



THE SOCIETY OF RECORDER PLAYERS

Registered Charity No. 282751/SC038422

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING Sunday 1st October 2017 Hughes Hall, Cambridge CB1 2EW

PRESENT:

Vic Morris	Chairman	Anthony Hall	Web Editor
Mike Wilkinson	Secretary	Alyson Lewin	Musical Adviser
Ulli Burchette	Treasurer	Evelyn Nallen	Musical Adviser
David Rollason	Membership Secretary	Rodney Callow	Committee
Sandra Foxall	COS Secretary	Ciara Flanagan	Committee
Moira Usher	WBF Chairman	Pamela Flanagan	Committee
April Munday	Training Co-ordinator	Caroline Jones	Committee

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting at 12.40pm and welcomed those present. Apologies for absence were received from Helen Hooker (Musical Adviser), Sarah Langdon (Moeck/SRP Competition Administrator), Allyn Richardson (News Editor), Louise Findley (Publicity Officer) and Josée Beeson, Debbie Nicholas and Frances Tuffery (Committee).

1.2 The Committee noted that Isobel Clarke, who had been appointed as one of the Society's Publicity Officers earlier in 2017, had stepped down from the role due to pressure of her other work.

2. In Memoriam

2.1 The Committee noted with great sadness and fond memories the deaths in July of **Theo Wyatt** (at the age of 96) and **Eileen Silcocks**. Both had contributed immeasurably to promotion of the recorder and the work of the Society. For example, amongst their many roles, Theo had been a Vice President of the Society and Eileen had served as a member of the Panel of Conductors and a Musical Adviser. Tributes and further biographical details for them both appeared in the Autumn 2017 issue of the *Recorder Magazine*, which also included an obituary of **David Bellugi**, who had taught at many recorder courses in the UK and been an adjudicator for the Moeck/SRP Competition in 2007 and 2013. The Society had sent a donation in memory of Eileen to her chosen charity.

3. Minutes of previous Committee meeting, and matters arising therefrom

3.1 The Secretary apologised for the late circulation of the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19th February 2017. Subject to some typographical corrections and the deletion from minute 3.9 of the amount of a grant awarded to an individual by the Society (which it would not be appropriate to make public), the minutes were approved.

Proposed: April Munday Seconded: Sandra Foxall

3.2 The following comments were made on the minutes:

* Minute 3.1: Further work was still needed to ensure that the benefits offered by the Society were fully publicised and appreciated. The "Welcome" leaflet produced in 2013 tried to give a comprehensive summary but, having been originally intended for newly joined members, had not been posted on the website. However, with some updating, the text of that leaflet would be a useful starting point for a "benefits" page.

* Minute 3.2: Where matters had been discussed (e.g. advertising in the U3A magazine) the Committee, and the minutes, should make more effort to agree, record and allocate responsibility for action arising from that discussion.

4. Officers' Reports - record of issues discussed: the Reports themselves are on the website.

Chairman

4.1 The Chairman had not produced a separate paper for the meeting since most items on which he wished to report developments and seek agreement on next steps were listed elsewhere on the Agenda.

Secretary

4.2 The Secretary updated the Committee on the transfer of the Society's public and Trustees' liability insurance to a new insurer (Ansvar) with effect from 1st September 2017. Dick Pyper, a former SRP Chairman who advised the Society on insurance issues, had suggested this change since it offered substantially the same cover as the previous policy from Markel UK Ltd but at significantly lower cost. The matter had been discussed in e-mail exchanges with Committee members and some queries answered before a majority of the Committee had agreed to the change. Nevertheless some queries remained and in particular the Secretary was asked to obtain further clarification about the possible implications of a clause concerning the provision of "hot food" at SRP events.

Action: Secretary

Treasurer

4.3 Scottish Festival: The Treasurer drew attention to the donation of £300 from Glasgow Branch. This was most of the surplus from the 2017 Scottish Festival. The Branch was under no obligation to make this donation since the Treasurer, concerned about possible repetition of the significant loss made by the Scottish Festival in 2014, had declined to approve the Festival budget when the organisers had declined to follow her advice on the level of fees for participants. This meant that the Society had not underwritten the Festival and did not have a claim on any profits.

