

**WCCC Committee Meeting 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 held at LF's House**  
**Minutes**

**Present:** Peter Brook (PB), Sarah Donaldson (SD) – present virtually via Zoom, Liz Forman (LF), Carole Oliver (CO), Kevern Oliver (KO), Lynne Reekes (LR) – present virtually via Zoom

Item		Action
1	<b>Welcome</b> <b>Apologies:</b> John-Paul Hoskins, Jenny Kettleton, Helen Randall, Anne Renshaw, Stephen Shellard, Mark Wilson and Robin Walker	
2	<b>Minutes</b> Two minor amendments were put forward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AR pointed out that Venables is the composer of the week for the 2025 Elgar Festival, not just the weekend.</li> <li>• KO felt the minutes regarding transport to Westminster Abbey was vague, and confirmed that the coach is booked and everyone has indicated how they are getting there.</li> </ul>	
3	<b>Financial report</b> CO spoke to the report provided beforehand. SS's salary has still not been uplifted by the cathedral although it has been approved. Hopefully this will happen in time for his next payment in May. She also confirmed that we have received payment for the Fladbury Wedding in June (£675).	
4	<b>23/24 Events</b>	
4.1	<b>Fladbury Wedding</b> No updates currently.	
4.2	<b>25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Social in the Undercroft – 19/10/24</b> As per her briefing note, CO has asked SH to book the Undercroft for this. He has flagged that there will be a 'custodian fee' for this, and wondered if the Old Palace might be better – although we'd probably need to pay a custodian fee for this too. General agreement was that the Undercroft would be a better venue for this event. CO will confirm the booking, but we need someone to take on the organisation of the event. <b>We need a committee volunteer to coordinate the event.</b> If not we will need to open this to the whole membership. The idea would be that a small group would be formed to mastermind this.	CO Any volunteers?
4.3	<b>Westminster Abbey Evensong</b> No significant updates. KO will be contacting those who are travelling by coach to ask for payment in the next few weeks.	KO
5	<b>25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert</b> Immediately prior to the meeting AR had sent a briefing/list of suggestions which is appended to these minutes. The bulk of these were accepted, but there was some concern about the idea of offering members of other choirs a discount at this stage. The idea wasn't disagreed with in principle, but the main concerns	

	<p>were around the logistics at this stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How choir members would be identified on the door without causing significant delays on entry and stress to those manning the desk.</li> <li>• If members of other choirs have already bought a ticket at full price should they get a partial refund and if so how the logistics around this would work – if not offered they might be upset which would defeat the aim of the gesture.</li> <li>• Would a discount be the deciding factor for members of other choirs?</li> <li>• Which choirs? WFCS/Elgar Chorale/Malvern Festival Chorus were the obvious ones.</li> <li>• Could we offer the chairs of the various choirs free tickets and a discount to other members.</li> </ul> <p>The general agreement was that collaborative working was important and in principle the idea was felt to be good, but perhaps it was a little late for this concert.</p> <p>Invitations to Cathedral staff/other grantees was discussed, and it was agreed that we should stick at those people invited so far (Cathedral staff + Mayor &amp; Consort), and widen the net for the St Cecilia's Day Evensong.</p> <p>We've had a donation of £75 promised from Gabrielle Bullock of Bygones for an advert in the programme.</p> <p>There are still concerns about how we are going to get hold of the card machine for the concert as CO's e-mails regarding this have gone unanswered to date. She raised the suggestion that we look at buying our own machine which would cost in the region of £100. We'd need to link the Cathedral's bank account to this, but then could use it in just the same manner as the Cathedral's machine. It was agreed to make a further attempt to contact the Cathedral about use of their machine before looking at purchasing our own – we'd have to get permission from them to link it to their bank account, so we'd need to be sure we could do this before buying the machine.</p>	CO
6	<b>24/25 Outline Planning</b>	
6.1	<p><b>Himbleton Concert</b></p> <p>Date for this confirmed as 14/06/25.</p>	
6.2	<p><b>St Cecilia's Day Evensong and subsequent celebration</b></p> <p>The Chapter House is not available after Evensong on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November. The Old Palace would be available, but we felt there was too great a risk of losing people on the way due to the separation of the venues. The Dean's Chapel or the West End of the Cathedral were suggested as more appropriate possible venues. CO will go back to the cathedral regarding this.</p> <p>Once this is confirmed the general agreement was that a 'save the date' type invitation should be circulated to those we want to invite prior to the summer break if possible, with more formal invitations going out in September.</p>	CO
6.3	<p><b>Future Dates</b></p> <p>The dates agreed at the last meeting for 2024-25 were sent to SH shortly after our last meeting and we await confirmation from the Cathedral – they have yet</p>	

