

WCCC Committee Meeting 19th March 2025 held via Zoom
Minutes

Present: Sarah Donaldson, Liz Forman, Carole Oliver, Anne Renshaw, Kevern Oliver for items 4-5 inclusive.

Item		Action
1	Welcome Apologies: John-Paul Hoskins, Stephen Shellard, Lynne Reekes for item 6	
2	Minutes The minutes of the last meeting (22/01/25) were confirmed as a correct record.	LF
3	Financial report 3.1 CO's report is as distributed beforehand. We are where we should be financially at this point, and there are no concerns as the financial year end approaches. 3.2 CO's summary of charges was accepted unanimously (including by SS in absentia). 3.3 As per her report, CO is continuing to work on the budget for 2025/26. This is dependent on confirmation of planned events – likely recording and medium-sized concert (see item 8 below). We discussed the need to put subs up, particularly as we have no weddings in the diary at the moment, and may not get a paid Carol Service this year. The suggestion is that we increase by a further £5/term taking us to £120 for the year. AR pointed out that this is still cheaper than WFCS which is only active for 2 terms in the year (albeit with more expensive concerts).	CO
4	Westminster Abbey KO joined the meeting to discuss our upcoming trip to the Abbey. All is in place now with transport/timetable etc, although the domestic arrangements are still not entirely clear – the normal area used for visiting choirs is currently being refurbished. The taxi has now been paid for by those using it. It has been flagged that there is a half-marathon starting from Downing Street at 8:30 on the morning of the 6 th , so this may impact on transport/travel and members should take this into consideration. There is a small window where a photo of the choir in the Abbey can be taken, and we have a photographer lined up from amongst our supporters for this, but we need to know how they will gain access. KO has sent the Abbey an 100-word description of the choir (taken from the Brahms Programme) at their request.	
5	Re-evaluations Following the announcement of the planned re-evaluations two people have already signed up for slots as they are not going to be present at tomorrow's rehearsal. There have been no questions/difficulties raised so far, and all the paperwork/procedural details are in place.	

6	<p>Himbleton Concert</p> <p>LR was not able to attend the meeting, but had provided a briefing paper which was discussed – CO is also involved in the arrangements.</p> <p>SS has put together a programme, and says it has been <i>chosen to give the audience a flavour of the kind of music the choir sings in the course of a year's singing at the cathedral. Also, practically this is a programme we can put on with minimum fuss given how busy we are at the moment. Robin and I have been in touch re organ pieces.</i></p> <p>CO agreed she will update the publicity posters she has done to include mention of what we're singing. These can be sent to Clive Buswell (who has taken on social media, see below), and if the church request more posters they can have an updated version too.</p> <p>LF will send the programme and SS's notes on to LR for use with the church as needed, and will ask SS for a timetable for the day – are we rehearsing in the afternoon, or just before the concert?</p> <p>Eileen and Lynne are liaising with regard to parking and the use of the village hall and have requested a schedule for the day so they can work out when we need this – it's charged by the hour. The question was raised about whether we actually need the hall if it's going to be an extra cost – LF will contact them about this.</p>	<p>CO</p> <p>LF</p> <p>LF</p>
7	<p>Cathedral Liaison</p> <p>7.1 Safeguarding</p> <p>The new Cathedral People Administrator Jodie Brookes-Kavanagh has been in touch with those who need DBS checks and they have send their paperwork back so the DBS process is underway, and hopefully they'll be given what they need to complete the safeguarding training soon too – this is online and shouldn't be too time-consuming.</p> <p>7.2 SS's Contract</p> <p>This has been reviewed by SD and is now back with the Cathedral.</p> <p>7.3 Gift Aid/Financial Liaison</p> <p>We are now getting monthly Gift Aid payments, but as per CO's briefing there is a discrepancy of about £500 between what she has calculated we are owed and what the Cathedral think we are owed. She has discussed this with JPH and once our trip to Westminster Abbey/Easter/the financial year-end are over, they are hoping to meet with the finance team to discuss this and work out where the error is.</p> <p>CO is still waiting for a log-in. In his absence, LF will contact JPH to see what the current status of this is.</p> <p>All Staff Meeting</p> <p>7.4 SD and CO attended this yesterday. Nick Freestone arranged a 'live interview' with SD who was then able to talk about who we are and what we do, many seemed surprised at what we do other than Cathedral services, and did not know we were off to Westminster Abbey imminently!</p> <p>CO was able to remind Matthew Hall (Chief Operating Officer) that when we met 18 months ago he had agreed to send us various documents so we could make sure we were in line with Cathedral policy/process. He has sent these to CO in</p>	<p>CO/JPH</p> <p>LF/JPH</p>