4.4 Festival surpluses: Although the matter had been discussed and largely agreed in e-mail exchanges, the Treasurer again queried whether some of the surplus made by the national Festival in 2017 should have been used to make payments to some of the Festival conductors and others who had provided their services without charge other than expenses. Her advice to Festival organisers was usually to plan for a small profit on the basis of 150-180 paying participants, but in both 2016 and 2017 the number of participants had proved to be significantly higher, generating substantial profits. A further concern for the Treasurer was that, with agreement from most Committee members, the profits from the 2017 Festival had been distributed in the customary way - i.e. equally to the Walter Bergmann Fund, central SRP funds and the organising Branch(es) - before the present meeting, meaning that the Committee had no opportunity to discuss alternative options.

4.5 In reply, the Chairman (who had also been one of the organisers of the 2017 Festival) noted that the accounts for the 2017 Festival had been finalised 3 weeks after the Festival, making possible a prompt distribution in accordance with the organisers' expectations, whereas in previous years this had been more protracted. While it was open to the Committee to agree retrospective payments to Festival conductors, any such payments should not be at the expense of the WBF's or the organisers' shares and so would have to come from the Society's central funds. In the event, the Committee did not support the proposal for retrospective payments to conductors etc, though it did agree an ex gratia payment of £150 to Helen Hooker for taking photographs at the Festival.

4.6 After further discussion, the Committee agreed that the organisers of future Festivals should have the option of including in their budgets the possibility of payments to conductors etc being made contingent on the Festival generating a sufficient surplus. This would of course reduce the sum available for distribution, including to the organising Branch(es). This option should be spelled out in advance, not applied ad hoc afterwards, so that everyone involved was aware of the situation. It could not apply to the 2018 Festival since plans for that were already well advanced.

4.7 Gift Aid: The Committee unanimously endorsed the Treasurer's thanks to Tessa Rolph for her continuing work in managing the Society's Gift Aid claims. The claim for 2013/14 was complete and, since it had been paid well after the year to which it related, had attracted interest of about £60 from HMRC. The Committee did not support the Treasurer's proposal that this sum be donated to the Concerto Fund. Gift Aid claims for 2014/15 and 2015/16 were being prepared and benefitted greatly from being able to use the information in the Society's membership database. The Chairman agreed to check with Tessa whether she was content to continue in her role or whether the Society should resume its search for a replacement.

Action: Chairman

4.8 Financial structure: In further discussion of financial issues, the Committee briefly considered the structure of the Society's finances, which currently included the Central Fund, the Arthur Ingram Fund, the Walter Bergmann Fund and the temporary Concerto Fund. Branch funds were also SRP funds and, while they were primarily the responsibility of the Branches, they were reported in the Society's accounts for the Charity Commission. The WBF was a "restricted" fund, meaning it could only be spent on the charitable purposes of that Fund. The Central Fund and AIF were unrestricted and there was no technical reason why they had to be kept separate, but the Treasurer currently found it convenient and presentationally helpful to keep them separate and to allocate categories of income and expenditure to one or other Fund. While this structure had been reported to the membership in the past, and was explained on the website, it was important to keep repeating the message so that members understood what their subscriptions were used for.

Action: Treasurer

4.9 Conference expenses: The Treasurer also expressed concern about the cost of expenses arising from the Annual Conference. She recalled that in the early 2000s ordinary Committee members would also represent their Branches at Conference, while now each Branch could nominate any of its members as the Branch delegate. The Committee saw some advantage in this but was also reluctant to dictate the choice of delegate to Branches whose members happened to include one or more SRP Committee members, though it was noted that any member could attend Conference as an observer, with no entitlement to expenses. The Committee invited the Treasurer to put forward specific proposals on this issue for consideration at the next meeting. It would be prudent to seek Conference's view on any changes agreed by the Committee, so implementation could not start until 2019.

