



THE SOCIETY OF RECORDER PLAYERS

Registered Charity No. 282751/SC038422

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday 24th January 2016

Benslow Music Trust, Hitchin SG4 9RB

PRESENT:

Tessa Rolph	Chairman	Anthony Hall	Web Editor
Mike Wilkinson	Secretary	Alyson Lewin	Musical Adviser
Ulli Burchette	Treasurer	Rodney Callow	Festival 2016
David Rollason	Membership Secretary	Vic Morris	Committee
Sandra Foxall	COS Secretary	Frances Tuffery	Committee
April Munday	Training Co-ordinator	Richard Chester	NYRO – item 6

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chairman opened proceedings at 10.30am by welcoming all present. Apologies for absence were received from Moira Usher (WBF), Sarah Langdon (Competition Administrator), Emily Bannister (Publicity), Madeline Seviour (News Editor), Ross Winters (Musical Adviser) and Josée Beeson, Ciara Flanagan, Pamela Flanagan and Evelyn Nallen (Committee members).

1.2 Declarations of interest: The Chairman recommended that Committee members should be invited at each meeting formally to declare any potential conflict between the business to be considered by the Committee and their other interests.

2. Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 11th October 2015

2.1 Changes to the following paragraphs in the draft minutes were agreed:

- para 4.4: to clarify that if, following a recommendation from Cornwall Branch, Sarah Whomersley remained keen to join the Panel of Visiting Conductors, Helen Hooker and Alyson Lewin were happy to endorse her appointment on the basis of having observed her conducting at the 2014 Festival in Truro.
- para 4.6: the composer of *Wolf Suite* is Sasha Manning Johnson.
- para 8.1: Pamela Flanagan “tabled” her paper on conducting skills, and the workshop on conducting for beginners IS suitable for absolute beginners.
- para 8.2: while the initiative to hold a workshop is usually taken by a Branch, it does not have to be.

Subject to these changes, the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 11th October 2015 were approved.

3. Actions and matters arising from the previous meeting

3.1 Concerto Fund (minute 3.3): The Chairman had established that it was in order for the Society to claim and remit Gift Aid on donations to the Concerto Fund. For NYRO, the Society could accept and pass on donations but should let NYRO, as a separate charity, reclaim any Gift Aid due.

3.2 Visiting Conductors (minute 4.4): Following the recommendation by two Musical Advisers, Sarah Whomersley had confirmed she would like to join the Panel of Visiting Conductors, so the Secretary would inform Branches and add Sarah’s details to the List of Conductors on the website. Two further recommendations by Musical Advisers were discussed and the Secretary was asked to contact the persons concerned to see if they were interested.

Action: SECRETARY

3.3 Benefits for Branches (minute 4.6): Following comments after the previous meeting, the Committee revisited its decision that Branches and affiliated orchestras should receive a score and SIX sets of parts of the pieces commissioned for Festivals, paid for from central funds. This might be appropriate for pieces with 4 or so parts, but not for pieces with more parts since six sets would be more than most Branches could use, especially for larger instruments. It would be impractical to tailor the number of parts to the current size of each Branch or Orchestra. It was therefore agreed that in future Branches and Orchestras should receive a score and a total of 30 parts in a combination appropriate for the piece concerned. This would still be ample for most Branches and would help contain costs. This new approach would apply to the extra copies to be issued of parts for *Wolf Suite*, to Mirjam Morat's arrangement of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Farewell to Stromness*, and to Nick Wynne's piece for the Festival in Lincoln. The piece being composed by Paul Richards would be on sale at the Festival.

3.4 Alyson Lewin gave estimates of what her company, Hawthorns Music, would charge for printing copies for Branches and Orchestras of the pieces referred to above. This would be around 2-3p per double-sided sheet of A3, meaning that the cost of sufficient copies could be under £500 for each piece. Alyson would refine the figures when she had worked out how many sheets each piece would require. The Chairman said that she could ask one of her local printers for estimates for future reference. With Alyson then taking no further part in discussion, the Committee agreed that, if the final costs were in line with Alyson's estimates, it would be both practical and good value for Hawthorn Press to print copies of the scores and parts to be issued at the Festival in Lincoln.

Action: CHAIRMAN, ALYSON LEWIN

3.5 New Branches (minute 4.8): The Secretary reported that he had been in touch with Caroline Melody who, with several colleagues, proposed to establish a Branch of the Society in Orkney in time for a Resolution to recognise it to be moved at Conference in Lincoln on 3 April. Plans to set up a Branch in SE Essex had come to nothing since the prime mover was leaving the area. It was suggested that the scope for setting up a Branch in Merseyside (many years ago there had been a Branch in Liverpool) and a new or sub-Branch in North Wales should be explored.

