

WCCC Virtual Committee Meeting 15th August 2020 – Minutes

Present: Phil Crowther (PC), Stephen Shellard (SS), Judith Aldridge (JA), Carole Oliver (CO), Kevern Oliver (KO), Rebecca Jones (RJ), Mark Wilson (MW), Sue Standford (SSt), Anne Renshaw (ARn), Eileen Roberts (ER), Sarah Donaldson (SD), Richard Holroyd (RH), Helen Randall (HR) and Robin Walker(RW)

Minute		Action
1	Apologies from Michael Brierley (MB)	
2	Minutes of meeting on 25/04/20 and notes of informal meetings and notes from informal meetings on 06/06/20 and 04/07/20 unanimously agreed. Matters arising will be postponed until next formal meeting.	KO
3	See Confidential minute	
4	<p>Brahms, Requiem concert: 15th May 2021</p> <p>4.1 CO referred to her report on progress with arrangements for staging the concert in the Cathedral: date 15/05/21, cost £4330, break-even 290 ticket sales.</p> <p>She explained that following the informal Committee meeting on 04/07/20 she had had a further Zoom discussion with MB who confirmed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the way forward had to be through Susan Macleod (Cathedral's Operational Manager) who would deal with it as a normal, Cathedral Family, booking. As result of Covid-19 the Cathedral's finances were such that it would not contemplate any financial risk and that the concert would be the Chamber Choir's rather than a joint venture. <p>4.2 ARn reminded the meeting that the above was contrary to her original proposal, which had been unanimously endorsed by the Committee in which the promotion and staging of the concert would be a joint effort.</p> <p>Apart from the above it was agreed that with current Covid-19 uncertainties, May 2021 was on balance too early for such a major event to take place.</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the moment, there should be no further action other than to seek joint collaboration on the concert within the wider context of just emerging attempts to work more closely with Cathedral. The 15/05/21 booking should not be cancelled. 	KO, All CO
5	<p>Ongoing management of WCCC</p> <p>Unanimously agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to Choir members agreement the Choir's AGM should be postponed and that the current arrangements for managing the Choir should continue to the end of 2020 when the situation will be reviewed by the Committee. <p>Action: KO will write to Choir members asking for their approval of the above</p>	KO

6	An Outdoor Sing There was widespread support for Andrew Russell's (AR) idea but the latest government guidance precludes us holding such an event at this time. Action: KO to contact AR	KO
7	Date of next meeting 1100 on 19/09/20	KO, MW

Confidential minute

<p>3</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p>WCCC's financial arrangements with Worcester Cathedral: the need for change</p> <p>KO reported that he had no further contact with Val Floy since the exchange of correspondence already reported in his briefing paper.</p> <p>MB had sent an email in which, as well as apologising for his absence from this meeting he wrote:</p> <p><i>On the matter of the meeting next week, as you know I've given my apologies already, but reading the briefing papers, there's one thing in them that's not true - the suggestion that VF had not seen the WCCC constitution before. She was responsible for the chapter meeting last year which approved the constitution changes, so she has indeed seen it before.</i></p> <p><i>I hope that the meeting goes well, and I'm sorry that I can't be there in person. I'm sure that closer relations with the Cathedral, however they can be worked out, are the way to go rather than more distant ones.</i></p> <p>In a wide-ranging discussion, the following points arose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chamber Choir principally exists to sing services in the Cathedral. This is our <i>bread and butter</i> whilst concerts are <i>icing on the cake</i>. • Becoming a separate organisation/charity is not too difficult and there are many local examples to learn from e.g. Elgar Festival. The Cathedral's Bell Ringers are looking at becoming a trust. • If we became a separate, small organisation we would no longer be a Cathedral Choir but just another Choir with an uncertain status and future with issues of organisation, management and finance. • Becoming more fully a part of the Cathedral would be good but we need to be certain that we are wanted. • The need to revisit the Choir's relationship with the Cathedral is fundamentally more important than sorting out financial arrangements and gift aid. • In this Covid dominated times it could well be that the Choir's role and contribution to the Cathedral's music-making will change. • As a Cathedral Choir we should seek a closer relationship with the Cathedral, particularly the music department. • If we draw closer to the Cathedral there must be a mutually agreed memorandum of understanding/set of working guidelines/rules i.e. a successor to our constitution. • In order to find a way ahead there must be direct discussions between representatives of the Choir and members of the Cathedral's management, other than those involved in process and financial management. • Whatever the outcome of discussions with the Cathedral, Choir members will have to be consulted on any changes before a formal agreement is reached. <p>There was unanimous agreement that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Committee wishes and believes that the Choir should become a more integral part of the Cathedral community, particularly the music department. 2. The finance/gift aid issue is a fortuitous catalyst in that it is prompting the wish to explore how best to bring about 1 above. 3. KO should, until wider discussions with the Cathedral arise, continue to be the Committee's principal contact with Val Floy. 	
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	<p>KO reminded all that this matter must remain strictly confidential to the Committee until such times as there is something concrete to report to Choir members.</p> <p>Action: KO will write to Val Floy, reporting 1, 2 and 3 above and asking for meetings about how best to progress them.</p>	KO
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This is a copy of the email which I sent on 17/08/20 to Val Floy, with copies to the Dean, Sam Hudson, and Debbie Harding.

Good morning Val,

The Chamber Choir's Committee met, via Zoom, last Saturday, 15/08/20.

The major item on its agenda was how best to respond to: your email of 17/07/20 about the need to change the WCCC's current financial arrangements with the Cathedral, the meeting on 29/07/20 between you, Debbie, Carole and me, the subsequent exchange of emails.

You can imagine that discussions were long and detailed and lead to unanimous agreement. Briefly:

- The Committee understood the need to change financial arrangements and emphatically favoured more formal integration with the Cathedral rather than becoming a separate organisation.*
- The Committee felt that formal integration would not only solve the financial issues but, far more importantly, consolidate the Choir's raison d'être which is, first and foremost, a contribution to the liturgical life of the Cathedral.*
- It became very clear during the course of the discussion that the financial issue was a timely catalyst for a fundamental rethink of the Choir's relationship with the Cathedral in general and the Music Department in particular. The Committee recognised that any integration would mean surrendering autonomy but believed that this could be achieved in ways which would benefit all.*
- The Committee was encouraged during its discussions by your comment, in the last email you sent to me,... I am sure we will find the right way forward for the Chamber Choir and by Michael Brierley's similar written words .. I'm sure that closer relations with the cathedral, however they can be worked out, are the way to go rather than more distant ones.*

I suggest that it is clear from the above that the Committee's principal concern is the Choir's ongoing relationship with the Cathedral rather than finance; and that a resolution of the former will naturally lead to a solving of the latter.

You will see that I have copied this email not only to Debbie and Michael Brierley, but also, in Michael's absence to the Dean and the Musical Director.

The Committee has for the moment asked Carole and me to continue discussions and we look forward to pursuing the above with you and others.

A final point: In order to avoid rumours and alarm amongst members the Committee is treating the above as strictly confidential until such time as we have something concrete to share with them. Please would you bear this in mind in your discussions.

Very best wishes

Kevern Oliver

Secretary Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir

this is Sam Hudson 17/08/20 reply to the above

Dear Kevern,

Many thanks for the below - it's good to be kept in the loop, and I very much share the views you have put forward about consolidating the rapport between the Chamber Choir and cathedral. I don't think there's any more I can add at this stage, but just wanted to acknowledge your message,...

Many thanks again and with all best wishes,

Samuel Hudson

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