



THE SOCIETY OF RECORDER PLAYERS

Registered Charity No. 282751/SC038422

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING Sunday 18th February 2018 Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

PRESENT:

Vic Morris	Chairman	Helen Hooker	Musical Adviser
Mike Wilkinson	Secretary	Evelyn Nallen	Musical Adviser
Ulli Burchette	Treasurer	Josée Beeson	Committee
David Rollason	Membership Secretary	Pamela Flanagan	Committee
April Munday	Training Co-ordinator	Debbie Nicholas	Committee
Anthony Hall	Web Editor	Frances Tuffery	Committee
Sarah Langdon	SRP/Moeck Competition	Mary Tyers	Festival 2019

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting at 11.30am by welcoming those present. Apologies for absence were received from Sandra Foxall (COS Secretary), Moira Usher (WBF Chairman), Alyson Lewin (Musical Adviser), Louise Findley (Publicity Officer), and Rodney Callow, Ciara Flanagan and Caroline Jones (Committee). Allyn Richardson had stepped down as News Editor and Evelyn Nallen had taken on the role on an acting basis. Allyn also intended to step down as e-News Editor once a successor could be found.

1.2 The Committee particularly welcomed Mary Tyers and Barbara Law. In accordance with past practice, Mary was attending the meeting primarily as a representative of the organisers of next year's Festival. Barbara was attending part of the meeting by invitation since, particularly in her new role as Editor of the *Recorder Magazine*, she had an overview of many current developments in the recorder world.

1.3 The Chairman also expressed thanks to Annabel Knight and her colleagues at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire for making a meeting room and display stand available for the Society during the International Recorder and Early Music Festival. Some Committee members had hoped to be able to attend part of this Festival, including the Walter Bergmann Celebration Concert, but in the event Committee business occupied all the time available.

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

2.1 The revised draft of the minutes of the meeting held in Cambridge on 1st October 2017 was approved. Proposed: David Rollason Seconded: Evelyn Nallen Carried.

2.2 Minute 4.3: The Secretary was asked to send a note of thanks to Glasgow Branch for its decision to donate £300 to the Society from the profits of the 2017 Scottish Festival when, since that Festival had not been underwritten by the Society, it was under no obligation to do so.

Action: Secretary

2.3 Minute 8.2 (point 6): The Membership Secretary reported that he was now receiving contact details for those attending the NYRO Easter and Summer courses and had prepared a welcome letter to introduce them to the Society and their year's free membership.

3. Management of the Society

3.1 The Committee considered a further paper by the Secretary developing the ideas discussed at the previous meeting for establishing sub-Committees, though perhaps to be more positively designated as Teams or Action Groups, to be responsible for the delivery of many of the Society's activities. There was some concern that liaison between Teams and with the central SRP Committee might actually slow down the taking of decisions, though this could be avoided if Teams were given clear terms of reference, appropriate delegated authority and budgets, and in some cases targets. The website Forum was available, and should be better used, as an efficient means for Teams to consult others when necessary.

3.2 It was suggested that the proposed Teams dealing with membership and with publicity might be combined since the topics were very closely related. This, and current improvements to the website, might counter the perception that the Society was difficult to join. This had been sadly demonstrated on the Society's stand at the Early Music Festival being held that weekend at the Birmingham Conservatoire when, as Barbara Law had noted, membership forms and details of subscription rates and benefits had not been available.

3.3 In discussion of the possible composition of Teams it was noted that, while the Secretary had previously suggested they should elect their own Chairmen, it might be preferable for the central Committee to designate at least the first Chairmen so that there were clear lines of accountability when the Teams became operational. The need for regular turnover in the membership of each Team, requiring say a least one change each year, to stimulate new thinking and broaden the experience of those serving on Teams, was recognised. It was also recognised that the Society's Rules would need revision to reflect whatever new management arrangements were eventually agreed, though it would be premature to starting drafting revised Rules just yet.

3.4 Devolving responsibilities to Teams would make it possible to reduce the size of the central Committee, which would retain overall responsibility for policy and finance, though it should still be as representative as possible of the Society's membership. While all Teams would be expected to report to and receive feedback from the central Committee, they did not all necessarily need to be represented on it. The Secretary's proposal to reduce the number of Trustees from 18 to about 5 was compatible with guidance from the Charity Commission and would facilitate compliance with the Commission's requirement for at least one face-to-face meeting of Trustees per year even when more business was conducted by Teams and online. The Chairman and other Trustees would be entitled to attend Team meetings, though there was no expectation that they would do so regularly.

