



THE SOCIETY OF RECORDER PLAYERS

Registered Charity No. 282751/SCO38422

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday 3rd April 2016

Christ's Hospital School, Wragby Road, Lincoln LN2 4PN

PRESENT:

Vic Morris	Chairman	Helen Hooker	Musical Adviser
Mike Wilkinson	Secretary	Alyson Lewin	Musical Adviser
Ulli Burchette	Treasurer	Joseé Beeson	Committee
David Rollason	Membership Secretary	Rodney Callow	Committee
Sandra Foxall	COS Secretary	Ciara Flanagan	Committee
Moira Usher	Walter Bergmann Fund	Pamela Flanagan	Committee
Anthony Hall	Web Editor	Caroline Jones	Committee
Sarah Langdon	Competition Administrator	Frances Tuffery	Committee
Evelyn Nallen	Musical Adviser/Committee		

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Vic Morris, having been elected Chairman by Conference that morning, opened proceedings at 12 noon by introducing himself and welcoming all present, especially those newly elected or returning to the Committee – Helen Hooker and Rodney Callow, and Caroline Jones, respectively. He reiterated the thanks he had given at Conference to Tessa Rolph for her years of service as Chairman. Apologies for absence were received from Emily Bannister (Publicity), Allyn Richardson (newly elected News Editor), and Eileen Silcocks, Colin Touchin and Ross Winters (Musical Advisers).

2. Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24th January 2016

2.1 The references in paragraph 3.4 of the draft minutes to “Hawthorn Press” should read “Hawthorns Music”. Subject to this correction, the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24th January 2016 were approved.

3. Matters arising from Conference

3.1 Following the discussion at Conference that morning, the Committee spent some time considering the factors that influenced people to become members of the Society and its Branches, and how these needed to be developed to maintain and enhance the appeal of the Society for the future. Points raised included:

- The fortunes of individual Branches, with some growing and some declining, could provide clues to what members did and did not like. This had been considered following the 2020 report, when friendliness and the opportunity to work with like-minded people had been identified as important factors. For many people, therefore, joining a Branch was the key attraction, with membership of the Society as an extra. In contrast the American Recorder Society attracted a greater proportion of professional musicians for whom membership of the national organisation was an important factor.

- The perception of the Society and the recorder as an instrument were crucial in shaping the attitude of people who were not yet members. Some thought only of massed playing, often by school children, rather than one-to-a-part and solo playing, and were unaware of the virtues or even existence of the larger instruments. Others thought of the recorder as only for beginners, though the success of recorder players in

the BBC Young Musician competition and the dynamism of many ensembles for or including recorders was doing much to dispel this view.

- Some people saw the Society as a haven for older players, which the data showed was largely true, and tapping into the growing ambitions of younger musicians was perhaps one of the greatest challenges that the Society faced. Workshops, such as that given by Piers Adams that morning, made a valuable contribution to this process, and there might be scope for more educational workshops to encourage and develop younger players. Greater involvement of the other newly appointed Vice Presidents might also help to change perceptions that the Society focussed primarily on older players.

- Moira Usher, who was drafting an article on this theme, suggested that the Society perhaps suffered from its origins, when “amateurs” gave their time for free and Branches benefitted from expert conductors without payment. Nowadays, with reductions in public expenditure on music, professional musicians were increasingly dependent on other sources of income and some tended to avoid unpaid activities. The view now amongst Branches should be that “professionals” were paid to support “amateurs”, an approach that might be encouraged if the Society could attract more “professional” members. If Branches continued to see cost as an obstacle to enlisting support from professionals, the Society might want to consider offering to pay some or all of visiting conductors’ fees, in addition to their travel and accommodation costs, from central funds.

- Some Branches and ensembles found it rewarding to become involved in their local communities by giving concerts, sometimes in aid of local charitable causes. This not only helped promote the recorder as a serious and enjoyable instrument to play but could also be a catalyst for contact with potential new members.

4 Other current issues

4.1 Paul Clark commemoration: Helen Hooker, Caroline Jones and Wendy Pettitt were considering the scope for producing a CD, on the lines of *Bravo Bonsor!*, to commemorate the work of Paul Clark, who died in 2014. A further or alternative option was to devise a “Paul Clark Playing Day” to be offered to Branches on a subsidised basis as their annual pastoral visit. Helen, Caroline and Wendy were invited to continue their deliberations and present proposals to the Committee in due course.

Action: Helen Hooker, Caroline Jones, Wendy Pettitt

4.2 Witnesses: Some Committee members were concerned that one of the NYRO Trustees had been invited to attend the Committee’s meeting on 24th January 2016 to explain and answer questions about NYRO’s application for a grant for 2016/17. This should not become a precedent. The Society should expect every written grant application to include sufficient information for the Committee to reach (or, exceptionally, defer) a decision without the need for giving the applicant an opportunity to present further oral evidence or arguments. The Committee agreed that this should again be made clear to grant applicants, who should not be invited to Committee meetings at which their applications were to be considered.

4.3 A new President: The Committee briefly discussed the criteria and process for appointing a new President for the Society, in succession to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, who had died in March 2016, and made some initial proposals for possible candidates. It was suggested that, while the new President should be familiar with and an advocate of the recorder, he or she did not necessarily need to be an established player of the instrument. It was also important that a new President should play an active role in the Society. The appointment should be for a fixed term of perhaps 5, 7 or 10 years, with the possibility of renewal, though the actual term to be offered needed further consideration – a well-known musician might have a full diary for a few years ahead before being able to allocate significant time to the Society. If a President’s appointment was not renewed, he or she they might then be awarded the title of President Emeritus. The Secretary was asked to prepare a job specification and set out the selection and appointment process for consideration at the Committee’s next meeting.

Action: Secretary

5. Future meetings

5.1 The next Committee meeting had been provisionally scheduled, according to the pattern of recent years, for Sunday 16th October 2016, at a venue to be decided (since Benslow Music Trust was finding it increasingly difficult to accommodate the Society's Committee meetings amongst its many courses). However, the Chairman felt that the current pattern of meetings (in January/February, after Conference in March/April, and in October) was no longer conducive to the efficient operation of the Committee and the Society: the meeting after Conference had become a distraction from the attractions of the Festival, and there were very long gaps between meetings. The Chairman hoped that the Committee could move to more equally spaced meetings and, notwithstanding the extra costs, to more meetings each year to help progress the Society's business more effectively, though with increasing use of e-mails to deal speedily with relatively minor issues. With that in mind, the Secretary was invited to explore the scope for the next meeting being in August or September 2016. The Committee also acknowledged that it should try to fix future meetings dates as far ahead as practicable, possibly by formula (e.g. Xth Sunday of Y month), to help those Committee members whose diaries tended to acquire commitments months or even years ahead.

Action: Secretary

The meeting closed at 1.05pm.
