

Macclesfield Male Voice Choir.

Minutes of an On-line Committee Meeting held on 13th July 2020 at 7.30pm.
Meeting was held using Zoom – Zoom controller was R. Owens.

The Chairman (HN) opened the meeting at 7:30 pm with a tribute to our late our colleague Geraint Jones-David whose valued contribution to the Choir will be sorely missed.

1] Attendance and Apologies for Absence.

In Attendance - H. Newton (HN), J. Robinson (JR), R. Jenner (RJ), G. Waters (GW), D. Collins (DC), K. Jones (KJ), B. Peak (BP), J. Powell (JP). R. Owens (RO), N. McArthur (NM).

Apologies for absence. D. Evans.

2] Minutes of last meeting

As the Meeting scheduled for 12th March 2020 had been cancelled, the minutes for the previous meeting held on January 30th were approved. They are available in the Members Section of the Choir website.

3] Matters arising from 2 above.

None.

4] Financial Update (RJ).

As of 9th July 2020, the balance is £21780 of which £8000 is ringfenced for Uniform, £1250 is ringfenced Cornwall deposits potentially refundable leaving £12530.

This figure has been considerably boosted by donations to the *Friends of MMVC Support Fund*.

The Support Fund was specifically set up to ensure the Choir's ongoing viability both financially and musically and I can report that whilst we have not yet achieved the target originally set, massive generosity on the part of very many people means that we can continue to pay the music team "retainers" through to at least the end of 2020 without comprising the choirs reserves. Specifically, we have received 30 individual donations which totalled £3070 before Gift-aid (the realistic Gift-aid claim on these donations will be c£700).

Donations continue to arrive and even though we have recently received two more donations which further under pin our financial robustness we may now have reached its natural conclusion.

The contribution from our Chairman's Run added a valuable £245.

Additional notes for the Committee for future consideration and/or action;

a) a few of the above donations resulted from non-usual distribution of the Appeal i.e. the press release and Harry's FB notice of his run.

b) we need to exercise all the channels we have access to; FB, web, paper media, radio, etc., and make no distinction between one or other.

c) we have a "following" / supporter base that is wider than just choristers and families, we need to "tap" that following in ways so far unconsidered. This should mean considering new forms of membership (Friends of MMVC seems a good start) with different membership packages, promoted by different "channels" and plugging in to the "Keep In Touch" concept.

David Hyde has expressed some concern re the reserves. His concern was based on a set of figures that are not drawn from the actual accounts. Given the above and known levels of expenditure through the remainder of 2020 the end of year balance (reserve) will be c£7000 (original target £5000-6000).

Looking forward, it is impossible to forecast for 2021 particularly as we have no concert programme revenue projections. Nor are we able to project membership/subscription income. Nevertheless, this

level of reserve is sufficient to enable three months of operation (i.e. end of March 2021) with no significant income and still maintain an adequate reserve.

5] Uniform Project Update (RJ)

For obvious reasons there have not been massive strides forward but we did manage to get in two more meetings and schedule a number of activities to bring the project to a close. We defined 'close' as the purchase and distribution of uniforms, but because of the Covid pandemic regrettably that is still at some unspecified point in the future.

The Project Group has resolved down to a core group of David Hyde, Keith Jones, Dave Collins, Martin Tute, Bryan Peak, and me. Sadly, Geraint's passing, shortly into the lockdown period, robbed us of a valuable member.

Importantly we have been in contact with both funding agencies (National Lottery and Macclesfield Town Council) to confirm that, whilst the project timescales are necessarily extended, there is no imminent likelihood of the grants having to be returned. These monies remain "ring-fenced" within the Choirs account so will not be used for any other purpose.

As a reminder, the new uniform will be a navy-blue lounge suit with three different colour shirts and three different ties. The shirts will be plain (not dress) in some shade of blue, white and pink. Two of the ties will be plain in some shade of; ruby red and a gold. The third tie will be a club tie with three stripes and a choir logo. The ties will be 'clip-on'. There will be three pocket squares with colour/pattern to match the uniform combination. It is hoped that the whole uniform will be provided in a badged uniform carrier.

We have agreement from the Committee that the uniform when it arrives will be delivered with a strict Dress Code (no point having a nice new uniform and wearing a crumpled shirt for instance) and an Ownership Code (the uniform will remain a Choir asset so we have to define terms of loan).

