

Manchester Community Choir

Committee Meeting

Thursday March 9th 2017 7.15 for 7.30pm



Margaret's House: 2 Anerley Road, Didsbury, M20 2DJ

Present:

Jo Melzac (Chair), Margaret Seaby (Deputy Chair), Chrissie Gibson (Secretary), Steve Campbell (Treasurer), Julie Batten, Wendy Eaden, Tudor Owen, Sandra Hunt, Lorraine Thompson, Peter Willmot

Apologies: Alan McDonald, Alison Peacock

1. Welcome and Apologies

Thanks to Margaret for hosting the meeting.

2. Past events: Learning points for the future

a. Visit with Gasworks Singers 17-19/02/17 (Margaret & Julie)

Comments from the participants were circulated by Margaret and Julie, they were all favourable. Everybody pulled together and it was an opportunity to get to know each other, people took responsibility for each other. Lessons had been learned about the overall organisation, as a result we now have the flow chart and expenditure figures for each event from the Treasurer. The two MD's (Liz and Dee) worked well together. Belle Vue coaches were good. There was not a complete list of emergency numbers, so we need to address that later. A very worthwhile weekend collaboration with £1,142.33 raised for Médecins Sans Frontières at the busking in Bristol Museum and Art Gallery + the evening concert.

b. Busking for Marie Curie 04/03/17 (Chrissie)

Nice to have a performance in March. The arrangements went well after an initial change of location. Cross St Chapel was good for the warm up and King Street was a good spot for space and acoustics. We might ask for a busier place eg St Ann's Square, next year. The collectors said that the proportion of people donating was much higher than elsewhere in the city centre because the choir was there. They raised £300 during our spots. The money will enable the charity to provide 15 hours of nursing care. We have photos and videos for our own publicity. We used the stage and PA. We have subsequently bought a second trolley for the PA because it was difficult to roll it on the city streets.

3. A draft plan for future Choir years

The Choir has received lots of requests including some from abroad. Committee members had expressed concern about the potential costs incurred and the trips not being inclusive. Agreed to go on April agenda when Liz will be at the meeting. Julie wanted us to be more proactive than reactive to these requests. Tudor reminded us of Sally's bequest which was to help with travel costs.

4. Hosting Street Choirs Festival 2019 - discussion

Margaret and Sandra had suggested that we host the SCF in 2019 to mark our 20th anniversary.

Documents from Leicester had been circulated they were impressive in their detail and also daunting.

Peter circulated information about venues (see below). It demonstrated that Royal Northern College of Music was a similar price to The Curve, Leicester. There are two halls so we could split the concerts and accommodate more people. They were keen to have us and we could reserve it at this point in time without paying a deposit.

We could try to be part of the Manchester International Festival, but Committee members were not sure that we would fit with their type of performances.

If we arranged it for after MIF, that would point to July 12-14th.

A second paper entitled Next Steps was also circulated. If we want to progress, we would need to set up a Project team. It was agreed that Peter, who has extensive project management experience, would be the lead. Leicester set up a separate company. All significant decisions would come back to the Committee.

The team would produce a detailed project plan. Team members would have clearly defined roles. The volunteer workforce would be crucial.

We agreed that we might involve other choirs, but we must take the lead and everyone must report to MCC Committee.

Liz is supportive in principle.

We agreed:

- Jo would talk about SCF2019 in Sunday's announcements, whilst stressing that things were tentative at the moment.
- Peter would make a provisional booking at RNCM.
- The project team would start a feasibility study
- Margaret would tell Kendal and Brighton we were doing a feasibility study and ask for a 'hold' on the 2019 Festival hosting for MCC, until the feasibility team have completed their study by the first week in June.
- We would decide by June this year whether we went ahead

5. Working groups - feedback on ideas so far

a. Committee meeting schedule/location/time change (Jo)

We decided to carry on as we are for now using Margaret's house or the Cop Hall.

b. Email protocols (Alan, Chrissie, Steve)

to be discussed later when Alan is present

6. Future events standing list: updates

a. Rehearsal and performance dates for 2017 (Tudor)

Tudor circulated a list of new and revised dates for rehearsals through to December 2017. Liz had been consulted and is available.