Action: Treasurer

Web Editor

4.10 The Web Editor reminded the Committee about the Forum function he had added to the website to facilitate orderly discussion between Committee members. All Committee members are subscribed to the Forum by default but can unsubscribe to the whole Forum or individual topics if they wish. Any Committee member can open a Forum thread and all members subscribed to that thread should receive a message when any comment is added. This avoids the proliferating chains that occur with normal e-mail exchanges, with no-one sure they have seen all comments. The Chairman encouraged Committee members who had not yet done so to familiarise themselves with the Forum and to use it in preference to e-mails for matters of Committee business.

Walter Bergmann Fund

4.11 The Chair of the WBF Sub-Committee reported that Francis Knights, Director of Studies in Music at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, and Chairman of the National Early Music Association, had agreed to join the Sub-Committee. A further member might be appointed soon. The WBF page on the website had been updated to reflect the Sub-Committee's decision to focus increasingly on grants for group activities as well as for individuals, and new application forms had been devised. Currently the Fund's income exceeded its expenditure and all Committee members were invited to encourage applications from suitable individuals and groups with members under 30 years old.

4.12 In further discussion of support for younger players, the Chairman noted that Barbara Law, in her new role as editor of the *Recorder Magazine*, proposed to introduce new features intended to appeal to such players. It would also be useful, in discussion with Barbara, to review the role and scope of the Society's pages in the Magazine to ensure that they continued to be relevant and useful to members and other readers.

Action: News Editor

Moeck/SRP Competition

4.13 The Committee welcomed the report by the Competition Administrator about the selection of finalists for the 2017 Competition and the discussion that she and the Chairman had held with representatives of Moeck and the Early Music Shop about the operation of the Competition. Noting that there were no UK finalists again, there was some discussion of the less ornamented styles preferred in the UK, which might count against UK entrants in international competitions. The limited name recognition that the Competition secured for the Society - it was often just "the Moeck Competition" - was also a matter of concern. This prompted Evelyn Nallen to remind the Committee of a suggestion she had previously made for a separate competition, with a lower age limit than the Moeck/SRP Competition, to be run by the Society. The Committee invited Evelyn to refresh her earlier proposal for discussion at its next meeting.

Action: Evelyn Nallen

5. Festivals

5.1 2017: The Committee warmly endorsed Rodney Callow's congratulations to Vic Morris and his colleagues from Cambridge, Beds & North Herts and Peterborough Branches on a highly successful, enjoyable and well-organised Festival in Cambridge in April. The "All Stars" concert organised by Evelyn Nallen was also exceptionally memorable. Helen Hooker's photographs from the concert and Festival are on the Society's Facebook page. Vic thanked the Committee for their comments. The few problems that had occurred were mostly due to the welcome but unexpectedly large number of participants.

5.2 2018: April Munday reported that arrangements for the Festival in Eastleigh on 14-15 April were proceeding well. Some conductors had yet to submit their programmes for the Festival booklet. It was hoped that booking, using the online system developed for the 2017 Festival, would open later in October.

5.3 2019 onwards: David Rollason reported that Durham and Newcastle Branches were considering whether to offer jointly to host the 2019 Festival. The Secretary reported that Cumbria Branch was also considering this option. If both decided to proceed, one might be persuaded to bid for a later year. Suffolk Branch had already secured the 2020 Festival, and Pamela Flanagan noted that Edinburgh and Glasgow Branches had offered to consider jointly hosting the national Festival in a year when there was no separate Scottish Festival, the next such year being 2021.

5.4 Festival Guidelines: The Festival Guidelines on the website were last updated in 2007 and are not easy to use. Moira Usher agreed to rewrite them in more practical form to guide future Festival organisers. Alyson Lewin offered to help. The aim would be to have a draft of the new version ready early in 2018.

