

Minutes of Scottish Chamber Choir Committee Meeting

Friday 10 January 2025 (19.00 to 20.30) (on Zoom)

Present: Alan Miller (chairing), Iain McLarty, Stéphanie Robin, Alison Campbell, Catherine Hadshar, Valerie Holehouse, Graham Drew, Alastair Wilson

1. **Apologies:** Marjory Lobban

Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

2. **Matters arising from Minutes of meeting on 7 November 2024**

(Minutes approved)

(a) Library

Valerie had followed up with Edinburgh University Library and the National Library of Scotland on disposal of the handwritten *Cantos Sagrados* copies; neither was interested in acquiring them. Iain suggested offering the McMillan copies for sale: he will liaise further with Valerie; Making Music may also be interested. Valerie will retain one copy of the McMillan for the choir library. She will give the handwritten copies of the McLeod *Carmina* to Sue Shoosmith for storage. **(VH, IMcL)**

(b) Ailie Robertson Commission

Ailie has offered to apply for a grant towards making a professional live recording of the *Lost Lights* performance at the March concert; Iain is considering potential recordists, and Graham will also check whether his contact is available. Stéphanie is liaising with the venue on AV facilities. Provision of information on/ links to earlier commissions on the SCC website will be discussed at a future Committee meeting. **(IMcL, GD, SR)**

(c) Committee Roles

Alan will follow up as discussed on arrangements for filling the Treasurer role after June. Alison will be attending an online workshop about the Making Music platform. **(AM, AC)**

(d) March Concert programme notes

Neil Dawson has kindly offered to assist Martin Tarr with producing the programme notes for the March concert.

(e) Membership List

Alison will share the updated SCC membership list on the Dropbox facility recently created for the Committee's use. **(AC)**

3. **Finance update**

The Committee considered a helpful update circulated by Marjory in advance, noting that the November concert made a modest profit of £117, leaving just over £8,150 in choir reserves, and that we will need to sell 121 tickets at £15 to break even in the March concert.

The Committee agreed to add subscription levels for choir members not singing in all concerts in a given financial year to the agenda for its next meeting. **(AW)**

4. **2024-25 Season Programme**

(a) 23 November 2024

This concert had gone very well musically; it was particularly encouraging that choir members had covered all the solo parts so successfully. The audience had been very appreciative, albeit slightly smaller than it might have been had the weather been better.

(b) 8 March 2025

Iain has worked with Ailie Robertson on revisions to the original score - choir members' comments were very helpful - and the revised version (into which choir members will need to copy their notations from the previous version) will be available for rehearsals later in January. **(IMcL, VH)**

Stéphanie is liaising with Stockbridge Parish Church on venue arrangements. **(SR)**

(c) 24 May 2025

Given the clash with the new date for the Melrose Rugby Sevens, it no longer makes sense to proceed with the planned venue in Melrose. After careful discussion, including with potential venues and with choir members with close knowledge of the area, we are now booked to perform at Kelso Old Parish Church. Stéphanie is in touch with the venue on detailed arrangements, and Iain will liaise with Valerie on music requirements.

(SR, IMcL, VH)

5. **Collaborative Concert (Mozart)**

The Committee considered a further written update from Brian Kerr. The concert is at St Cuthbert's Church on Saturday 15 November. Iain is following up on arrangements for soloists and confirming additional repertoire with the Meadows Chamber Orchestra. **(IMcL)**

6. **Follow-up to November Workshop**

(a) Branding and Marketing

Alan outlined his proposal, endorsed by the Committee, to set up a short-life working group to consider branding, use of social media and audience engagement, building on very helpful contributions from the recent choir workshop. The initial focus will be on branding and presentation, with a new SCC logo an early proposed output. The working group will include Alan, Iain, Graham, Ailbhe Rees, Julie Morris and Jim Murdoch. Alan will finalise membership. **(AM)**

A brief discussion of social media platforms endorsed a proposal to rationalise the various platforms currently used by the SCC by de-activating our account on X (formerly Twitter). **(SR)**

(b) Programme 2025-26 to 2028-29

Iain introduced his outline draft proposals (circulated in advance). The intention was to achieve a balance of repertoire over the full period and within each season; to maintain our commitment to diversifying our programming, while making use of our extensive choir library; and for each concert to make some degree of profit, with one or two exceptions where we would need in advance to be clear on the size of any loss that we are able to

budget for. Planning had been extended out to summer 2029, 2028-29 being the year of the SCC's 60th anniversary.

The Committee noted that some elements, such as the 60th anniversary and a proposed "tasting notes" concert, would require a good deal of forward planning; and that careful consideration was also needed on venue strategy given the varying requirements of specific concerts.

Iain will work up a revised version of the forward programme, with specific questions on which input would be helpful, for dissemination by Alan to the whole choir. **(IMcL, AM)**

Additional points arising in discussion:

Alastair will work with Graham to contact Nordic and Baltic consulates and related associations to help disseminate details of the March concert to potential audiences. It was agreed that we can offer one or two complimentary tickets to those who undertake to circulate publicity materials. **(AW, GD)**

Stéphanie will pursue venue options for the choir getting together socially after the March concert. **(SR)**

Cath and Alison are looking at some straightforward steps, such as name badges and introducing folk, that can be taken to help new choir members feel welcome. **(CH, AC)**

7. Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Cath will recirculate her proposals (previously discussed by the Committee) for any additional comments. She is meanwhile working with Amy Wilson on early options to address barriers to inducting and integrating choir members. **(CH)**

8. AOCB

(a) Rachel Bucknall is kindly providing wine glasses for use in the Esenvalds and Iain is pursuing a source for chimes. **(IMcL)**

(b) Iain is likely to have commitments in the US in the first two weeks of January for the next three years; he will let the Committee know once this is confirmed. **(IMcL)**

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 23 April at 7.00 - 8.30 pm. **(AW, All)**

Alastair Wilson
27 January 2024