We still need to set a date for the AGM.

b. Target Ovarian Cancer FR event Buxton 06/05/17

(Alison, Chrissie, Lorraine)

The event is now called the Peak and City Concert. The tickets will be £8 and £5. Free for choir members. Tickets will be available via Eventbrite or paper tickets for friends and family. Whaley Choir and Matilda are designing marketing materials.

We will need to promote it through our contacts.

Whaley Choir are checking out the PA in the church.

We already have good numbers signed up to sing.

We have 22 signed up for a coach. We decided to progress the coach booking as soon as possible to get a good price. *Chrissie will send out an email to choir members with a deadline of the March 27th rehearsal to sign up for the coach.* Friends and family also welcome on the coach. We agreed to charge £10pp.

Steve will book the coach on March 28th

We would set off at 2pm. Arrive about 3pm to allow people to look round Buxton. Warm up 5pm.

7pm concert starts ?? end of concert. Leave 9.30pm.

c. Chorlton Arts Festival 25/05/17 (Tudor & Wendy)

We have not heard anything yet. We discussed whether the Heatons Youth Choir might join us, but decided that this was not the best event. We decided that Victoria Baths or the Fair Trade might be better. *Chrissie will get in touch with them including asking them about the PL insurance.*

d. Street Choirs Festival Kendal 23-25/06/17

(Sandra, Peter, Margaret)

Booking for the Festival has now closed. Additional tickets for the Friday concert might still be available. Contact Lakeland Voice. *Margaret to send email to all members.*

We agreed not to provide a coach because people will arrive and leave at different times due to the additional events. We will set up a car share list.

e. Llangollen International Eisteddfod 08/07/17 (Tudor & Alison)

We will hire a double-decker coach and charge £10 each. Leaving East Didsbury at 8am and leaving Llangollen at 4pm.

f. Victoria Baths 12/11/17

The West Indian Centre has been booked again for the warm up.

Ray to retrieve the banner cover.

7. Treasurer Slot

Steve had circulated a financial report (see below). He has a spread sheet with every payment and income now included. We all thanked him for his hard work and the excellent report. He also has a spreadsheet with income and expenditure for each event.

The main point was that we are not covering costs. The conclusion was that we need to be aware of overheads per event.

We agreed not to provide free coaches. We will review the subscription fees; we have had two years of frozen fees. We currently have 22 rehearsals per year. If we continue with additional rehearsals from September we must take those extra costs into account.

We have three types of performance:

- Lowest cost eg busking, no extra rehearsal
- Medium cost, most frequent eg Victoria Baths, Fair Trade
- Most expensive, might involve travelling eg Bristol.

We need to plan the year and possibly make some tough choices about the gigs we accept. We also need tighter financial control within each event.

8. IT Issues slot

Emergency contacts list to be discussed at a future meeting.

9. Celebrating MCC's 20th Anniversary

To be discussed at a future meeting.

10. New event suggestions for later years (see items 3 & 4)

To be discussed at a future meeting.

11. Other projects - standing list

Equipment - poles for banners
Choir archives

12. Minutes of January and February meeting - any other matters arising?

Two sets of minutes were approved.

It was agreed that in the future Chrissie would circulate the draft minutes for approval, to enable them to go on the website. We would discuss any Matters Arising in the meeting.

13. AOB

- a. Performance at Sheila Pickford's. Julie reported at it might be next year.
- b. We agreed the wording to go at the end of emails relating to performances. *"We expect those performing to have been using Liz's tips and practising at home and ideally to have attended the 2 consecutive rehearsals before the performance so that we can keep up our high standard."*

- c. Larry reported that the Fair Trade event is on 25th Nov at the same venue. We maybe in the main hall. She has asked for us to be on their leaflet.
- d. Larry also reported that she has been in touch with the City Council about the 200th anniversary of Peterloo and registered our interest.