Action: SECRETARY

3.7 Deputy Web Editor (minute 4.11): The Web Editor reported that Sara Scorey, a member of Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch, had been the most suitable candidate for the post of Deputy Web Editor. She was well qualified for the role and was already familiar with the Society's website since she edited her Branch's pages. She could start by understudying the role and then take an active role later. The Committee welcomed this news and was pleased to agree that Sara should be appointed as Deputy Web Editor.

3.7 Frequently asked Questions (minute 4.12): The Chairman had received three Questions and obtained Answers from Musical Advisers to launch the FAQ page of the website. The audience for this was anyone with an interest in recorders, not just teachers. It was agreed that Answers should be unattributed and that when several were received to a Question they should be combined in a single response. The Web Editor would create the page and a specific e-mail address, faq@srp.org.uk, to which Questions could be sent for circulation to the Musical Advisers. April Munday agreed to coordinate responses to forward to the Web Editor.

Action: APRIL MUNDAY

3.8 It was noted that matters remaining to be dealt with by the Committee included:

- proposals to be made by the Membership Secretary for distribution of the 2017 Membership List (minute 4.12);
- revision of the Society's Festival Guidelines, including any feedback from the Lincoln Festival (minute 6.3); and
- the codification of the terms for future commissioned works (minute 7.2).

4. Officers' Reports: record of issues discussed

The reports themselves are available on the SRP website at [www.srp.org.uk/committee meetings](http://www.srp.org.uk/committee-meetings).

4.1 Chairman: HMRC had revised the Gift Aid Declaration form. The new form, which must be used for Declarations made from 1 April 2016, would be posted on the Society's website and marked "January 2016" to distinguish it from earlier versions. It was agreed that Tessa Rolph should be given authority to deal with the Gift Aid claims with HMRC.

4.2 Membership Secretary: Of the 34 members who joined the Society for the first time after January 2015, and so benefitted from 50% discount on their first subscription, 25 had so far re-joined for 2015/16, suggesting that the discount scheme was useful for attracting new members.

5. Accounts and Report to the Charity Commission 2014/15

5.1 The Committee discussed the Trustees' Annual Report for 2014/15 drafted by the Chairman and the Annual Accounts for the same period prepared by the Treasurer. Both documents were required by the Charity Commission and would also be presented to Conference on 3 April for information. It was then proposed that both documents be approved.

Proposed: April Munday Seconded: Frances Tuffery CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. NYRO – Application for funding for 2016/17

6.1 After preliminary debate to identify key areas for discussion, the Committee welcomed Richard Chester MBE, a Trustee of NYRO since June 2015, to help inform their consideration of NYRO's bid for a grant of £5,000 for 2016/17. Richard briefly described his business and musical experience, which included being Principal Flute for the Scottish National Orchestra and Director of the National Youth Orchestras of Scotland. He continued to serve on the Boards of several musical organisations and had accepted an invitation to join the Board of NYRO since he shared its aims and felt he could help it work towards achieving these. He had studied various SRP and others papers that referred to NYRO, including the Report of the Society's 2020 Working Group (2012), and appreciated some of its history and the background to the decision that NYRO should become a separate charity with effect from September 2014.

6.2 The Chairman recalled that after NYRO was first established in 2002, as part of the Society, financial support was subsequently limited to the costs of NYRO's Administrator. However, in recent years NYRO's calls on additional funds had grown. While it was accepted that one cause was a fall in the number of course participants, which was an issue affecting many similar organisations, the Society had become concerned at the magnitude, unpredictability and increasing demand on its funds, together with NYRO's difficulty in securing funds from other sources while it was underwritten by the Society. This resulted in the decision for NYRO to become a separate charity but with the ability to make periodic applications to the Society for grants.

6.3 Mr Chester said that helping NYRO to a secure financial position was a top priority. In his view it could not operate without some external funding to supplement its income from course fees and sales. The Trustees were therefore applying for grants from a range of organisations and, while the majority to date had declined, there had been some success. Personal contact was often the key to a successful application. The Trustees were also considering engaging a fundraiser, to work on commission rather than for a fee, with a target for the next 12 months. This could help achieve what he perceived as the Society's wish to reduce its long-term funding for NYRO, though the Chairman noted that the Society had not taken any formal view on this. The grant sought from the Society for 2016/17 would give NYRO time to pursue these other initiatives. NYRO had completed its registration for Gift Aid with HMRC.

6.4 There was some discussion of NYRO's management strategy, of which Mr Chester said a key aim was to maintain a rational allocation of tasks to and adequate support for the administrator. In his view every successful youth charity needed a part-time administrator, not least to ensure proper compliance with Charity Commission requirements. Other questions on NYRO's current agenda were whether there was sufficient funding to continue with Recorder Days at the present level when nearly all currently ran at a loss, though the

number of participants was increasing, and whether current demand justified holding two residential courses per year. NYRO would continue to emphasise to potential participants and funders the great educational value to be gained from recorder playing and, even though it was currently registered as a charity only in England and Wales, was developing a UK-wide database of contacts of players, schools, local authorities etc to help publicise NYRO and enlist support for its aims and activities. Developing contacts with schools was seen as particularly important.

