



THE SOCIETY OF RECORDER PLAYERS

Registered Charity No. 282751/SC038422

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday, 22nd February 2015

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

PRESENT:

Tessa Rolph	Chairman	Evelyn Nallen	Musical Adviser
Mike Wilkinson	Secretary	Caroline Jones	Committee
Ulli Burchette	Treasurer	Vic Morris	Committee
David Rollason	Membership Secretary	Frances Tuffery	Committee
Sandra Foxall	COS Secretary	Anthony Hall	Web Editor
Moira Usher	WBF Chairman	Emily Bannister	Publicity Officer
April Munday	Training Co-ordinator		

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting at 10.30am by welcoming all present. Apologies for absence were received from Pamela Flanagan (Committee member), Sarah Langdon (Competition Administrator), Alyson Lewin and Eileen Silcocks (Musical Advisers) and Madeline Seviour (News Editor).

2. Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 12th October 2014

2.1 Paragraph 9.3: The Committee recalled that it had agreed to nominate Barbara Law, as well as Bob Whitmarsh, for endorsement by Conference as Honorary Life Members. Barbara was a long-standing member of the Walter Bergmann Fund sub-Committee and teacher of Charlotte Barbour-Condini and Sophie Westbrooke, BBC Young Musician finalists in 2012 and 2014. Subject to this addition, the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 12th October 2014 were approved.

3. Actions and matters arising from the previous meeting

3.1 Instrument insurance (minute 3.1): Lark Insurance had provided flyers about the preferential terms it was offering to SRP members for all musical instrument insurance. The Secretary would circulate copies for Branch Secretaries to bring to their members' attention and make copies available at Conference and other appropriate events. The Chairman had mentioned this service in her article for the Spring 2015 issue of the *Recorder Magazine*.

Action: SECRETARY

3.2 Paul Clark (minute 3.4): The Secretary would continue to discuss with Helen Hooker and members of Birmingham Branch how the Society might commemorate the work of Paul Clark.

Action: SECRETARY

3.3 Frans Brüggen (minute 4.2): It was agreed that, following Frans Brüggen's death in 2014, the Chairman would send condolences to his family from Conference in April. Contact details were suggested.

Action: CHAIRMAN

3.4 New Vice Presidents (minute 4.3): The Committee was pleased to note that all four proposed new Vice Presidents – Piers Adams, Tom Beets, Michala Petri and Philip Thorby – had graciously accepted nomination for approval by Conference. Evelyn Nallen, who had designed long-service certificates for Branch officials, agreed to devise certificates for Vice Presidents and Honorary Life Members and requested appropriate wording. It was suggested that, when Vice Presidents gave concerts in the UK, the local SRP Branch might approach them to offer assistance with contacts in arranging any accompanying workshop.

Action: EVELYN NALLEN, CHAIRMAN, SECRETARY

3.5 Long-service certificates (minute 4.4): The delight that some long-serving Branch officials had shown when awarded long-service certificates suggested that Branches should again be encouraged to identify further candidates. The Secretary might be able to prompt Branches by scrutinising old Membership Lists, especially in cases where long service had been accrued at more than one Branch.

Action: SECRETARY

3.6 Financial issues (minutes 4.5 and 4.6): The Treasurer reported that the accounts of the 2014 Festival in Truro had been finalised and copied to South Staffordshire Branch, hosts of the 2015 Festival, for information. She also said that, in view of some continuing difficulties, she was preparing additional guidance on how Branches should treat the finances of Workshops that they organised when submitting their year-end accounts to the Treasurer.

Action: TREASURER

3.7 NYRO (minutes 5.1 and 5.2): Agreements with NYRO on the terms and conditions that should apply to future funding applications and awards, and on the loan to NYRO of instruments owned by the SRP, had been signed in January.

3.8 Commissioned music (minute 8.2): Evelyn Nallen reported that the Society's payment of £3,000 plus other donations, including some gratefully received from Committee members, had enabled the first instalment to be paid towards the £20,000 (including VAT) cost of the concerto for recorder and orchestra that she and Barbara Law were commissioning from Graham Fitkin. She also reported that she had found an "angel" to underwrite the project if donations were insufficient. Evelyn was invited to prepare a poster about the commission for display, and to solicit donations, at the Festival in Wolverhampton on 18th-19th April.

