

MACCLESFIELD MALE VOICE CHOIR

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Held 3rd October 2023 at Macclesfield Methodist Church

PRESENT Mr Ciaran Fleming (Chair) Mr Neil McArthur Mr Laurie Kennard
Mr Paul Nadin Mr Tim Neale Mr Shane Owens
Mr Bryan Peak

1 **Welcome** – CF welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 **Apologies** Mr David Coggan Mr Chris Cromar Mr Keith Jones
Mr Robert Owens Mr John Robinson

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 4th September were agreed and signed.

4 Matters arising

- **Dragon's Den** – NM is progressing a suggestion to apply to Macclesfield Town Council for some funding for a project aimed at attracting new members, particularly younger members. LK also advised that we should hear soon re the application to the Coop.
- **Choir photos** – NM and TN will start filling the gaps next week. **Action: NM and TN**

5 Financial Update

5.1 Forecast

There has been little change since last time with the projected end of year balance now being £8,787 including ear-marked funds of £587. This still presumes net concert income of £4,000 for the rest of the year. Next year's budget will be reviewed in more detail at the next meeting when the overall MD situation may be clearer.

6 Events

6.1 Prestbury

Harry and Tony visited the church today to review staging/seating. Everything appears to be in hand.

6.2 Joint concert with BackBeat

LK advised that 130 tickets have been issued (not necessarily sold) of which 75 have been to members. BP will send an email to members asking them to confirm actual numbers of tickets sold so that we can be sure of seating and overall capacity. LK still needs to arrange staffing for front of house, including raffle and programme sales, and drinks sales. He will speak to Dave Collins about the raffle. SO will check with JR about collecting drinks from Majestic Wines. Agreed programme price will be £2. **Action: LK and BP**

6.3 Remembrance concert

TN will progress once the overall format of the concert is agreed. He will contact CC re the programme and Harry N about acquiring a wreath. He will also discuss with Harry C the specific Remembrance aspects of the concert. It has been agreed that profit will go to SSAFA. Agreed that the ticket price should be £10 and, if necessary, the choir will supplement the donation to SSAFA. **Action: TN**

6.4 Songs from the Shows

Mike Batson has started organising initial promotion. CC has arranged for David Jones to be accompanist in the absence of Anna. He is approaching Miles Horner as a soloist. SO also suggests approaching Miles about the Last Night of the Proms event that he organises. **Action: MB and SO**

6.5 Mottram Hall

Basically the same as last meeting re members. Definitely confirmed with a fee of £500. Whilst not an ideal room to sing in, they are happy with what we provide. We shall need the choir keyboard. **Action: reps**

6.6 The Bridges

We have been asked to perform another informal concert for them on Monday 29th January, fee £350. This is obviously instead of normal rehearsal. CF pointed out that this would normally be the AGM date so we shall need to bring the latter forward to 22nd.

6.7 Joint concert with Bollington Singers

BP has investigated use of Bollington Civic Hall but the capacity is too small. Options being reviewed. **Action: BP**

6.8 Joint concert with Côt Melbion Colwyn

No further contact. BP will chase for a date. **Action: BP**

6.9 Joint concert with Côt Melbion Maelgwn

To be considered for autumn 2024. **Action: BP**

6.10 Cornwall Choir Festival

As already advised, this visit will not go ahead because of insufficient support from members. Agreed to keep it in mind for their next event – presumably 2025 – in order to give more notice and preparation time.

6.11 Joint concert with Audley

CC advised that the concert will need to take place on a Thursday evening between January and March to fit with the availability of soloist Wynn Evans. A date should be proposed later this month. BP advised that Bollington Singers concert needs to be in March to fit their schedule so we must be careful to avoid a clash.

6.12 Future Date and Venues

PN suggesting we investigate a concert at Astbury with Russell Watson who is a supporter at the church and has performed there in the past. It was agreed to investigate for next summer but acknowledged that Russell Watson's diary may well dictate that we need to wait till 2025. **Action: PN**

The committee reviewed the outline concert programme for 2024 and felt that we should have a major concert in April after Easter. Whether it is a "Gala" concert or on a specific theme is to be determined. BP will advise KJ of the specific amendments to the schedule. Once we have a clearer idea of the overall programme, the website summary will be updated and will be advised to members. **Action: BP**

7 Section Representatives

Nothing that is not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

8 MD arrangements

CC has advised that he is not available on 15th November and 18th December and, going forward, 17th February and 16th March. Re the first two, he proposes rehearsing on Wednesdays of those weeks, firstly for SftS and secondly for carols at Mottram.

9 Any other business

9.1 Contact with schools/colleges

LK reported that he has now received positive responses from Kings and Fallibroome. Both though have said that December is a busy month so they would be looking to be included in a concert next year. LK asked what the response should be if any other school responds as we now have the potential for a soloist for SftS [see item 6.4]. It was agreed that we should still try to accommodate any response subject to being available to fit in with the overall programme. Thanks to LK for his work with this. **Action: LK**

NM reminded the meeting that he and Bob had visited Macclesfield Academy some months ago to enquire about use of their facilities. Although nothing has progressed on that, he can supply the contact name who was quite helpful at the time. **Action: NM**

9.2 Choir recording

LK has identified suitable tracks from choir CDs. He will coordinate with PN about the technical aspects of getting them on to the website. **Action: PN and LK**

9.3 Meeting frequency

PN queried the need to meet every month. It is only in recent years that monthly has been the default. It was agreed to revert to bi-monthly meetings with an informal meeting before rehearsal on the intervening months to cover upcoming concert matters and anything urgent. This will start wef January 2024.

9.4 Ticket discounts for helpers

PN felt we should acknowledge the assistance given – mainly by partners – with things like front of house duties and selling refreshments as, by doing so, those people will miss a section of the concert. Plus of course, without them, we would have a problem. It was agreed to offer a reduced ticket price of £10.

9.5 Recruitment

CF has been approached by Graham re work he undertook for John Powell a while ago, whereby he researched other choirs' approach to recruitment. To date, Graham has received no feedback on this. It was agreed to ask Graham to revisit the findings. **Action: CF**

10 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 7th November. BP gave his apologies and asked NM to take the minutes.

Signed

Ciaran Fleming.....7th November 2023

MD Arrangements

CC emphasised that he has always seen his rôle as being a caretaker one allowing Robert the space to come back when he feels able. With hindsight, the original offer to step back when Robert returned (which was expected to be after only a few months) is not entirely practical from both his point of view and in terms of security for the choir.

CC therefore submitted his suggestions for the way forward to cover the MD position next year. His three options are:

1. We reappoint him for another three months wef January. This would leave him free to accept work elsewhere from April.
2. We reappoint him on a rolling three month basis so that, for example, if we still need him at the start of February, the agreement would roll over till end of April.
3. We reappoint him on a retainer basis. Thus, presuming we accept Robert's offer of no fees, we continue to undertake to pay Chris for say three months but he won't be required if Robert is available.

After discussion the committee agreed to propose to Chris a combination of 2 and 3, i.e. a retainer agreement on a rolling three month period. It was agreed to suggest that this arrangement comes into immediate effect. This gives Chris certainty of income for the "next" three month period and means we would always have cover from him or Robert.

The committee emphasised that they are all very appreciative of the support and commitment he has given to us over recent months.

BP will draw up a simple agreement and seek Chris' views.

Action: BP