

Society of Recorder Players : Minutes of Committee Meeting

Sunday 15 February 2014

Benslow Music Trust, Little Benslow Hills, Hitchin, Herts SG4 9RB

PRESENT:

Tessa Rolph	Chairman
David Rollason	Acting Secretary and Membership Secretary
Ulli Burchette	Treasurer
Sandra Foxall	COS Secretary
Moira Usher	WBF Chairman
Naomi Wellings	Chairman, NYRO sub-committee
Emily Bannister	Publicity Officer
Sarah Langdon	Moeck/SRP Competition Organiser
Evelyn Nallen	Musical Adviser
Caroline Jones	Committee
Pamela Flanagan	Committee
Vic Morris	Committee

The chairman opened the meeting at 10.30 am.

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Mike Wilkinson, Eileen Silcocks, Colin Touchin, April Munday, Sue Eades, Sheila Richards, and Frances Tuffery.

1.2 Concern was expressed about the fact that musical advisers, aside from Evelyn Nallen, very rarely attended the committee's meetings, despite this being an expectation of their appointments, so that the committee did not have their advice in its discussions. The committee recognised that their time was under considerable pressure, especially at weekends, and resolved to consider whether the dates and venues of meetings could be adjusted to make their attendance easier. It also agreed that the rules about minimum attendance of musical advisers should be re-examined.

Action: Mike

2. Minutes of previous Committee meeting

2.1 The acceptance of these minutes as a true record was proposed by Caroline Jones, seconded by Vic Morris, and carried unanimously.

3. Actions and matters arising from the previous meeting

3.1 Gift Aid (minute 3.2): The Chairman reported that the draft guidance on this had not yet been circulated to branches, but that the article she had published in *Recorder Magazine* covered the subject in summary form. She reported that there are still problems with HM Revenue and Customs regarding visitors' fees, and that further clarification was needed both from them and from Making Music.

Action: Tessa Rolph

3.2 Adopt a Composer (minute 3.4): This scheme had been drawn to the attention of Branches and Affiliated Orchestras by means of a mention in the Chairman's report, published in *Recorder Magazine*.

3.3 CD for Schools (minute 3.5): Caroline Jones and Sandra Foxall have been in communication with each other about carrying this forward, but their feeling was that CDs were outdated and that video-clips, accessible from the SRP website, perhaps through links to YouTube, would be more appropriate. The Committee discussed the pressure on schoolteachers' time and the difficulties of undertaking projects involving the recorder in schools, but it also heard of successful initiatives in this respect at Trumpington, where there was a school group supported by the school's head-teacher and a governor, in Suffolk where Suffolk Branch are trying to sponsor a day for the music service's wind teachers on how to teach the recorder, and in Warwickshire where workshops for schoolteachers were organised. In the light of this, it was agreed to compile for the next Committee meeting an account of such developments in progress which were known to Committee members, with an assessment of the positive results they had produced. This material should be sent to the Acting Secretary.

Action: David Rollason and other members

3.4 Long-serving branch officials (minute 4.3): Mike Wilkinson had still to notify branches of the decision to recognise long service in branches. With regard to producing certificates for presentation to long-serving branch officials, it was agreed that Tessa Rolph should write the wording for them; that Evelyn Nallen should design them, distinguishing in that design those for twenty-five, forty, and fifty years of service; and that, when they were required, Evelyn should e-mail them to Tessa to be signed.

Action: Mike Wilkinson, Tessa Rolph, Evelyn Nallen

3.5 Festival 2016 (minute 5.5): It was noted that Mike Wilkinson had still to canvass northern English and Scottish branches as to the possibility of holding this in one of their areas. Action: Mike Wilkinson

3.6 Commissioned music (minute 12): It was reported that a contract had been signed with Bob Chilcott for the 2017 commission.

4. Officers' Reports (filed with the minutes)

4.1. These were received with approval.

4.2. The Membership Secretary reported verbally that, setting aside COS, there had been a modest increase in the number of members from 1239 to 1270, with twenty-four branches increasing their numbers, twelve holding them static, and only fifteen experiencing a reduction.