3.5 The Chairman then formally moved that the number of Trustees should be reduced to 5 with effect from the start of the Society's next financial year on 1st September 2018. The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer would be three of the Trustees, with the other two to be decided.

Proposed: David Rollason Seconded: April Munday Carried.

3.6 After further discussion, the Committee asked for further work to develop an even more detailed prospectus for the Society's proposed new management structure, with draft terms of reference, operational and financial delegations, and proposed initial membership for each of the proposed Teams, and proposals for the responsibilities, membership and operation of the reformed central Committee. A timetable for implementation would also be important. Any views from Conference on 15th April could be taken into account before the proposals were finalised. Rule 4.11 allowed the Committee to delegate powers, duties and functions, albeit only of a "time-limited" nature, to "working parties" and so would serve to allow Teams to be appointed and operate temporarily until formally constituted on a permanent basis.

Action: Secretary

4. The Recorder Magazine

4.1 Since Barbara Law, the new Magazine Editor, was present the meeting took the opportunity to hear about her plans for the development of the Magazine and her views on the Society more generally. She acknowledged that the Magazine was financially viable only because the Society bought copies for its members and affiliated groups as part of their subscriptions. Equally the Magazine was a key vehicle for promoting the Society and its activities to current and potential members. So there was mutual benefit in maintaining close links.

4.2 Barbara noted that the Society is allocated 4 pages in each issue of the Magazine (though this had sometimes been allowed to creep up to 6) and these were under the control of the SRP News Editor. In the past the SRP pages, along with the page allocated to ERTA, had been printed towards the back of the Magazine but in future would be placed more prominently nearer the centre. The regular list of SRP Branch Secretaries had been discontinued since details changed infrequently and were always available from the website. The listing of forthcoming courses had also been discontinued, though SRP the website would continue to include information about any courses involving recorders of which details were submitted to the Web Editor. It would be open to the News Editor to mention or list courses, especially ones run by the Society or a Branch, in the pages she edited but it was hoped that the organisers of other, commercial courses would choose to pay for advertisements in the Magazine.

4.3 A new e-News Editor might well wish to continue the practice of alerting recipients to events due to take place in the 4-6 weeks after the issue of each monthly e-News Bulletin. The Chairman reported that Louise Findlay was keen to assist whoever took over as Editor of this monthly Bulletin.

5. Proposed new membership categories

5.1 Following discussion of this issue at the Committee meeting on 1st October 2017, the Chairman introduced an updated paper listing proposals for revised membership categories. Subject to any changes agreed by the Committee, he intended to invite Conference on 15th April to discuss and, if thought appropriate, approve these categories, to take effect from 1st September 2018.

5.2 In discussion of the Student Membership category, it was noted that the Walter Bergmann Fund had agreed to cover the potential small loss in membership income to the Central Fund resulting from the proposal to introduce a £10 subscription for students since that sum did not even cover the cost of the Magazine. It was also agreed that, in line with a previous Conference Resolution, a "student" was anyone in full-time education, irrespective of age. So eligibility for this category should be "Players in full-time education or under the age of 25".

5.3 The Treasurer expressed concern that no charge was proposed for the Schools Affiliation programme. There were around 30,000 schools in the UK and, at over £10/year just for the Magazine, even a small percentage take-up of the programme could be costly, though there might be scope for some support from the Walter Bergmann Fund. On the other hand, school budgets especially in the State sector were under great pressure and even a modest charge might discourage participation on behalf of those whom the Society particularly wished to reach as potential future members. Moreover, given the capacity of the Society and Branches to promote and support the programme, it was unrealistic to expect initial take-up to be anything more than modest. It was therefore agreed that the programme should be launched with no charge but that the position could be reviewed as necessary.

5.4 There was concern that the Ensemble Affiliation scheme and to some extent the Central Membership proposal risked drawing members, particularly more advanced ones, away from the main membership route through Branches. The Chairman noted that the primary intention was to attract new members and smaller groups, not divert existing ones to different membership categories, so this concern needed careful consideration when the proposals were finalised. It was suggested that a further benefit for affiliated Ensembles might be copies of the music commissioned for Festivals.