Action: Moira Usher, Alyson Lewin

6. Visiting Conductors scheme

6.1 The Committee considered a paper by the Secretary on the operation of the Visiting Conductors scheme, with suggestions for how it might be improved. Currently the process for appointing new conductors was too lengthy and sometimes required established musicians to submit to audition, a minority of conductors in the scheme received the majority of invitations from Branches and some received few or none, and while Branches were reimbursed for conductors' expenses they did have to pay their fees, which varied greatly. Points made in discussion included:

- The nomination and appointment process could be better matched to candidates' experience, and should not always rely on candidates being known to or observed by a Musical Adviser.
- The scheme might operate more efficiently if responsibility for it was delegated to a small group of Committee members which reported back to the full Committee from time to time.
- The number of conductors in the scheme might be limited to around 20 of those who were most highly regarded, who should command a commensurate fee (say £300/day).
- Conversely, the Society could choose also to welcome less experienced conductors who could guide Branches whilst refining their own skills, including the skills needed to lead amateur groups of mixed ability.
- The Society might make some contribution to conductors' fees, which currently ranged up to £320/day.
- Alternatively, visits by conductors could be placed on the same financial basis as workshops – i.e. cost-neutral for the host Branch, with deficits underwritten by and surpluses paid to central funds.
- It would be difficult to prescribe a set fee, or range of fees, to be charged by conductors since that could increase costs for visits from conductors who would be content with less than the set fee and deter those seeking a higher fee from taking part in the scheme.
- However, conductors should not be inhibited from charging the "going rate" (e.g. the current ISM rate of £30/hour) and Branches, if they continued to have to meet the conductor's fee, should expect to pay a fair rate for professional services.
- Travelling expenses for visits to more remote Branches would normally be above average, but that was an inevitable consequence of the Society's policy, endorsed by Conference, that all Branches should be entitled to an annual visit on the same basis.
- Costs might be reduced if it was possible to appoint conductors resident in areas where there were currently none, but that would require some limitation on Branches' choice of conductors, which might not be desirable or practicable.
- The "pastoral" nature of visits could be given greater emphasis, with conductors encouraged to give guidance on matters such as the choice and care of instruments, rehearsal and playing techniques, and repertoire as well as conducting.

6.2 At the Committee's invitation, Caroline Jones, Alyson Lewin and the Secretary agreed to develop the suggestions in the Secretary's paper and the points raised in discussion of it, and to present a more detailed and definite proposal in time for consideration, and hopefully a decision, at the next meeting.

Action: Caroline Jones, Alyson Lewin, Mike Wilkinson

6.3 William Summers: In accordance with the current scheme for appointing new conductors, Helen Hooker had observed William Summers conducting part of the Weald of Kent Branch's Playing Day in July. Having considered Helen's report, the Committee approved William's appointment. The Secretary would welcome William to the Panel and inform Branches of his appointment.

Action: Secretary

7. Improving the SRP website

7.1 The Committee considered a report by the Web Editor summarising ways in which the Society's website might be improved and listing known problems and proposed solutions. These included proposals to address concerns, only recently reported to the Web Editor, that some information on the website should be made easier to find. It was important to note that the overall feel and utility of the website depended not only on its structure and navigation but equally on the quality and coverage of its content, which required input from many Committee members. Points made in discussion included:

- Key topics that should be very easy to find on the website included "how to join" and "the benefits of membership". Compiling the former might in turn prompt some reconsideration of the Society's membership structure.
- Enabling prospective members to join and pay their subscriptions online would not only be a major technical undertaking but could also risk undermining the valuable link between members and their local Branches, through which most members joined. While, for example, the website of the American Recorder Society - <https://americanrecorder.org> – allowed members to join, pay subscriptions and make donations online, only about half of ARS members were also members of any of its 90 chapters.

7.2 The Committee endorsed the Web Editor's proposal that a small Group should be established to consider the further development of the website. Amongst other issues, the Group would review the allocation of responsibilities for keeping the content of different website pages current and accurate. Subject to the agreement of those concerned, those proposed as Group members were Moira Usher (representing the Walter Bergmann Fund), Louise Findlay (Publicity Officer), Allyn Richardson (News Editor) and someone who was primarily a user of the website (for which role David Rollason volunteered).

Action: Web Editor and those indicated above

8. Membership Categories

8.1 The Chairman introduced his paper on proposed new membership categories. The aim was to provide a clear range of membership options and defined benefits designed to appeal to existing members and to attract some of those enthusiastic individuals and groups of recorder players who had either not heard of the Society or felt that it had little to offer them.