Action: EVELYN NALLEN

4. Officers' Reports: record of issues discussed and action arising

4.1 Secretary: It was agreed that the Chairman should write to Denis Bloodworth and Graham Danbury, who were stepping down from the Panel of Visiting Conductors after many years' service. The Committee welcomed the Hersom Consort as a new affiliated group and, while noting the initial financial implications, agreed that the 50% discount for new members joining after January should, by virtue of Rules 14.5 and 14.6 linking the subscription rates, also apply to new affiliated and corporate members. Anthony Hall was asked to make this clear on the website.

Action: CHAIRMAN, WEB EDITOR

4.2 Walter Bergmann Fund Chairman: Moira Usher noted that the WBF's support for the first course to be run by the London Youth Recorder Orchestra was for up to 3 tutors' places, depending on the number of students. For future LYRO courses the Fund might prefer to consider applications from potential students. It was noted that LYRO's course (7th-9th April) and NYRO's Easter course (7th-11th April) overlapped, so possibly competing for the same students. However, the Society should continue to consider all grant applications on their separate merits and ought not to use funding decisions to influence choices on the timing or other details of courses that were for organisers to make for themselves. Anthony Hall was asked to put a link to LYRO, at www.cym.org.uk/lyro, on the Society's website.

Action: WEB EDITOR

4.3 Web Editor: Anthony Hall said that he would make clear on the SRP website that the whole of the News archive, not just the items in the News banner on the opening screen, were available to view. He would also make the link to information about the Festival in April more prominent until then. The Committee further discussed proposals from Emily Bannister for links between the SRP website and social media services. Anthony advised that some links would serve little purpose and might bring extraneous material to the SRP website. It was agreed that there should be a link TO the Society's Twitter feed from the website so that website users could easily access that.

4.4 The Committee discussed and agreed a proposal for a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section, initially limited to questions about teaching the recorder. Anthony Hall invited Musical Advisers, and others if they wished, to devise questions (and answers) with which to launch the FAQ section. This would invite users to submit questions which, if relevant, would be forwarded for answer to those Musical Advisers who agreed

to take part. Question and answer would then be displayed in the FAQ section. The Committee also discussed a proposal for a Forum section where anyone could post a comment or message, for example seeking advice on music or instruments. However, there were doubts about whether this would be useful: many such sections attracted comments that were less than constructive and, for example, the SRP Facebook group set up by Sheila Richards already acted as a Forum for the exchange of information between its members. The Committee therefore decided not to pursue this proposal at present.

4.5 The Committee discussed the proposed Performers page, for which Anthony Hall had provided the address of a test page. This listed an initial selection by Emily Bannister of recorder soloists and ensembles, and groups that included recorders. The preamble stated that those listed had to be active in the UK and should state any musical qualifications and whether they were amateur or professional. Those wishing to be included were asked to contact the Publicity Officer. The Committee reaffirmed its previous decision (12th October 2014, minute 4.15) that the Society could not vet (or endorse) those wishing to be included and so had to accept all applications unless there were obvious reasons not to. On this basis the Committee agreed that the Performers page should become part of the Society's public website and publicised.

Action: WEB EDITOR, PUBLICITY OFFICER

4.6 The Committee discussed whether the Society's *Teachers' Guide to the Recorder*, devised by Herbert Hersom in 1986 and last revised by Anne Martin in 2004, should be updated and reissued via the website. Helen Hooker had said that an updated version, amending or removing outdated publication and contact details, could be a useful resource for less experienced teachers and could be made available to download or as a printed booklet. The Secretary was asked to discuss this further with Helen.

Action: SECRETARY

4.7 Competition Administrator: The Committee supported in principle the proposals in Sarah Langdon's report that an opportunity for press photographs should be provided before or after the winner's recital, and that the recital and possibly the Competition might be recorded. It was agreed that Sarah should be asked to consider the practicalities, the possible costs, and whether any recordings would be just for participants and organisers or for wider distribution.