6.5 Mr Chester noted that the need for clarity over funding was central to most NYRO's decisions. For example, the NYRO Trustees had only agreed that the 2016 Summer Course could be held in Germany (following the successful participation of a group of German students in the 2014 Summer Course in the UK) on condition that all students were given advice on fund raising. One parent had already donated funds for bursaries and, as the Committee noted, the Society's Walter Bergmann Fund offered means-tested grants for eligible students. Other ways in which the Society and NYRO could support each other included ensuring that NYRO students were aware of local and national SRP events in their areas, making sure that NYRO publicity material was available on the Society's stand at the annual Early Music Exhibition, and reinstating the arrangement for students on NYRO's residential courses to be regarded as SRP members and sent copies of the *Recorder Magazine* for 12 months after their most recent course.

6.6 At this point Mr Chester left the meeting. The Committee felt that his contributions had been helpful, particularly in highlighting some of the key issues that NYRO itself had identified as important to its future direction, though tangible achievements over the last 12 months appeared fairly modest. The Committee then considered whether to award a grant to NYRO for 2016/17 and, if so, how much and whether any conditions should be attached – for example, whether some or all of any grant should be on a “matched funding” basis, payable only if NYRO succeeded in raising an equal sum from other sources. The Chairman reported that two of the Committee members not present opposed the award of any grant, whilst some of those present had reservations about making an unconditional award of the whole £5,000 requested.

6.7 After further discussion the Committee decided to vote on three options:

(a) To award a grant of £5,000 without conditions

Proposed: Ulli Burchette Seconded: David Rollason

For: 3 Against: 5 DEFEATED

(b) To award a grant of £5,000, of which £1,000 was to be on a “matched funding” basis

Proposed: David Rollason Seconded: Alyson Lewin

For: 5 Against: 3 CARRIED

The third option, for a grant of £5,000 with £2,000 of this as “matched funding”, was not then put to a vote. The Secretary would write to NYRO to convey the Committee's decision on its grant application and to propose reinstatement of the arrangement referred to at minute 6.5 above.

Action: SECRETARY

7. Preparation for the 2016 Festival, Lincoln, 2nd – 3rd April

7.1 Rodney Callow gave an update on preparations for the Festival in Lincoln. He was keen to attract more participants (of any age) for the masterclass to be given by Piers Adams. There were some rooms left at Longdale House if any Committee members required accommodation. The problems with setting up a bank account had been resolved. The Chairman thanked Rodney and his team for their sterling work to date and was greatly looking forward to the Festival.

8. Conference 2016

8.1 The Committee discussed possible changes to the membership of the Committee that Conference would be asked to vote on in Lincoln on 3 April. The terms of office of Frances Tuffery and Vic Morris as Committee members would end at Conference, though both were eligible to stand again. It was noted that it appeared to have become established practice that existing Committee members (including Officers) who had not indicated a wish to stand down and whose Committee membership was subject to annual election were regarded as re-nominated for a further year - i.e. new nominations were required only for new Committee

members, existing members standing for a different post, and members whose terms of office were expiring and who wished to seek and were eligible for re-election. However the Chairman noted that, these being annual elections, nominations should be invited for any of the posts/Officer positions. Some names were suggested as possible Committee members and the Secretary was asked to contact these to see if they were interested. He would also invite nominations generally, for both expected vacancies and any existing posts, in the Conference Notice that he would be sending to Branches in early February.

Action: SECRETARY

8.2 It was also noted that Madeleine Seviour had expressed a wish to stand down as News Editor after many years' service and that a new volunteer was being sought. Appointments to that post were subject to nomination by the Committee and endorsement by Conference. Under the established system of rotation, Helen Hooker was due to replace Eileen Silcocks as one of the three Musical Advisers on the Committee.

9. Benefits offered by the Society

9.1 Following the brief discussion on this issue at its previous meeting, the Committee held a more wide-ranging discussion on the benefits, for individuals and Branches, of being members of the Society of Recorder Players. Many aspects of this question had been considered in the Report of the 2020 Working Group in 2012, but there was general agreement that more needed to be done to ensure that individuals and Branches appreciated the benefits that were currently available and to expand the range of benefits where possible within the Society's charitable remit. A note from Cornwall Branch, asking whether members might opt out of receiving the *Recorder Magazine* or switch to the online version to save costs and reduce their subscriptions, illustrated some of the concerns that needed to be addressed. A similar idea had been raised, and rejected, several years ago but the Committee ought to consider the proposal on its merits rather than rely on a decision taken before electronic communication had been more widely accepted by many members.