8.2 Points made in discussion included:

- Joining the Society through a Branch, and also joining that Branch, was likely to remain the main membership route.
- While many members understood the purpose of the "Country and Overseas" Branch, its role in providing a home for those who did not also join a Branch might not always be obvious to others. Redesignation as "Individual Membership", open to UK and overseas members, could make this role clearer.
- The Society found it particularly difficult to attract younger members. Contributory factors might be the great range of young people's other interests and the decline of music education in schools. The Society did have a scheme whereby schools could affiliate to a Branch, but that had been little used and there were currently no such affiliates, though several Branches (e.g. Cornwall) were known to have active links with schools. Piers Adams, one of the Society's Vice Presidents, and others also had considerable experience of working with younger players and might be asked for advice.
- Links with schools usually developed as a result of personal initiatives and the scope for a wider approach was limited, though one option could be to try to work with the Music Education Hubs funded by the Arts Council. Finding funding for musical activities was often a problem for schools so any initiatives, such as workshops or concerts, that the Society could offer without charge were more likely to attract interest. This linked with initiatives being taken by the Walter Bergmann Fund to expand its support for group activities and, once firmly established, could be brought under the banner of the proposed School Affiliation category.

- The Society currently had a category for Student members, defined as those of any age in full-time education, for which the subscription was half the adult rate. This attracted little interest and was not actively promoted. A new category for Students, with an age limit of 25, a subscription of £10 a year, entitlement to the *Recorder Magazine*, and the possibility of access to the Society's website or e-Newsletter to promote events might be more attractive. It was proposed by Moira Usher, seconded by Evelyn Nallen and agreed by the Committee that this option should be promoted at once, though the agreement of Conference in April 2018 would be needed for the reduced subscription.

- Neither the Society nor NYRO were making good use of their links, though NYRO continued to look to the Society for grants. Students taking part in NYRO's residential courses were enrolled as SRP members without charge for 12 months after their most recent course, but the Society should be more active in welcoming them and in seeking to retain their membership. The Membership Secretary agreed to follow this up.

Action: Membership Secretary

- There was no immediate enthusiasm for following the American Recorder Society in offering Life Membership, for which the ARS charged \$1,000.

- Affiliation for Recorder Orchestras should remain a membership category. While the Society did not have detailed information about Orchestra members (who might, in any case, be a fluid group), it was to be expected that many would also be members of the Society. But setting a minimum number for such members as a condition of affiliation could risk eroding the normal membership option. On balance, therefore, it might be better to leave the criteria for affiliation unchanged.

- The Corporate membership category, which had always had very few members, should either be abolished or, preferably, revamped with better defined benefits and then widely promoted.

- The proposed Recorder Ensemble category was welcome in principle but further work was needed to distinguish between an "orchestra", an "ensemble" and merely a group of players, for example a U3A group, to avoid confusion and possible erosion of other membership categories.

8.3 The Chairman thanked the Committee for their constructive discussion and agreed to develop the ideas in his paper, in consultation with others as appropriate, with the aim of presenting firm proposals for consideration at the Committee's next meeting and, subject to the Committee's decision, for presentation to Conference in April 2018.

Action: Chairman

9. Management of the Society

9.1 The Committee considered a paper by the Secretary proposing changes to the management of the Society to improve its efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness. The essence of his proposal was that responsibility for most operational activities should be delegated to sub-Committees (as was the case in practice for some activities at present), with the main Committee reduced in size and retaining responsibility for policy and finance. The sub-Committees would have defined authority, and in some cases a delegated budget, and would report to and seek guidance as necessary from the central Committee. Each sub-Committee would have 3-4 members, including one of those elected by Conference to present the interests of Branches, and would decide its own method of working and choose a Chair, who would be a member ex officio of the central Committee. The paper also included proposals to reduce the number of Trustees.

9.2 Points made in discussion included:

- It would be important to ensure that any changes in how the Society was managed and in the number of Trustees were compatible with the rules of the Charity Commission and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, from which it might be necessary to seek approval.

- The terms of each sub-Committee's delegated authority would need careful definition to ensure that its members, and other Committee members, were fully aware of what was expected of them. Delegations could of course be revised in the light of experience and to reflect new initiatives.