4.3. The Committee discussed an outline proposal from Anthony Hall to submit to the Conference a proposal for a change to the Society's rules permitting reduced subscriptions for new members joining part-way through the year. There was considerable sympathy for this in view of the need to attract new members, but also some scepticism as to its desirability for the administration of the Society. It was agreed to ask Anthony to prepare a detailed proposal to be circulated to members of the Committee ahead of its submission to the Conference.

Action: Anthony Hall, David Rollason

4.4. Alex Ayre's music: Moira Usher reported that work on this was going forward. It was agreed to ask the Web Editor to explore the possibility of including the facility on the web-site for users to post reviews or ratings of individual items of music.

Action: Tessa Rolph

5. Society's accounts for 2012/13

5.1 The Treasurer explained that the differences between these accounts and those for the previous year were principally:

- i. that the Scottish Festival had made a loss of £141.85;
- ii. that the conference in Dublin had been more expensive in view of travel costs;
- iii. that the overall loss to the Society for the year was only £165, so that break-even would have been almost achieved but for the Scottish Festival's loss; and that the Society's situation would be further improved when the interest was paid on its accounts;
- iv. that £1200 had been spent on the publication of the biennial membership list;
- v. that Committee expenses were lower than in the previous year.

5.2 In response to queries from members of the Committee, the Treasurer further explained that:

- i. the apparently high cost of music for the Dublin Festival at £1765 in reality included the fee of £1000 for the commissioned music;
- ii. the sum of £1015 for the accommodation of recitalists at the Moeck/SRP Competition is not a normal recurring cost since recitalists are generally expected to provide their own accommodation;
- iii. there had been substantial donations to the Walter Bergmann Fund.

The accounts were unanimously accepted.

Proposed: Moira Usher; seconded: Emily Bannister.

It was agreed to propose to conference that subscriptions for 2014-15 should be: full member £23.50, £35 household, £17 student.

6. Approval of the Trustees' Reports to the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

6.1 These were unanimously approved for submission with minor amendments.

Proposed: Sandra Foxall; seconded: Caroline Jones.

It was agreed to record particular thanks to Keith Varney for his work in acting as independent auditor to the Society.

Action Tessa

7. Reinvestment of Society funds

7.1 It was unanimously agreed that the sums of £20,000 and £80,000 currently invested respectively with Barclays Bank and Nationwide Business Services should be re-invested in equivalent accounts with these organisations when the currently-held accounts matured.

Proposed: Moira Usher; seconded: Sandra Foxall.

8. Festival 2014

8.1 In Sue Eades's absence, a brief written report was received. The Committee expressed anxiety about:

- i. the low level of publicity, especially the absence of a circulation to branches;

- ii. misleading documentation indicating that the Festival was to include a chamber orchestra (one to a part), whereas in fact Caroline Jones was undertaking to lead a full orchestra;
- iii. the fact that the programme on the website did not include the music that was to be played at the sessions, although conductors had provided details of this to the organisers;
- iv. the fact that the budget contained no contingency fund and that prices had been published in advance of approval of the budget by the Committee.

8.2 It was agreed:

- i. that David Rollason should contact the organisers to raise these points and to report back to the Committee;
- ii. that David Rollason should e-mail a copy of the brochure and the application form to all branches;
- iii. that Ulli Burchette should approve the budget, while expressing unease about the points noted above.

Action: David Rollason, Ulli Burchette

9. New competitions

9.1 Enthusiasm was expressed for the ideas set out by Evelyn Nallen and, after extensive discussion, it was agreed:

- (a) that the Moeck/SRP Competition should be kept separate from any new competition, which would in any case be an event taking place at most in alternate years.
- (b) that a working group made up of Evelyn Nallen and Sarah Langdon should prepare a more detailed proposal for the event outlined in Evelyn Nallen's document and there named SRP Platform. This would be a competition for groups of three-eight players, which would have to include at least one recorder player, and which could play any repertoire. The first prize would be one or more concerts at a festival or festivals in various parts of the country.

