



Committee Meeting by video conference 8 June 2020

Present: Colin Cameron (Chair), Mark Evans, Bill Noblett, Annette Rogers, Amy Anderson, John MacDonald, Carol Omand, Christine Hunter, Julia Cross, Philip Gaskell.

1. Welcome and Apologies: Colin welcomed everyone. Apologies from Sheena Mclean.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 20th January 2020 were accepted as correct. (Proposed by Bill and seconded by Christine.)

3. Matters arising from the meeting on 20th January 2020

- a) **Come & Sing.** Nothing has been progressed on this given the current circumstances.
- b) **Accompanist** There has been no progress given the current situation.
- c) **Christmas carol singing** Colin approached Camphill Christmas Fair who were positive, but nothing has been progressed since lockdown.
- d) **Aran Browning collaboration.** There has been no recent contact.

4. Financial Report

Bill reported on the current finances:

- a) The only refund due is for the concert booking in Killearn church but Bill will seek to carry this over for when we next perform in Killearn. Colin asked that this be clarified with Sue Beck. There are no contracts outstanding with concert performers.
- b) All members' subscriptions are up to date. The accounts are currently with the accountant for inspection. At the moment the account is £1,600 more in the account than last year. There was a proposal to increase the current subscription which was last increased in 2015/16. Discussion followed around the possible increase and the appropriate level of subs should there not be a full session in 20/21. Some thought we should ask members to pay the full subscription; others thought that people could be given the choice of deferring payment until such time as we are back up and running. It was also noted that were it not for the COVID crisis subs should have increased this year. A proposal will be put to the AGM.
- c) Colin noted that Stirling Council was not permitting AGMs to be held online, but the consensus was that this should be possible using videoconferencing. It was decided to hold a virtual AGM if circumstances have not changed by September. It was also noted that we should inform choir members in plenty of time and offer technical support to get people started on conferencing platforms if needed.

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5 Future options and actions arising

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying social distancing measures, Mark was invited to speak about options for the choir's future. He noted that the SCO and RSNO had already stated that they would not return to full rehearsals until January 2021. NYCOS has also said that they will do only online rehearsals with a view to starting back in January. Mark commented that while online choirs are not very satisfying musically, it would nevertheless be good to maintain some sort of contact or connection within the choir. Carol and John both suggested that online rehearsals could be good for technique and for warm-ups. Mark agreed and said that short sessions with a warm-up and teaching about musicianship could be beneficial. A potential programme will be drawn up.

Christine noted that we need to think about how the choir will function with social distancing measures once we are back and proposed a recce of Balfron Church when it reopens. Julia suggested Drymen church as a rehearsal venue as it may have more space. It was also noted that cleaning procedures would have to be assessed and detailed. Carol suggested the possibility of sectional rehearsals on alternating weeks so that numbers were lower and social distancing easier. Annette suggested that no rehearsal tea break be held at all initially in order to keep the duration of our gathering together to a minimum. The joy of being able to sing together again being enough on its own. Any socialising could be left up to individuals following rehearsals. Others thought that people could bring their own refreshments and talk to whoever they sat near.

Colin pointed out that some people may not want to return to choir in the current circumstances and we need to gauge this somehow: Carol suggested perhaps by personal phone call from committee members. Colin will issue a newsletter update.

Mark thought it unlikely that we would be able to have a Christmas concert, but that Spring 21 is feasible. John made a plea that we retain the *Northern Lights* programme planned for 2020. This would also take the pressure off rehearsing new material in a shorter time. This was roundly supported by the rest of the committee.

There was more discussion around the social benefits of the choir, particularly as people might need it in these isolated times, and possibilities of earlier meeting up, either to practise for the Spring concert or if a smaller group wanted to.

Colin summarised that we should aim for a resumption of in-person meetings for January 2021 but explore options for some sort of activity online from September. A Christmas concert looks unlikely at this stage.

6. AOB Mark was asked to leave the meeting to allow for a discussion on his contract. The committee discussed the level of increase in his pay and the timing thereof. His loyalty and commitment, combined with the professional standards he demands of the choir, was noted as being hugely valuable and he should be remunerated accordingly. Bill agreed to circulate a report from Making Music on Directors' salaries. Comments from the committee by email were invited after the report has been sent out.

Date of next meeting tbc.

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