5.5 For completeness, the current Orchestra Affiliation scheme should be added to the list before presentation to Conference even if there were no present proposals to change the details of that scheme, though the possibility of a lower affiliation fee for Orchestras including more than a given number of individual SRP members could be considered.

6. Proposal for new SRP Recorder Composition and Performance Competitions

6.1 Mary Tyers introduced the paper that she, David Rollason and Graham Hamlett (a further member of Durham Branch) had written proposing that the Society should promote new Composition and Performance Competitions. The proposal was that there should be:

- (a) a competition for composers, with a class for composers of any age and a class for composers under age 18 or under on the day of the competition, and
- (b) a competition for performers, with classes for solo players under age 18 and for groups of 2-8 players age under 23, including at least one recorder player.

It was envisaged that the finals of each competition would be held at alternate Festivals, with the finals of competition (a) in Durham in 2019 and of competition (b) in Suffolk in 2020, and so on. The competitions would be managed and funded by the SRP centrally, with Festival organisers asked only to provide a venue and allocate a time slot, though of course they could provide further support if they wished. Further details of the suggested criteria for each competition and of possible prizes were given in the paper. It was not intended that there should be any restriction on the nationality of entrants. To be successful, it was important that both competitions attracted a wide range of entrants, so extensive publicity was essential.

6.2 As the paper indicated, the proposed competitions would support many of the Society's objectives: raise the profile of the Society and its Festivals; attract new participants, especially younger ones; offer good value for money by sharing some costs with Festivals; and, in the case of the Composition Competition, give entrants the opportunity to hear their work performed by a professional consort.

6.3 Mary and her colleagues had estimated budgets and considered income streams for both proposed competitions. There were preliminary estimates for the Composition Competition in the paper, but further work had resulted in a revised estimate of £7,330, to cover the fees and expenses of judges, the hire of a professional quartet to perform the shortlisted pieces and give related workshops, and the administration costs. The estimated cost of the Performers Competition was considerably lower since, for example, no quartet would be required. Venue costs for both competitions would be small since they would use facilities already hired for Festival use. Overall it was estimated that the two Competitions might cost the Society an average of £5,000 per year.

6.4 There was some discussion of whether there should be criteria for the degree of difficulty for entries in the Composition Competition (e.g. playable by a typical SRP Branch). However, it was accepted that adding to Branch repertoire was not an aim of the Competition and that serious composers deserved a free hand on the style and difficulty of their work. After further discussion the Committee then approved a budget of £7,330 for the first Composition Competition and invited Mary, David and their colleagues to take their plans forward as proposed. They would, of course, want to report on progress and any issues requiring further decisions at future Committee meetings.
Action: Mary Tyers, David Rollason and colleagues

6.5 The Committee also welcomed the proposed Performance Competition but deferred a decision on whether it should go ahead for the time being. A final decision would depend, amongst other things, on details of the Early Music ensemble competition being launched in 2018 by the Early Music Shop, though it was thought that had no requirement for recorders. The biennial Moeck/SRP Solo Recorder Playing Competition, which the Society had administered and supported for many years, was of course also a performance competition, though entry requirements for that largely differed from those for the proposed new competition. There were arguments for and against the Society's continuing involvement in the Moeck/SRP Competition and David Rollason was invited to review these as part of a paper to Conference presenting and inviting comments on the proposed new competitions.

Action: David Rollason

7. Developing the SRP website

7.1 The Web Editor announced that, with advice from several members, work was almost complete on the revamped website. A temporary preview could be seen at www.demo1.srp.org.uk. It was planned to go live before the Festival in April. The new version had a more modern style, a simpler and more logical navigation menu, and scope for great flexibility on the introductory pages of each section. It had been commented on favourably by those who had seen it. The Web Editor again emphasised that, while he and his deputy developed and managed the website, they were not responsible for its content, which had to be provided and when necessary updated by those with expert knowledge of the various topics covered.

7.2 There was some discussion of the page listing individual performers offering professional services since there was no consensus on what constituted "professional". While the Society wished to serve all parts of the recorder world, it could not interrogate and make its own judgment on those wishing to be listed but could, for example, decide to list everyone who asked without any implication of their status or any endorsement by the Society. On balance, however, it was decided to omit this page and see whether this gave rise to any comments.