9.2 It was recognised in discussion that:

- (a) it would be inappropriate to restrict the competition to UK groups;
- (b) it would, however, be appropriate to restrict it to players who were within five years of the completion of their formal studies rather than those under the age of twenty-five;
- (c) auditions could be conducted via YouTube;
- (d) it would be necessary to specify the maximum number of finalists;
- (e) that it would be necessary to restrict expenses for finalists' performances to travel within the UK, the number of finalists, and the maximum expenses which could be claimed;
- (f) that avenues would need to be explored to develop financial partnerships with festivals, perhaps involving a share of ticket-takings being paid to the Society, or approaches to recorder makers for sponsorship.

Action: Evelyn Nallen and Sarah Langdon

9.3 It was agreed that further consideration should be given at the October meeting of the Committee to the proposed Open Stage non-competitive event, involving short performances by recorder consorts, followed by coaching from a professional player, and awards for various categories of performance. Evelyn Nallen noted that a series of such events regionally with a national final might be appropriate for the Society's eightieth anniversary in 2017. It was

agreed that Evelyn and Sarah Langdon should bring a more detailed proposal to the Committee's October meeting.

10. NYRO

10.1 The NYRO Chairman's report for February 2014, the minutes of the NYRO subcommittee for 25 October 2013, and a document entitled NYRO Projected Income and Expenditure 2013-2015 were received.

10.2 The document entitled NYRO Safeguarding Policies and Procedures 2013-2014 was received and approved, subject to discussions to take place at an imminent meeting of the NYRO Subcommittee. Naomi Wellings reported that she was urgently seeking an appropriate provider of DBS certificates.

10.3 With regard to the information requested from NYRO in the Committee's minute 6.12 (13 October 2013), Naomi reported:

(a) that the target for the Easter course was 25/26 players, and that there was an overall annual target for all events of 90 players; the attendance at the summer course would be increased by the attendance of a party of German players, whose participation would, however, be financially neutral;

(b) that a publicity strategy was being implemented, involving use of Facebook and Twitter accounts, and an overhaul of the publicity in general, including the use of photographs commissioned from Helen Hooker;

(c) that an application was currently being made to the Radcliffe Trust for a recurrent grant, and other applications to trusts were pending with a view to securing income of £10000 annually;

(d) that an audit of voluntary and paid work was in progress with a view to defining contracts from September.

10.4 With regard to NYRO's finances, it was noted that:

(a) the Blockwork recording weekend was funded by a donation to NYRO of £2500;

(b) of the £5,500 brought forward to 2013-14 in NYRO's SRP account, the sum of £2,500 had been transferred to NYRO's new independent account;

(c) although an SRP grant of £3,000 had been transferred to NYRO in 2012-13, there had been no such grant since.

10.5 It was agreed that any funds left in NYRO's SRP bank and Paypal accounts on 31 August 2014 should be transferred to NYRO once all bills up to that date had been paid and all commitments cleared. However, the £3,000 potentially still available from SRP to NYRO for 2013-14 should be regarded as merely underwriting so that, if NYRO were to run out of funds and to draw on any or all of it, no transfer of any residue from it should be made.

10.6 It was a condition of this arrangement, and of the payment of the grant of £5,000 from SRP for 2014-15 that NYRO's SRP bank account and PayPal account should be closed.

10.7 Final arrangements with regard to the instruments used by NYRO should be deferred until a definitive list of them was prepared, and until consultation had taken place with Janette Hipsey as donor of some of them.

Action: Tessa Rolph, Mike Wilkinson

10.8 A decision was deferred as to whether an invitation to donate to NYRO should still be included on the SRP's membership application form until consultation with the Charities Commission as to the legality of this had taken place.

Action: Tessa Rolph

10.9 It was agreed that all participants in the NYRO Easter and summer courses should continue to receive a year's membership of SRP gratis from 2014/15 onwards.

10.10 Naomi Wellings would consult with Dick Pyper as to whether affiliation of NYRO to SRP would be of assistance with the costs of insurance.

11. Moeck/SRP Competition

11.1 The report on the 2013 competition was received and Sarah Langdon made a verbal report on preparations for the next competition. The following points were noted:

(a) Contrary to the 2013 report, the 2nd and 3rd prizes were respectively £600 and £400.

