

AW to buy a stock of folders from Wilkinsons. Choir will continue to fund. Review after 6 months. AW will obtain existing stock from Maiké.

h. Decide when to open the women's waiting list & discuss men's as well – ONGOING (see separate 'Membership Report' below)

i. Sign constitution – ONGOING

JG to bring copy of constitution to next meeting for signing

5. Music Report

a. Practice recordings – where we have purchased music from Chorus Online, we also have access to practice recordings which are available on Soundcloud. Where music is not from Chorus Online, we are trialling members singing and recording each part. Positively received, but challenge to find people who want to record the parts.

All to informally approach other members independently to see if anyone else wants to volunteer.

b. Sectional rehearsals - as the choir grows, sectionals increase in benefit. Considerations of frequency, venue, leadership. Would be good to have a venue where sections could use separate rooms. It was observed that turnout at men's sectionals is low. Members feel more confident asking questions in a sectional rehearsal, but too many sectionals might impact on cohesion and flavour of choir. A benefit is that it provides opportunities for members to increase their confidence in leading and diversifies the musical leadership within the choir. The frequency of the rehearsals was discussed and it was decided to have a sectional once every half term.

c. Pianist – the most recent pianist has withdrawn

TB to put advert for pianist on website

ST to ask his contact whether he would be interested in this role

JG to mention on choir email

d. Gareth Malone choir – this has been discussed on the choir Facebook page and there was an enthusiastic response. However, it was decided that entering this competition would put unnecessary pressure on choir members, it is not necessarily what people signed up for, and everyone is very busy and it would be hard to coordinate. Preference would be to go for a more low-key option, perhaps a festival.

DM to research local options.

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JG to feedback on the newsletter

6. Finance Report

- a. Current position – this term is quite a heavy expenditure term so there is only about £200 (net inflow) in the bank at the moment. The current balance of the bank account = £776.17 and £84 cash.
- b. Fees - We are increasing the fees from Easter. This is only a small increment because we don't want to breach the £5000 threshold until the question of charitable status is resolved. However, if there is not an issue then we could increase fees further to £35 from January 2017.
- c. Keyboard – VH queried whether we want to set aside money to buy a quality keyboard. It was decided that this is contingent on decision about venue. JG said that presently we can only do concerts at venues which have a decent keyboard. DM said she might be getting rid of her electronic piano in the middle of the year but it might need some repairs. JB also said she has a good keyboard which she would be prepared to bring to concerts if the venue didn't have one. It was discussed whether we could apply for a further grant. However, if the choir bought a further keyboard, we would need to find somewhere to store it. At present, there is a £400 provision set aside in the budget. It was decided to defer this decision until questions around our future venue have been resolved.
- d. Confirm budget remains appropriate / agree any amendments needed – no changes to the budget were made.

7. Rehearsal room bookings

- a. Main venue – discussion held around suitability of Tudor Hall. It was noted that this venue is quite cold, but a bonus is that it is right next to the pub. We only commit to Tudor Hall a month at a time. There is an alternative at the Quaker Hall (next to Fairfield Kingston) which has a piano, but it is quite a long way from current venue and there might be parking difficulties too. While the founding choir membership was very local to Tudor Hall, as the membership has expanded, locality is less of a factor. Quaker Hall is a good venue and has a number of rooms which would be suitable for sectionals. It was decided to hold the men's sectional at the Quaker Hall on 11 April and a full rehearsal there on 25 April. The following rehearsals will be 2 hour rehearsals – 11 April (sectional), 25 April (Quaker Hall), 16 May (Tudor Hall), 6 June (Tudor Hall), 27 June (Cornerhouse Theatre?), 4 July (Cornerhouse Theatre?).

JG to book Quaker Hall for the above two dates

JG will manage sectional rehearsal bookings on an ongoing basis

VH to inform Tudor Hall so we don't pay twice.

DM to confirm Cornerhouse Theatre for 27 June and 4 July

- b. Band rehearsals – will continue to use the studio in Morden, even though the journey is difficult

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8. Membership Report

- a. Attendance this term peaked at 37 on Monday 18th January and has averaged 30 over the eight-week period. It has been steady at 28 for five of the last six weeks.
- b. Since AW took over we've lost Sonja Harrison (pressure of work and family commitments); Michelle Dawson (joined another band); Kirsty Liddle (never actually attended after joining last November) and Stephanie Wood (no contact).
- c. In addition, we offered places to Jacqui Gibbs (who accepted but then changed her mind because of a family bereavement) and Caroline Goodall (now has another commitment on Monday evenings).
- d. We have recruited Samantha Voyle and Ema (*sic* – pronounced Emma) Buchanan and are expecting Lu Luo to join us for the first time on Monday 14th.
- e. We therefore currently have 29 women members.
- f. Since AW took over we recruited one new male member, Rupert Cheek, who also plays the piano. Unfortunately, AW heard from him today that he has now changed his mind and so we are also one male member short.
- g. We currently have 17 women and three men on the waiting list, plus another four women who have expressed an interest in going on the WL as soon as it re-opens.
- h. Proposal 1 - That the committee reserve the right to allow certain ex-members to jump the queue and resume membership should they be interested in rejoining. This might be because they were founding members; or because their voices will significantly enhance the choir's performance or because of the circumstances in which they were obliged to leave. This would be entirely at the committee's discretion and would only apply in exceptional circumstances.
 - i. All voted against. Committee members observed that our primary objective is not to have the best quality singers possible, so return on musical grounds is not justified. The fact that we feel that this arrangement would need to be discrete indicates that it probably isn't a fair arrangement. Some people choose to leave so they free up a space, the other option is that people retain their space but their attendance dips. We always try to be fair and non-judgemental, we let people join regardless of their ability, it is dangerous to introduce selection into the process. All voted against.
- i. Proposal 2 - that new members should be allowed to attend their first rehearsal free-of-charge – effectively as a taster session. This would apply unless and until we reinstate taster sessions.
 - i. All voted in favour.
- j. Proposal 3 - that the waiting list for women be re-opened, but not until AW has written to everybody on the current list asking for their positive confirmation that they are still interested and available.