8. The Visiting Conductors scheme

8.1 The Secretary introduced his further paper, written with some advice from Caroline Jones and Alyson Lewin, taking forward points made in discussion of this issue at the previous Committee meeting in October 2017. It was accepted that the process for appointing conductors to the Panel was too cumbersome and protracted, that a minority of conductors were invited to undertake a majority of visits to Branches, and that while Branches were reimbursed for conductors' expenses they did have to pay their fees, which varied greatly. If the Committee eventually agreed the Secretary's proposals for delegating operational responsibilities to Teams, then in future the Visiting Conductors scheme would be managed under delegated authority by one of those Teams.

8.2 The Committee agreed points (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), parts of (v) and (vi), (vii) and (viii) in the Secretary's paper, some of which merely confirmed details of the existing scheme. These concerned respectively the purpose of the scheme, becoming a candidate, the assessment process and criteria, Branches' entitlement to an annual visit, reimbursement of conductors' travelling and some accommodation costs, publicity, and feedback. The main changes to the existing scheme agreed were in points (ii) and (iii), as follows:

(ii) At present candidates could only be considered after nomination by two Society members. Candidates could in future be invited to apply, self-nominated or recommended by Branches or individual members with the candidate's agreement.

(iii) At present candidates whose work was not known to one of the Musical Advisers had to be observed conducting by one of those Advisers, who then made a recommendation to the whole Committee. In future it would be for the relevant Team to decide the appropriate method of assessment in each case. This could include but should not be limited to personal knowledge, recommendation by an authoritative person, and observation by a Musical Adviser or any other suitably qualified person chosen by the Team.

8.3 Matters raised in discussion of other points included:

- A suggestion that Branches should be allocated a conductor each year, to spread visits between conductors more evenly, was thought not likely to be attractive to Branches. But it might be worth inviting some of the conductors less frequently invited by Branches to conduct at Festivals so that they became better known.
- A proposal that the Society should specify the fee, or the maximum fee, that conductors could charge was thought not likely to appeal to conductors, though a suggestion that the Society reimburse Branches for part of whatever fee was charged was worth further consideration. The cost to the Society for reimbursing conductors' expenses had averaged about £3,300 per year in recent years, and adding say a £50 fee reimbursement for typically 40 visits would add a further £2,000, which might need to be reflected in increased subscriptions.
- While some Branches gave feedback when submitting claim forms, this could be made a requirement of the scheme, though there was a risk that Branches would make anodyne comments even if they felt critical. If feedback was routinely required, the Team would need to have a clear view on what action it could legally take in the event of adverse feedback.
- A further suggestion was that the financial arrangements for conductors' visits should be similar to those for workshops, which were financially neutral for organisers since any profit accrued to and any loss was underwritten by the Society. This might not encourage Branches to be economical, though there had been no evidence of extravagance with workshops.

- If otherwise promising candidates were thought not ready to join the list of conductors, perhaps because their experience had not included conducting groups of amateurs with a wide range of abilities, they could perhaps be given probationary appointments and offered opportunity to conduct Branches to acquire such experience. The Society would need to pay the costs since otherwise Branches would be reluctant to participate.

8.4 The above points, and any necessary further details of the Visiting Conductors scheme, were remitted for consideration and decision to the relevant Team if/when it was set up under the proposed new management arrangements for the Society.

8.5 Vincent Tumosas: In accordance with the current scheme for appointing new conductors, Helen Hooker had observed Vincent Tumosas conducting at Mid Herts Branch on 10th February. Having considered Helen's report, which concluded that Vincent would make a good addition to the team of conductors, the Committee approved his appointment. The Secretary would welcome Vincent to the Panel and inform Branches of his appointment.

Action: Secretary

9. NYRO grant application 2018/19

9.1 The Committee considered an application from the National Youth Recorder Orchestras for a grant of £5,000 for 2018/19. A grant of £4,000 had been made for 2017/18, with £2,000 payable on receipt of NYRO's examined accounts for 2016/17 and up to £2,000 payable to match grants that NYRO managed to raise from other sources. Proof that both these conditions had been met was included in the application for 2018/19 so the grant for 2017/18 was payable in full. After some discussion the Committee decided to continue the trend of phasing down its support for NYRO and accordingly agreed a grant of £3,000 for 2018/19, with £1,000 payable on receipt of NYRO's examined accounts for 2017/18 and up to £2,000 payable as matching funds. The Secretary would convey this decision to NYRO.