Action: COMPETITION ADMINISTRATOR

5. Accounts and Trustees' Report for 2013-14

5.1 The Committee considered the Treasurer's accounts and the accounts required by the Charity Commission for 2013/14, both of which had been certified by the Independent Examiner, and the Trustees' report to the Charity Commission for 2013/14. It was agreed that the reference to the Walter Bergmann Fund in the Trustees' report should say that the Fund gave grants to organisers of courses for young people as well as directly to those people. Subject to this amendment, the Accounts and Trustee's Report for the year ended 31st August 2014 were approved. Since Conference would "receive" the accounts (Rule 7.1), they could be submitted to the Charity Commission before Conference.

Action: CHAIRMAN, SECRETARY

5.2 The Committee also considered management accounts prepared by the Chairman to show the main categories of income and expenditure for the last 5-6 years. This helped to show general trends despite unusual items in particular years, such as the costs for printing the Membership List every two years, the irregular costs for commissioned music, and the one-off costs for new publicity material in 2013/14 when the Society resumed its presence at the Greenwich Early Music Festival.

6. NYRO – application for funding for 2015/16

6.1 The Committee considered NYRO's application and supporting documents for a grant of £6,600 for 2015/16. The Committee agreed that, in principle, any grant awarded by the Society would not be linked to a particular area of expenditure as it is the responsibility of the independent NYRO Trustees to decide on their priorities, taking into account the viability of their organisation. However while NYRO's application included most of the information specified in the Funding Agreement, there was some concern that NYRO had not answered the key questions on the application form in sufficient detail. These were intended to help establish

both whether applicants were in “financial need”, which was a key requirement for charitable funding, and whether an applicant’s project was potentially financially viable. This in turn meant that those Committee members who were SRP Trustees, and so needed to be assured that they were properly exercising their responsibilities, could reasonably expect to see considerably more information than NYRO had provided about its financial circumstances.

6.2 There was some concern that the Committee might be seen as too demanding of an organisation that had been used to operating as part of the SRP and had been an independent charity for less than 6 months. Equally, however, there was concern that if NYRO could not present its case with total clarity to the Society’s Trustees, who were largely familiar with its activities and history, it would find it very difficult to attract funding from other organisations if submitting applications with a similar level of detail. Of particular concern was the lack of detail about how NYRO would cover any budgeted deficit, on which the Committee agreed the key information missing was:

- (a) NYRO’s use of reserves and their amount;
- (b) more detail on the efforts that NYRO has made and intends to make to raise funds from sources in addition to the SRP; and
- (c) any strategy for cutting costs in the event that income falls short of planned expenditure.

6.3 In discussion of these issues it was noted that NYRO’s application referred to its “small reserves”, which were assumed to be the end year balance of over £8,000 shown in the SRP and NYRO accounts for 2013/14. The 2014/15 budget showed a deficit of £4,166 even after the Society’s grant of £5,000, and the 2015/16 budget showed a fundraising target of £3,200 even assuming the requested £6,600 from the SRP. These two deficits, if unresolved, would almost eliminate the reserves and leave NYRO unviable and unable to operate. That would not be a comfortable position for either the NYRO Trustees or those providing financial support to NYRO. To protect their position the SRP Trustees therefore needed information about NYRO’s strategy for managing its reserves in a way that would sustain NYRO in the longer term, detailed information about NYRO’s past and proposed grant applications, and information about any cost cutting strategy that may be needed to protect NYRO’s financial viability in the medium and longer term.

6.4 After further discussion, the Committee voted on a proposal by the Chairman that NYRO’s application be accepted in principle, subject to subsequent discussion of the amount of the grant and any other issues that were legitimately matters for the SRP Trustees. Those eligible to vote voted 5 in favour and 5 against, with 1 abstention. The vote was therefore tied and the Chairman used her casting vote to maintain the *status quo* – i.e. against the proposal. NYRO’s application as currently presented was therefore refused. The Committee then agreed that NYRO should be informed in detail of the reasons for this decision but should be given the opportunity to submit a revised application by 20th March with the necessary additional information so that Committee members would have good time to consider it before reaching a decision on it at their next meeting, in Wolverhampton, on 19th April.