- It was implicit in the proposals that not all elected Committee members would serve on the main Committee. There should be a steady turnover in membership of sub-Committees to inject new ideas, and service on sub-Committees might serve to give newer Committee members the opportunity of gaining practical experience in management of Society activities.

- While the creation of several new sub-Committees might be thought to lead to increased expenses, this was not necessarily the case since much business could be conducted by e-mail, Skype and use of the website Forum. Some physical meetings could be helpful, but it would not be necessary to hire venues for only 3-4 people.

9.3 Committee members did not rule out some change on the lines proposed by the Secretary but felt that, before making any decisions, they needed to see how the proposals might apply in practice. The Committee therefore invited the Secretary, in discussion with the Chairman and others, to develop detailed plans for consideration at its next meeting and, subject to the Committee's decision, for presentation to Conference in April 2018.

Action: Secretary

10. Proposal for a new Young Composers Competition

10.1 The Chairman introduced his paper on this subject. He had been inspired by performances at the Royal Academy of Music in May of pieces written by students of the Purcell School, after which Graham Fitkin had described and Sophie Westbrooke had performed extracts from his Recorder Concerto. The paper suggested that the new Competition should be biennial and could alternate with the Moeck/SRP Solo Recorder Playing Competition, that it should have an age limit of 25 (the limit for the Moeck/SRP Competition was 30), that the judges should include one of the Society's Musical Advisers, and that the prizes could be cash and/or the publication and performance of the winning piece(s) to generate publicity for the composers. Barbara Law was keen on the proposal and would help with its implementation. The Society's President, Jonathan Dove, was also well qualified to advise on the proposal and might be willing to assist.

10.2 One point raised in discussion was the importance of advertising the new Competition widely, for example through the Composition departments of Music Colleges, to ensure that it attracted a high calibre and number of entrants. The criteria for judging should emphasise that it was compositional skills that were being assessed.

10.3 The Committee supported the proposal for this new Competition and asked the Chairman, in consultation with Evelyn Nallen and Barbara Law, to work up detailed proposals, including an estimate of costs if possible, for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting.

Action: Chairman, Evelyn Nallen, Barbara Law

11. Other Business

11.1 Caroline Jones noted that at the National Eisteddfod of Wales in August there had been a well-supported ukulele workshop. She felt that a recorder workshop might be equally well-supported and suggested that, with support from Wales Branch and the U3A groups with which it had links, the Society should promote such a workshop at the 2018 Eisteddfod, which was to be held in Cardiff on 3-11 August. The Committee welcome this idea and invited Caroline to discuss it with Wales Branch with a view to presenting a costed proposal to the Committee.

Action: Caroline Jones

11.2 Sandra Foxall reported receipt of an especially generous donation to the Society from a COS member in the United States. The Chairman agreed to send a letter of thanks.

Action: COS Secretary, Chairman

Minutes of SRP Committee meeting, Cambridge, 1st October 2017

11.3 The Committee discussed a suggestion by the News Editor for a possible survey of members. Its aim might be twofold – to obtain further information about the Society’s membership profile, and to solicit views on current and possible future activities of the Society. It was felt that at present the Committee had a sufficient, though imprecise understanding of the profile of the current membership and those that it wished to attract as members. It was also recalled that members’ views had been canvassed in 2012 to inform preparation of the 2020 Report. It was thought unlikely that another survey would elicit a significantly different range of responses. The Committee therefore agreed that a further survey should not be commissioned at present, though one might be appropriate and useful at a later date.

11.4 The Committee agreed that the deadline for repayment of the Society’s £5,000 loan to the Concerto Fund, which had been agreed by the Committee in e-mail exchanges since its previous meeting, should be extended from 31st December 2017 to 31st March 2018 to allow the Fund more time for fund-raising. The Secretary would inform Barbara Law accordingly.

Action: Secretary

11.5 Ulli Burchette, Sandra Foxall, Vic Morris, Moira Usher and Mike Wilkinson volunteered to help run the Society’s stand at the Early Music Festival in Blackheath on 9-11 November.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 5.35pm.

The next Committee meetings are scheduled for Sundays 18th February and 7th October 2018.

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