	to be discussed at a Music dept meeting. SH had sent an e-mail to LF to apologise for the delay in confirmation, but he doesn't think that our suggestions/amendments will pose any problem. Once these have been confirmed LF will communicate them to the choir membership at large.	LF
7	<b>Membership</b> As per KO's update which is on the agenda. Both Tim Cox and Rob Poulsen are currently uncertain for the concert due to medical reasons.	
8	<b>Attire for Female Singers</b> As requested at the last committee meeting, LF has e-mailed the female members of the choir with regard to clothing/Uniform. LF updated everyone on the responses she'd received. A couple of ladies felt we should all remain in skirts, but the vast majority felt that women should have the choice between long skirts or smart, tailored black trousers depending on what they felt most comfortable with. There were many and varied reasons behind this, but these chiefly related to comfort (both physical and mental) and inclusion. An anonymised summary of the feedback is attached to the minutes for reference. It was felt by those present at the meeting that we should therefore move forward with this change as soon as possible. As the Uniform policy is an appendix to the ToR any changes need to be ratified by Chapter LF was asked to liaise with JPH as our Chapter Representative to take this to the next Chapter Meeting.	LF/JPH
9	<b>Committee Future</b> Shortly after agreeing to take on the role of secretary LF was also asked to have a think about the structure of the committee and what, if any, changes needed to be made. The following comments are her thoughts on this:  In terms of personnel, KO and CO both need and want to step back, KO's stepping back has in part been realised, but not fully, and CO needs to be relieved from at least some of her duties as she currently holds two roles – Treasurer and Concert Organiser. It was agreed to seek replacement for KO's remaining tasks as Membership Sec, and CO's as Concert Organiser. PB has also announced his intention of stepping down as Chair at the AGM in the autumn.  LF made it clear that the rest of her thoughts are not personal in any way, but aiming to take an overview of the choir and the committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently, 13 people are invited to each Committee meeting (including ex officio members, co-opted members, and non-voting participant observers). As the choir only has 38 members this is a high proportion of the membership – just over 1/3.</li> <li>Turnover of committee members needs to be improved, the ToR state that committee members are elected for a year, but shall serve for a maximum of 4 years unless a successor is not forthcoming in which case they can stand again until a replacement is found. Several committee members have served for significantly longer than 4 years.</li> <li>This in turn makes the committee feels like a more daunting group to join, and makes those people who have served the longest seem very hard to</li> </ul>	

	<p>replace because of their wealth of experience. Whilst we don't want to lose this experience, we need to encourage turnover, albeit in a staggered way to allow continuity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst there are roles that need to be fulfilled for the smooth running of the choir, do all these roles need to be part of the committee? For example we need a librarian and a membership secretary, but do they need to be involved in committee meetings?</li> <li>• Might it be better to have a smaller committee, but with sub-groups working independently of, but reporting to, the committee. For example a small group could be put together to mastermind a particular concert or social event, drawing on choir members with specific skills and talents, but without those people having to commit to a 4 year term of serving on the main committee. This would also give choir members more ownership of events and some experience of how the choir works which might then lead to them feeling more able to join the committee in the future.</li> </ul> <p>There was further discussion following this, during which the following points were made.</p> <p>All agreed that succession planning is important, and that we do need people to step up to take on roles.</p> <p>Our relationship with the Cathedral was discussed, and it was clear that difficulties remain despite having held a meeting with JP, SH and Cathedral managers last Autumn in order to make improvements. We remain different from the other Cathedral choirs by having our own committee. We might find a way to involve SH more in important decisions, and any discussions regarding committee reorganisation should involve liaison with SH and JPH. A regular liaison meeting might be a good idea.</p> <p>We have already started delegating some jobs to other members of the choir – ie Eileen taking on responsibility for rehearsal venues and co-ordinating weddings – and that this is working well and could be imitated for other jobs.</p> <p>The general feeling was that a slimmed down committee with working/sub-groups may be better moving forward.</p> <p>It was agreed that LF would work on a proposed Committee structure purely as something to work from at the next meeting. This will be circulated in good time before the meeting so those who are unable to be there will have a chance to comment.</p>	LF
10	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>Rehearsal venues</b></p> <p>These are now all on the website, with the exception of the 25<sup>th</sup> July as further confirmation is needed as to whether we are actually having a rehearsal that week. LF will liaise with SS and Eileen regarding this.</p> <p><b>Committee Meeting venues</b></p> <p>There is general agreement that face-to-face meetings with the option of Zoom for those who are too far afield/injured/have covid etc is working well. The Cathedral however now expect us to pay a custodian fee if we use somewhere other than the Song School (which we can't use if Zoom is needed as it doesn't have decent wi-fi or signal) which would be in the region of £30 for each</p>	LF

	committee meeting. LF has clarified with SH that this would apply to all Cathedral committees if they met in the evenings although due to the nature of the other committees they tend to meet within working hours which obviously doesn't work so well for us. There is talk of getting wi-fi in the Song School, and once that happens we would be welcome to use the Song School for free – diary permitting! Various Committee members have offered use of their homes, so for now that seems to be the better option.	
11	<b>Date of next meeting: 12/06/24</b> <b>Venue TBC</b>	