9.2 The starting point for a discussion of "benefits to members" should be recognition that the Society was a registered charity, a status from which it derived considerable financial benefit, and that charities were constrained in the extent to which they could use subscription income from members to provide benefits specifically to those members rather than the wider public. Some charities, for example ones that had set up associated trading companies with profits covenanted to their parent charities, seemed less constrained in providing benefits and discounts to their members, so information about their operation could help the Society better to understand the opportunities available for it to support its members.

9.3 The key to the Society's future success was maintaining and growing the membership, which in turn would be achieved only if the Society delivered benefits, including charitable benefits, that its members endorsed. The application from Orkney for recognition as a Branch (see minute 3.5) expressed some of the very important, but less tangible, benefits of SRP membership – "*we hope that becoming an SRP Branch will demonstrate our commitment to the furtherance of our recorder playing, and we look forward to becoming members of the wider recorder playing community*". This supported the view that, for most members, being able to attend a local Branch where they could play and meet fellow players was the most important reason for joining the SRP, though with acknowledgement that being part of a national charity offered further benefits, even if these were not always fully appreciated or taken up by members.

9.4 The diversity of Branch meetings (monthly, weekly etc) and financial arrangements (e.g. paid/unpaid conductor, the size of visitors' fees etc) made quantitative comparisons between Branches difficult. However, taking Branch membership numbers as a measure of success clearly showed that some Branches were significantly more successful than others, though it was not always apparent what were the key driving factors. The Chairman also referred to the 2020 Report, which had surveyed branches, the membership in general and ex-members regarding various issues. The Membership Secretary, who had regular contact with many Branches, agreed to consult Branches on what they saw as the current drivers of their success or the factors causing their decline, and the reasons why members were retained or lost. The Treasurer would discuss these issues with her contact at the London Branches. Vic Morris also offered to write a note on the factors that he considered made a successful Branch.

Action: MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, TREASURER, VIC MORRIS

9.5 The Committee agreed that, to inform future discussion, it would be helpful to have a paper reviewing the existing benefits that the Society offered both for individuals and for Branches. There was relevant information in, for example, the report of the 2020 Working Group and the "Welcome" leaflet produced in 2013. April Munday volunteered to prepare a first draft.

Action: APRIL MUNDAY

9.6 In discussion of the note from Cornwall Branch it was agreed that the *Recorder Magazine* should continue to be available to all members as part of their membership. They could opt out of receiving it, but without any reduction in their subscription. The Society accounts for a significant proportion of the sales of the Magazine and any reduction in the number bought by the Society for its members could make it less attractive to advertisers and jeopardise its overall viability. This had happened previously when the Magazine was published by Schotts. The current publishers do offer an electronic version for about half the price of the printed version for a subscription taken out directly with them, but the Society enjoys an even greater discount on the printed version. Further, it is not possible at present to create different categories of membership for those who want the printed Magazine, the electronic version or no Magazine. The Treasurer also noted that the cost of the Magazine as a percentage of subscription income, which was shown as 47% in a pie chart on the website, would have been nearer 30% a few years ago before some items of expenditure were moved from the General to the Arthur Ingram Fund. It was agreed that the Secretary should reply to Cornwall Branch in the light of the Committee's discussion and that the Magazine should be promoted at the Conference at Lincoln.

Action: SECRETARY

9.7 The Committee also agreed that "benefits to members" should be an item for discussion at Conference on 3 April, with a specific time allocation. It would be important to ensure that discussion ranged more widely than whether members could opt out of receiving the *Recorder Magazine*, which the Committee had concluded was currently undesirable and impractical. The discussion would not aim to reach specific decisions but to elicit Delegates' views on what current benefits they particularly valued and whether there were further benefits, compatible with the Society's charitable status, that they would like the Committee to consider.

10. Support for potential conductors

10.1 Since Pamela Flanagan, who had initiated debate on this subject at the previous meeting, was unable to attend the present meeting, the Committee agreed to defer further discussion.

11. Any other business

11.1 Paul Clark commemoration: The Secretary sought the Committee's views on whether to pursue the idea of a commemorative recording of some of Paul Clark's works. Helen Hooker had expressed her willingness to take a lead, as she had done for the Bonsor CD. The Committee agreed that this was most desirable and felt that Birmingham Branch, of which Paul had been a leading member, should also play a part in planning and realising this project. The Secretary was asked to consult members of Birmingham Branch with a view to taking this project forward.

Action: SECRETARY

The next Committee meeting will be on Sunday 3rd April 2016, at Christ's Hospital School, Lincoln LN2 4PN.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm.