	the last 24 hours.	
8	Strategy Update	
8.1	The Strategy Sub-group met yesterday, and the 3 year plan timeline has been updated and circulated prior to today's meeting.	
8.2	<p>SS is finalising the repertoire for the recording, and will send AR the finalised list with a note for each carol explaining how it links to Worcester. She will then use this to publicise the upcoming recording and to hopefully encourage local businesses/people to 'adopt' a carol.</p> <p>The financial implications of this were discussed particularly regarding possible VAT implications. As the businesses/people being approached would not get anything substantive in exchange it was felt that it would not be classed as formal sponsorship but rather a form of donation and therefore would be exempt from VAT.</p> <p>SS will check when the organ is due to be tuned, as it would be ideal if we could time our recording accordingly and not have to pay for the organ to be tuned!</p> <p>SS is minded to accept the quote from Priory records – he says: <i>My first preference would have been Regent but Gary Cole no longer produces their recordings. Priory are a well established choral/organ based company. They are run by Neil Collier and he produces each of their recordings. They have a very solid reputation and have recorded in Worcester before so they know the building. The figures quoted by Neill seem to be entirely reasonable and I don't think will break the bank.</i></p> <p>He will contact them regarding this. Ideally, we need to get a fixed, all-inclusive quote which takes into consideration any possible uplift for 2026. SD asked if he could cc LF in to his acceptance e-mail with an introduction so she can liaise as needed.</p> <p>The aim is to record the CD in February/March 2026, for launch in September/October 2026.</p> <p>The budget for the CD recording is as per CO's briefing, but is awaiting finalised/confirmed figures.</p>	<p>SS AR</p> <p>SS</p> <p>SS</p> <p>SS</p>
8.3	<p>As well as the recording next year, the aim is for us to hold a medium-sized concert at St Martin's in late June/early July 2026. This will be broadly based on the <i>Vivaldi con Vino</i> concert which was planned for 2020 but cancelled due to the covid pandemic. The first half will be Vivaldi's Gloria, and the second half will be some big anthems such as Walton's The Twelve, and Mendelssohn's Hear My Prayer (in German), which could also be used in our services in 2026.</p> <p>We would not need an orchestra for this, but would use organ/piano and possibly a small group of instrumentalists depending on cost and the final repertoire choices.</p> <p>This would probably cost somewhere in the region of £1,000 which we would hope to recoup with ticket sales.</p> <p>The idea was that we could have something more than the normal refreshments, and that it could have a social element as well as being a concert, but it was pointed out that normally at St Martin's we don't make money on refreshments as they provide these. Further thought around this is therefore needed.</p>	
8.4	SS is meeting with the MD's of the other two Cathedral Chamber Choirs whilst we are meeting, so will feed back at a later date.	SS

8.5	<p>Over the Easter Break both SS and SD are intending to write to the choir with thanks for Westminster Abbey, and will mention the Dublin project, with some detail the choir can read over the break (LF asked if this could be ready to go out in Holy Week as she's away during Easter Week).</p> <p>AR will then talk to the choir at the first rehearsal back after Easter.</p> <p>It is important that the choir are aware of the back story around this, and that they are consulted.</p> <p>AR will also prepare a briefing paper on this for the next committee meeting.</p> <p>Funding was briefly discussed, and will need to come primarily from Dublin.</p>	<p>SS/SD/LF</p> <p>AR</p> <p>AR</p>
8.6	<p>The 2025/26 service dates were discussed. We've been given dates for the Autumn term, but nothing for the Spring/Summer terms as yet, and no details about Carol Services.</p> <p>The November dates (9th and 22nd) are fine, but it would be helpful to know what Carol Service commitments we may have before confirming the December dates so that we're not spreading ourselves too thinly.</p> <p>It was pointed out that the 6th December is the WFCS Messiah Concert Day, and that this is becoming a much bigger event with other activities going on around the concert. Would it be more sensible to have said Evening Prayer that night as a result?</p> <p>It would also be helpful to have service dates for the Spring and Summer terms in the diary so we can fit our other plans (recording/concert) around these.</p> <p>LF will contact JPH about Carol Services, and go back to Alan Sheldon about all the dates.</p>	<p>LF/JPH</p>
9	<p>Social Media</p> <p>Thanks are due to Clive Buswell who has taken on Social Media. He has all the appropriate log-ins and has started posting.</p> <p>AR reminded us that photo acknowledgment needs to be given to @Michael Whitefoot, and how this should be done.</p>	
10	<p>Succession Planning</p> <p>We discussed possible Treasurer candidates, but no-one obvious springs to mind. We ideally need a new Membership Secretary too as KO would like to stand down if possible.</p> <p>All to think about possible candidates, and SD will talk to the choir after the Easter Break, including floating the idea that we could look at appointing a partner/friend/supporter if none of the members are able to take the roles on.</p>	<p>All</p>
12	<p>AOB</p>	
12.1	<p>Advertising/recruitment ideas for new members were discussed, including the idea of producing a small video of a newish choir member talking about why they joined the choir and how much they're enjoying it. Perhaps one for each voice part.</p> <p>We need to be mindful of inclusivity/equal opportunities in the wording of any advert, and the fact that we may need to consider female tenors was discussed.</p>	
12.2	<p>LF is waiting for the next call for items for the Cathedral Newsletter, and will let SD know when this arrives.</p> <p>SS has also suggested that a note is put in the service booklet for the Cathedral</p>	<p>LF/SD</p>

	on the 6 th April to let the congregation know we are singing at Westminster Abbey that day. LF will ask Sarah Bowyer about this when the next Newsletter request comes through.	LF
12.3	<p>It was pointed out that we are due to rehearse on 08/05 which is the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. It may be that many people are involved in other events that day, and it was felt appropriate to check in case it would be better to rearrange the rehearsal.</p> <p>CO will ask KO to send out a WhenAvailable poll specifically mentioning the VE Day clash as people may not have picked up on this when filling in the term's WhenAvailable poll.</p>	CO/KO
13	<p>Date of next meeting: 1400 on 14/05/25 on Zoom</p> <p>Further dates were discussed: 11/06/25</p>	