Next meeting: Thursday April 6th 2017, Coop Hall, Hardy Lane Coop, 349 Barlow Moor Road, M21 7QH with Liz. NB venues are required for May 11th and June 8th

Street Choirs Festival 2019

Main venue for Street Choirs

Question: Can we find a suitable venue in Manchester that we can afford?

Answer : Yes!

Royal Northern College of Music

- 2 stunning, world-class concert halls, total capacity 1,200+
- all the choir warm-up space we need behind the scenes
- plenty of Sunday workshop rooms
- large reception area
- catering, bar

Based on Leicester's budget (£15K), we can afford it (£10-£15K incl Sunday workshop rooms)

Benefits:

- the chance for choirs to sing in a world-class music venue
- all the facilities we need for the weekend under one roof
- they are very keen to host us (eg deposit)
- similar event (LGBT choir festival being held there this August)
- two halls means the Saturday concert is more manageable (doesn't have to start at 5pm!) and...
- ...we can host more choirs, more delegates = more revenue
- affordable student accommodation nearby

Dates:

- University terms run to 1st week in July, after which student accommodation for delegates becomes available
 - Manchester International Festival 2017 runs from 29th June – 16th July.
- Opportunity to be part of MIF in 2019?
- Llangollen Eistedfodd has historically been first weekend in July
 - Possible SCF2019 dates: 12-14 July

Other venues considered:

Venue	(capacity)	Approx. cost
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Manchester Central (800-1000)	£10-15K
Lyric Theatre, Lowry (1,700)	£15-20K
Albert Hall (1,100)	awaiting response
Salford University (1,000)	£5-10K
Manchester Academy (1,100)	£10-15K

Initial estimates only

Suggested next steps

Now:

Do whatever we need with Street Choirs to do to 'hold' the 2019 slot for Manchester. Emphasise our 20th anniversary, 200th anniversary of Peterloo Massacre, Manchester International Festival.

Secure provisional booking with RNCM (no ££ required)

Next 3 months:

- 1) Create a budget and cash flow for the event
- 2) Clear proposed dates with City Council
- 3) Set up a core project team (c.6 people) from within the choir
- 4) Produce a project plan

This Sunday:

Start communication to our members and tell them we'll be asking for help – the Committee has a choir to run!

Early June:

If it all checks out, confirm to Street Choirs that we're definitely doing it and confirm booking with RNCM.

June 23-25:

Use Kendal 2017 (and Brighton 2018) for further learning/ideas (on top of Leicester feedback)

Treasurer's Report

A year in the life of the choir

1. Start of year: £4,226.17

The 2016/17 financial year began with £4226.17 in the bank account, (along with Sally Mitchell's separate bequest of £500). This is the total amount accumulated since the choir started in 1999.

2. Members pay their subscriptions...

So far in 2016/17 we have received £7,380 in subscriptions with a little more still coming in as new people join mid-year. This takes us to £11,606.17.

3. But we have certain fixed and unavoidable commitments...

To run the choir we have to pay rent to whichever venue we rehearse in, and to pay our MD a professional rate for teaching and leading us. We also have certain administrative essentials such as 3rd party insurance, a web site and email service etc. and this applies even if we didn't do any performances or spend any money on any other activity!

Over the current year these will be:

Didsbury Baptist Church (£90 per month)	£1,080.00
Liz payment for 11 Sunday and Monday rehearsals	£3,118.50
Insurance	£92.40
Internet (estimate based on last year – may be more!)	£100.00

These four alone come to £4,390.90 each year, so after these have been covered we still have in theory £7215.27 left to spend on the year's activities if we spent all the choir's assets, but we should aim to keep a reasonable end of year balance for future year's activities.

4. What else does it cost to run the choir?

A lot! So far this year we have spent over £952 on a range of items including stage and sound equipment, flowers and other gifts, Alison Critchley's song arrangement and the Christmas celebration. And after the visit from Kor Rey we added £229 of choir funds to our Shelter donation.