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- i. All voted in favour. Discussion as to whether we need a finite cap on the length of the waiting list (it is currently 20), or if we regularly send review emails (perhaps with current position in waiting list), will it self-regulate? Discussion as to whether we should canvas the part each prospective member sings and use this in our decision making, but view was that some people are not sure until they arrive. It was decided that TB and JG would be excluded from the men membership count because they also contribute to the band and sometimes men are underrepresented at concerts. AW requested that he sees how the current system which he has inherited is working before he comes to the next meeting with further proposals.

AW to report back to next committee with view on these considerations, including whether we close to new members joining next term and then re-open in September

9. Events Report

- a. DM suggested a 'Making Music' workshop on 12 June in St. Albans, costing £60 in total. The conclusion was that this wouldn't work due to proximity to concerts and limited rehearsal time. Decision that workshops need to come to us. The next one would need to be after the concert, perhaps September 2016 / January 2017. But workshops could be put out to choir for people to take up on an individual basis.
- b. DM said that we have been invited to collaborate with Canbury Singers at St. Paul's church on 7 May, we have been invited along. A discussion was held about what this collaboration would look like. The view was that doing concerts with other choirs introduces extra complications, and it would entail extra rehearsals for us. Most other choirs have different motivations, paid leaders, profit driven etc. Decision not to pursue collaboration at this stage but will review further down the line. It was noted that we could show support to other choirs by attending their concerts.

DM is going to chase arrangements for forthcoming concerts

10. Social Report

- a. Post-Canbury Bandstand concert – discussion whether we want to make formal arrangements for a social after the Canbury bandstand concert on 19 June. Decision that there is no need to reserve an area at the Boaters, people can pop in and get drinks if they like, and we can base ourselves outside.
- b. Mini-social – it was decided that it would be good to have a mini-social in May; a social before a concert has a positive effect! Date of 20 May agreed.
- c. Summer social – not appropriate to hold immediately after summer concert because people have family/friends at concerts. Date agreed of 15 July. Options discussed were a boat party or a bandioke night after the end of summer term

JG to circulate dates for mini-social and summer social in email

ER to make arrangements for both

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11. Choir tour - a tour takes about a year to organise, could be a link-in with another choir, or attending a festival. Probably a weekend away. It would be good to have some support from other choir members in planning/organising this. Some other members indicated a willingness to get further involved in the recent survey so this is a possibility.

JG to put in next newsletter and mention at next rehearsal, for someone to lead on investigating further.

12. 2016 music video - there was great feedback from our Fix You video, produced in 2015. This has been our most-viewed video. It was discussed whether this should become an annual fixture. Suggestion we could have a charity link for donations beneath the video. It was decided that we would aim to make an annual music video, but next time we will plan better so we are less rushed. We will try to get professional assistance such as a media student to help film, direct, produce etc. This will be further reviewed in the Autumn.

13. Request for photos from workshop – Delia (who ran our recent choral workshop) has requested permission to use some of our photos in her own promotional material. We have decided not to support this request because members have not given their consent and may feel inhibited at future workshops if the photos may be shared publically.

JB to inform Delia of committee decision

14. Survey results

- a. 20 people replied (under half) and gave very positive general feedback, with relief from work and home stresses figuring highly. Suggestions included
- Beat boxing and body percussion workshop
 - Song suggestions - traditional African or gospel music, David Bowie, a traditional choral piece and a classic piece , and older / show tunes.
 - More sectional rehearsals to make us more time efficient on Mondays.
 - More advanced notification of songs we'll be singing in concerts
 - Try more workshops (3)
 - One main concert per year and then other smaller events (as this year).
 - A tour or perform at one of the music festivals!
 - Notice of rehearsal plan so can print music/prepare
 - 19/20 want to retain paying termly and not annually
 - 6/20 download tracks onto phones/tablets
 - 17/20 practice at home from website recordings
 - 19/20 people access the members' website 1-3 or more than 3 times a week
 - 20/20 read the weekly choir email
 - 3/20 prefer to access a web notice board & the remainder prefer a weekly mail

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- 5 people were happy to help/lead sectionals/warm ups
- 5 people prepared to help with admin, note taking & the website

15. Any Other Business

ST to set up Whatsapp group for committee members to communicate easily

16. Next Meeting - 6 May at JB and TB's home.