Action: CHAIRMAN, SECRETARY

7. Preparation for Conference, 19th April 2015

7.1 The Secretary’s letter of 19th February to Branch Secretaries and Committee members had invited Branches to nominate delegates to Conference and candidates for election as Committee members, and to put forward any resolutions they wished Conference to discuss. The letter also explained that Conference would be asked to approve the appointment of new Vice Presidents and Honorary Life Members (see minutes 2.1 and 3.4) and, unless opposed, the re-election of all officers subject to annual re-election, all of whom were willing to serve for a further term. The Treasurer was not intending to propose any change in subscriptions for 2015/16.

7.2 Since there were already two vacancies for Committee members, and the 3-year terms of Pamela Flanagan and Caroline Jones would end at Conference, there were four posts to fill. It was hoped that Branches would make sufficient nominations, and several Committee members agreed to provide encouragement by contacting suggested Branches and individuals. Evelyn Nallen’s 3-year term as Musical Adviser on the Committee was also due to end at Conference when, subject to his agreement, Ross Winters was due to start his first term as Musical Adviser on the Committee.

Action: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

8. Festivals

8.1 2015: Details and booking forms for the 2015 Festival in Wolverhampton on 18th-19th April were available on the SRP website. Moira Usher reported that by the date of the Festival she hoped that the number of Alex Ayres' arrangements available in set form would have reached 200.

8.2 2016 and later: Glasgow Branch had sent regrets that it was not able to take up the suggestion (12th October 2014, minute 4.19) that the 2016 national Festival might be held jointly with the Scottish Festival. Another option for the 2016 Festival was being considered, but this was in the very early stages of discussion and it was too soon to announce any details. The Committee noted that Cambridge Branch was hosting the 2017 Festival and warmly accepted an offer from Suffolk Branch, which had hosted the 2010 Festival in Felixstowe, to host the Festival again in 2020.

9. Greenwich Early Music Festival, 12th-14th November 2015

9.1 The Chairman said that she felt the Society's stand in 2013 and 2014 had been successful in raising the profile of the Society and the Committee felt that the cost was a worthwhile investment for the Society. It was therefore agreed that the Society should again have a stand this year. Much of the publicity material produced in previous years could be used again. The Chairman welcomed offers of help to run the stand.

Action: CHAIRMAN

10. Visiting Conductors

10.1 Support for potential new Visiting Conductors: Pamela Flanagan had raised this issue but, in her absence, discussion was deferred and she was invited to submit written proposals to a future meeting.

Action: PAMELA FLANAGAN

10.2 Appointment of new Conductors: At present candidates to be Visiting Conductors had to be observed conducting a Branch that was not their own by one of the Musical Advisers, who then made a recommendation to the Committee. The Committee agreed an alternative procedure – direct nomination to the Committee by a Musical Adviser familiar with the candidate's work (i.e. with no observation necessary). In both cases the recommendation or nomination made by the Musical Adviser was subject to confirmation by the Committee. The Secretary was asked to update the relevant guidance and publicise this decision.

Action: SECRETARY

11. Commissioned Music

11.1 The Committee agreed that, as discussed on 12th October 2014 (minute 8.1), decisions were needed fairly soon on a new budget for financing and a framework for commissioning future works. The current commission, a work by Bob Chilcott for 2017, was the last that could be funded from the budget previously agreed. The lead time for a commissioned piece could be 2 years or more, especially if the composer already had a high workload or agreed to support the Society by charging less than the normal rate. The Secretary, in consultation with Evelyn Nallen and others, would draft a paper for discussion at a future meeting.

Action: SECRETARY

12. Any other business

12.1 Gift Aid: The Chairman said that she had agreed to handle the Society's Gift Aid claim for 2013/14 and that, until further notice, all new Gift Aid Declarations should be sent to her. The Secretary was asked to notify Branches of this.

Action: SECRETARY

Future meetings: The next Committee meeting will be on Sunday 19th April 2015 in Wolverhampton. In the light of members' availability, the following meeting will be on Sunday 11th October 2015 at Benslow.

The meeting closed at 4pm.