On the other hand we have received about £100 from CD sales and EasyFundraising, and the Faith Watson workshop made a surplus of £80

So if we estimate £970 as the net admin cost we now have about £6245.27 left for the year's events before we go overdrawn!

5. What do our events cost?

More than most people think! If an outside organisation invites us to perform we normally put on an extra rehearsal (paying Didsbury Baptist Church or some other venue for their rehearsal room and Liz for her time and additional travel costs). Then we pay Liz for her time on the day and some travel expenses. So a minimal event might cost us:

Rehearsal room	£45.00
Liz's rehearsal cost	£140.00
Liz's cost on the day	£157.50

Giving a minimum of £342.50 for an economical gig.

But we may need to pay for extra time with Liz and have to cover additional travel costs. Also an event we organise ourselves (perhaps as a 'fund raiser') can involve extra rent payments to get a performance venue and publicity costs such as printing flyers and programmes.

For a bigger event like Llangollen or Street Choir we have to pay Liz for a full day (£378) and her travel costs which can be up to £100, there may be registration fees (£78 for Street Choir, £100 for Llangollen) and if we provide a coach the fares may not cover all its cost. There are other occasional extras (for example the visit to Bristol also involved an additional MD fee of £200) and many of our events have cost in the range from £400-£600 each.

Of course some organisations are willing to pay us a fee to perform or cover our costs in some other way. Every event is different but paying gigs are increasingly hard to find, and with more competition from other choirs.

6. What have we done so far this year? And how much of that £6245 have we spent?

Events for the year, with estimated costs (Red if it's a net spend, Black if net surplus) are:

21 st Sept:	Peace Day	£189.80
9 th Oct:	Kor Rey weekend	£522.43
6 th Nov:	Victoria Baths	£414.25
19 th Nov:	Stockport Fair Trade	£388.50
2 nd Dec:	Freedom From Torture	£134.00
10 th Dec:	Central Library	£323.10
10 th Jan:	Faith Watson workshop	Credit of £80.00
17 th Feb:	Bristol Gasworks	£661.50
4 th Mar:	Marie Curie busking	£197.30
6 th May:	Target Ovarian cancer	Tbc

25 th May:	Chorlton Arts Festival	Probable credit of £75.00
24 th Jun:	Street Choirs Festival	(estimate provisional) £496.00
8 th Jul:	Llangollen estimated:	£681.00

(I have the details of these event costs if needed).

The cost of these events (although some are estimates) add up to about £3844 which means we will end the year with rather less than we started with – about £2401 if these estimates prove to be correct.

The total cost of events may of course rise (and therefore the end of year balance drop) as we add in events which haven't yet been costed, along with some uncertainties such as the cost of coach hire and numbers travelling, possible additional admin expenditure and so on and the uncertainties with Liz's current invoicing arrangement.

7. So how much have we got left this year?

This has been an expensive year, with a lot of high profile events as well as a lot of admin spending. We have essentially run at a loss approaching £2000 which means we will carry forward significantly less than we did last year.

8. And what might we do differently in future?

Here are some possible conclusions for the committee to think about:

We *can* have years where we spend at the current rate, but we need to offset them with other years where we take in more than we spend.

We could try to take in considerably more in membership subscriptions (our main source of income), but this is not easy. There are few other ways of increasing our income.

We have additional uncertainties around possible changes to next year's rehearsal pattern - we could increase costs without necessarily increasing income.

We could look to a less expensive model for organising performances.

We may need to increase subscriptions.

We certainly need to establish a new routine where we examine the cost of every event before committing to it, with Liz's costs agreed with her before the event, and invoiced promptly after it.

And as a committee I think we each need to keep a greater awareness of the range of costs outlined above in sections 3, 4 and 5.

Note - I have not costed the extra rehearsals recently scheduled as part of the review of the rehearsal pattern. They will be another cost to us.

9. Summary of costs

Membership income received this year	£7,380
Essential cost of maintaining the choir	-£4,390.90
Other administration costs so far this year	-£970
Estimate of the costs of 13 events held this year	-£3,844
	(£1,824.90)
Total deficit this year	-£1824.90