Proposed: April Munday Seconded: Helen Hooker Agreed

Action: Secretary

10. Festivals

10.1 2018: April Munday reported that to date 130 applications for the Festival in Eastleigh on 14th-15th April had been received. To break even 160 were needed. Bookings closed on 31st March to allow for programme and catering arrangements to be finalised. The latest e-News included a further reminder, and a news item on the website drew particular attention to the concert by Tom Beets and Philip Thorby. There were currently three applicants for Tom Beets' masterclass. Recorder MusicMail had confirmed they would be attending.

10.2 2019: Mary Tyers confirmed that the dates for the 2019 Festival were 12th-14th April, that the venue (Ushaw College, Durham) had been booked, that a composition had been commissioned from Rosemary Robinson, that a marketing team was in place, that there would be the finals of the proposed Composition Competition (see Minute 6.1 above) and possibly a wider youth strand, and that a concert was planned for the evening of Friday 12th April.

10.3 Mary Tyers also sought views on the timing of Conference in 2019. There had been frequent complaints that scheduling Conference for the Sunday morning of the Festival meant that delegates, officers and others wishing to attend had to miss several playing sessions. She was therefore proposing that, as an experiment, Conference in 2019 be scheduled for late afternoon on the Friday, to be followed by an evening meal and the proposed concert. There would be implications for delegates' expenses since a free Sunday lunch would no longer be an enticement to attend Conference. The Committee supported this proposal in principle and invited Mary to canvas opinions at this year's Conference on Sunday 15th April before a final decision was made.

Action: Mary Tyers

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

11.1 The Chairman reported that Tessa Rolph continued to be willing to be Gift Aid Administrator, though she would not stand in the way of anyone who volunteered to take over the role.

11.2 The Secretary drew attention to the fact that the Society had changed brokers and insurance companies for its public and other liability insurances with effect from 1st September since that offered the prospect of better value for money. However, the new arrangements had proved less than satisfactory, with the brokers being slow to issue certificates and disputing the extent of cover. So with effect from 8th February the Society had cancelled the new policy and reverted to the previous arrangements with insurers Markel and brokers Lark and now had liability cover that ran until 31st August 2019. A new certificate would be issued to Branches and affiliated Orchestras as soon as it was received from Lark. A pro rata refund was expected in respect of the cancelled policy.

11.3 The Secretary also reported that he had not yet completed the Trustees' report for 2017/16 but would do so in time to get approval from Trustees and post it, with the accounts (see below), to the websites of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and the Charity Commission for England and Wales by their respective deadlines of 31st May and 30th June 2018.

11.4 The Treasurer presented her accounts for 2016/17 and the accounts (CC17a) required by the Charity Commission. Both were being examined by the Independent Examiner, Keith Varney, and she expected his certificates soon. She also reported that the temporary Concerto Fund, set up to channel support for the concerto commissioned from Graham Fitkin by Evelyn Nallen and Barbara Law, had almost reached its target, so an invitation to make further donations need not be included in the Membership Application form for 2018/19.

* That the Society's accounts for 2016/17 be approved.

Proposed: April Munday Seconded: Josée Beeson Approved.

12. Any other business

12.1 The Web Editor reported that he would be preparing advice for the Society and its Branches on the implications of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) that were due to come into force on 25th May 2018.

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

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Sunday 7th October 2018, at a venue to be decided.

Supplement

An ad hoc quorate meeting of Committee members was held at Barton Peveril College, Eastleigh, on Saturday 14th April 2018 to prepare for Conference the following day.

At that meeting the following proposals from the Treasurer, intended slightly to reduce pressure on the Central Fund and provide a further stream of income for the Arthur Ingram Fund, were agreed:

- (a) the expenses of the Walter Bergmann Fund Committee were a legitimate charge on that Fund and should continue to be allocated to it; and
- (b) donations for which no other purpose was specified by the donor, and any Gift Aid arising from such donations, should in future be allocated to the Arthur Ingram Fund.

It was also agreed that, in view of the volume of current business, an additional Committee meeting should be held during the summer. The Secretary was asked to canvass Committee members' availability and then fix a date and venue.

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