

Lichfield Cathedral Chamber Choir Committee Meeting by Zoom, Tuesday 8th February 2022 at 8.15

Present: Martyn Rawles (MR), Jenny Arthur (JA), Vicki Shirliff, Jenny Mason (JM), (VS) Megan Barr (MB). (VS Geoff Mason (GM), Wendy Shepperson (WS), Andrew Woodburn-Drayton (AWD),

1. JA welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies had been received. Later in the meeting it was realised that Tina Shakeshaft (KS) had been inadvertently omitted from the invitation to the meeting, apologies were expressed and an invitation sent out immediately.
2. Minutes of previous meeting (8th Nov 2021) were agreed and accepted.
3. Matters arising:
 - Item 10: New folders have been received and distributed.
 - Item 11: The query about whether we should have our own psalters was satisfactorily resolved.
4. Treasurer's Report:
 - a) We are now charged £5.00 a month by HSBC for our account, but this is considered standard nowadays and a reasonable fee.
 - b) Discussion ensued on whether we should still be considering giving the Cathedral an occasional donation, and the historical background to this practice was given by JA. It was decided that our true gift is singing for services, but that we could also contribute financially by taking and decorating one of the Christmas Trees in the Advent season, and MR suggested we might be able to sponsor an organ pipe in the near future. These contributions would also bring our name to public attention. VS will contact Ollie Birch to discuss potential donations.
MR said his understanding was that we are an independent body, but that we have a mutually beneficial arrangement with the cathedral; in return for our services we are not charged for rehearsals or for one concert in the cathedral each year, and we are able if necessary to refuse a service booking. We could choose to give a concert each year for the benefit of the cathedral if we considered that to be appropriate.
 - c) Our current balance is approximately £5000.
5. Website, Publicity, Social Media:

WS has sent a sample new-look website idea through the company Wix. It is more closely affiliated in appearance with the Cathedral website, and the committee was asked for initial responses, which were all positive. Wix offers a good financial deal, especially if we take a 3-year booking. WS is confident that their required method of payment can be managed satisfactorily. WS was thanked for her hard work in reaching this stage.

The new website will have a more active news section at the beginning and this will be managed by AWD. MB asked if our availability for weddings and funerals could be mentioned in the general information.

There will also be a Privacy Notice, the draft of which was read and approved by the committee with one small amendment regarding response times.

There will not be a members' site for the time being, as it was apparent that not all members use the website. It was decided that all information specifically for members will be sent out separately by email ensuring that everyone receives it.

WS is hoping to publish the new website next week.

KS was thanked for her ongoing work on our social media presence. JM will contact her as soon as possible to invite her to join the committee WhatsApp group.
6. Recruitment, Auditions, New Members:

MR reported that there are still new applicants contacting him, the most recent being two sopranos and an alto. Recruitment enquiries will continue to go to our enquiries@ address. He considers that the soprano section is now full, and will suggest suitable candidates may wish to remain in contact should a vacancy arise, and he has already contacted one previous soprano applicant with this suggestion. If the alto is suitable, she may be absorbed into the current alto section.

Since the last Committee meeting there have been a further four new members welcomed, Dan, Francis, Elli and Tom.

Welcome Packs are being emailed to all new members by JM along with the other information she sends.

7. Attendance:

GM reported that attendance levels have been very high recently compared to former times.

There has still been no contact with Ann O'Brien, despite many attempts. We are now assuming she does not wish to return. The music she holds will be retrieved in due course, but this matter is not urgent.

Ian Parry may not be attending until after Easter as he has an exceptionally heavy workload at present.

8. Calendar and Events

a) Events are advertised on the new website and in addition the intention is to have a calendar page. The chosen calendar template needs changing after discovering it will only allow 5 events before costs are incurred. WS is looking into this.

b) The Doodlepoll system is working well, and it is currently up to date until Good Friday.

c) No further news about the wedding at Weston Park on Saturday May 14th; Martyn will be editing our suggested wedding music list to choose pieces we consider appropriate for them to choose from, and will also suggest organ music likewise. This list and the invoice will be sent as soon as the list is ready.

9. 40th Anniversary recognition:

a) JA thought that The Hub is now unlikely to be a suitable venue for a concert as it is very busy and they now have their own choir/s.

b) The possibility of a dinner was explored at some length, with various venues being considered. MB will find out more about the new Whittington Golf Club and Darnford Moors Golf Club, JA will investigate the Old Schoolhouse at Weeford and St John's House. These venues were considered to be large enough to accommodate our choir with guests.

c) The idea of a new choir recording (either CD or MP3) was still a possibility. MR thought a Christmas recording would be most popular, and will get a quote from his contact.

10. Date of AGM

MR is conscious that our rehearsal time is very precious at the moment and asked if the AGM could be held by Zoom outside rehearsal hours. (The Committee agreed the date of the AGM outside of the meeting once availability had been checked. It was agreed that this would be held on Tuesday 5th April by Zoom. A link will be sent nearer the time).

11. AOB

Length of rehearsal times: it was agreed to keep rehearsals at 7.45 to 9.15 at present, as Covid is still prevalent, and AWD considers the statistics we receive to be an understatement.

Rehearsal dates and times with ETO have not yet been confirmed.

Date of next meeting TBA. The meeting closed at 10.00pm.