(b) No decision was reached on whether the Walter Bergmann Fund should provide the third prize for subsequent competitions.

(c) It was agreed to remove the maximum cap on fees for adjudicators.

(d) Proposals for changes in any fees should be brought to the April meeting of the Committee. At this meeting, however, it was agreed that entrance fees should be raised to £80 (UK) and £90 (outside the UK).

(e) It needs to be made clear that entrants are responsible for paying bank charges on the payments for their entrance fees.

11.2 Sarah Langdon is in the process of revising the list of colleges to be circulated with details of the competition, gathering information on adjudicators' fees from other competitions for comparative purposes, and examining various ways by which entries could be submitted.

11.3 It was agreed that the adjudicators for the next competition should be Bart Spanhove (chair) and Steven Devine. Suggestions for a third adjudicator, who should be a recorder player, should be e-mailed to Sarah, and the choice approved at the next meeting of the Committee. It was noted that, if this person were a teacher of recorder, it would have to be made clear that his or her students would be ineligible for the competition.

12. Applications for appointment as Visiting Conductors

12.1 It was agreed that the criteria for appointment should be re-examined with a view to including knowledge of recorder playing amongst them.

12.2 Despite Eileen Silcocks' further comment on her assessment of Michael Graham, some members of the Committee felt that her initial reservations, although based on a very rigorous examination of his conducting, still contained enough references to areas for improvement to justify deferring appointment. As the Committee was divided, the Chairman ruled that Michael Graham's application should be deferred at present. Pamela Flanagan volunteered to ask David Ellis, chairman of the Glasgow branch, if the branch would be agreeable to letting Michael have one or two practice sessions with Glasgow before he presented himself again for assessment, which should be with another branch such as Aberdeen or Newcastle. Strong encouragement should be given for him to put himself forward for reassessment in the near future.

12.3 On the clear recommendation of Eileen Silcocks as Musical Adviser, it was agreed that Lynne Hope should not be appointed as a Visiting Conductor at present.

12.4 It was agreed that there was a need to re-assess the list of Visiting Conductors to see whether all those named on it were still in a position to continue to be so named.

13. Greenwich Early Music Festival

13.1 It was agreed that the cost of £336 for hire of the SRP's stand at the Festival had been good value for money, and that the Society should have such a presence at future festivals. It was felt, however, that the Society should not host a reception for finalists after the recital. It was noted that, now that the Society's banner had been made and other materials assembled, they could be used at other events, and organisers were urged to notify the Chairman of any such opportunities.

14. Any other business

14.1 Possible Norway branch in Bergen: Some enthusiasm was expressed for the possibility of establishing a Norway branch, brought forward by Caroline Jones, but there were potentially serious implications for travelling costs for pastoral visitors and for conference delegates. Caroline would ask the Norwegian players involved to bring forward a more detailed proposal.

14.2 Sandra Foxall reported that there was a possibility of an application for branch status from a group of players on Orkney.

14.3 Publicity: Emily Bannister reported that she had created a Twitter account under the name RecorderSocUK. This was welcomed. Emily would bring forward a paper on publicity to the next meeting of the Committee.

14.4 Lark Insurance: This would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

14.5 Benslow Recorder Festival: It was reported that, in accordance with the preferences of the Benslow Music Trust, this would be coordinated by Colin Touchin, the festival being planned for the end of September 2014.

14.6 *Bravo Bonsor!* CD: The Treasurer reported that this had currently generated a surplus of £400, although she noted that Helen Hooker might have incurred further costs and should be encouraged to claim reimbursement.

14.7 Paul Clark: The Committee asked to be minuted its sense of loss at the death of Paul Clark, and its appreciation of the enormous contribution he made during his lifetime to the Society and to recorder-playing generally. It was agreed that David Rollason should contact Carol Pocknell at the Birmingham branch to obtain contact details for Paul's daughter with a view to the Chairman writing to express the feelings minuted.

Action: David Rollason

Future meetings

Sunday 13 April 2014, Lilly Room, Truro School, at 12.00 noon

Sunday 12 October 2014, Benslow Music Trust, at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.

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