The remaining project work has been around choosing colour and pattern schemes and identifying suppliers. We have agreed shirt colours of blue, white and pink shirts but need to confirm shades and suppliers. The three colours for ties and squares we were looking to mix-and-match were burgundy/deep red, yellow/gold and a shade of blue. So again, shades and suppliers to be agreed. For the "club tie", we have discussed varying widths of the stripes and colour combinations and have been working initially with Macravets on possible designs.

Finally, we have undertaken a "sense check" and tried to imagine how we (the Choir) might combine this equipment for the various Event types we attend; Gala, funeral, wedding, Care Home, small church, Christmas etc. So far it works really well.

6] Future Strategy Project (KJ).

In our recent Strategy session, distributed to the membership on 6th July 2020, we established a medium-term plan which foresees an increased Marketing and PR activity. John Powell has put a brief summary together of where we want to go with Marketing and PR.

In it, we aim to establish the Marketing and PR implications of that medium-term plan, particularly for the period July 2020 to March 2021

Summary of Medium-term plan-

The main components of the plan relevant to Marketing and PR are (in no particular order)

- A repertoire and performance style more adaptable to different audiences

- A desire to slightly increase the reach and penetration of the Choir's image and capabilities, particularly in respect of online presence.

- A recommencement of rehearsals in January 2021 (assumed) followed by a series of concerts and other events (yet to be determined) from around March 2021

- A need to increase membership particularly in the age group 35 to 55.

A desire to improve and deepen relationship between MMVC and other Macclesfield organisations, including the Council, the Town at large, sports and other social organisations etcetera.

Next steps -

We need to establish the implications of these changes to our ambitions in respect of Marketing and PR, even though they reflect an extension of our existing activity rather than a change of direction. Having done that, the following actions are appropriate:

Identify channels to be exercised.

Establish main messages to ensure coherence of message across channels

Establish budget and resourcing requirements

Produce material suitable for dissemination.

KJ went on to say that the reaction to the call for help had been negative. Not one member had volunteered, and he issued an urgent repeat request for help in PR and Marketing.

New website - (At this stage Tim Neal and Mike Batson joined the meeting).

The website is developing a plan. Tim, Mike, David Hyde and others are working with the developers.

It is felt that the website should carry an updated Future Events Diary as soon as possible.

7] New choir logo - RO

The committee were reminded that the purpose of a logo is to be an easily recognisable image. It is not a badge or coat of arms.

A survey showed that MMVC was common to a number of other organisations and, to avoid confusion, the logo would identify us as *Macc MVC* in future.

The Strategy Group, in conjunction with RO, have been evaluating various proposals for a new logo and narrowed it down to 3 which were presented.

#1 was chosen unanimously by the Committee. It has **Macc MVC** superimposed on a representation of soundwaves (as would be shown on an oscilloscope). The basic colourway is; *white lettering over a blue soundwave on a black ground*. This closely resembles the Macclesfield town colours. This colourway can be changed as required.

8] Section Representatives -

T1 – Nothing to report.

T2 -_Nothing to report.

B1 - Nothing to report.

B2 -_Nothing to report.

9] Events Secretary –

HN reported that he had received a letter from Martin Tute tendering his resignation as Events Secretary. HN has replied thanking Martin for all his hard work.

Because it is unlikely that we will be holding any Events in the near future and that we are reviewing our ongoing annual commitments (see below) we will not be replacing Martin at this stage. However, we are in discussion with someone to take up the position of Events Controller.

RO wants us, in future, to hold no more than 6 significant Events locally a year.

The concert with Jess Gillam is fixed for 24th July 2021. HN has booked St.Michaels.

With the exception of Backbeat, no joint concerts.

Investigate events in Knutsford and Congleton.

We should participate in a Christmas Service in town but not hold a full Carol concert as we have in Langley. HN will contact St Michaels.

JP will look into a service in St Oswalds Bollington.

Bollington Primary school event - JR will progress this with Martin Tute.

10] Change to Rule 4 – GW

With the exception of The President, all committee members and Choir officers come up for election at the next AGM.

a) GW feels that the current Rule 4 requirement for the Chairman to serve 3 years may well prove off-putting to possible candidates and suggests it should be changed to read something similar to “The Chairman’s period of tenure should not exceed 3 consecutive years”. The Committee considered this is not yet necessary but would review it later in the year.

b) if we did want to change Rule 4 it requires approval at an AGM or SGM. The Constitution has no provision for an on-line SGM, but we could ask the membership by email as in our DPP, to approve one.

11] Any Other Business-

The decision was taken to continue with the CovidContactList phone calls.

Date of next Meeting – As and when required.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and RO for setting up and controlling the Zoom session.

Meeting closed at 9:05 pm.