



The Society of Recorder Players

Registered Charity No. 282751, SC038422

President: Jonathan Dove

MINUTES OF TRUSTEE MEETING Sunday 26th February 2023 in Bristol at 11am

PRESENT:

Jim Grant	Chair	Debbie Nicholas	Trustee
Val Giltrow-Tyler	Secretary	Samuel Constable	Trustee
Erica Crabtree	Treasurer	Rod Callow	Trustee
Penny Clarke	Membership Secretary		
Jill Taylor	Trustee	Alyson Lewin	Musical Adviser
Steph Sutherland	Trustee	Caroline Jones	Musical Adviser

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed the SRP Trustees and Musical Advisers.

2. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared at the start of the meeting

3. Minutes of previous Trustees' meeting

3.1 The draft minutes of the meeting held on December 10th 2022 were approved.

Proposed Jill Taylor **Seconded** Samuel Constable **Carried** unanimously

4. Matters arising

4.1 Items 5.5 and 5.6 The Chair reported that he had a good, extensive, chat with Michael Graham, the Centrespread Editor, and was awaiting a follow up conversation with Barbara Law, editor of TRM.

4.2 The Chair wished to discuss the difficulties of meeting the long deadlines for material to be submitted to TRM, especially in terms of reports from Conference, which is usually around or after the deadline for the summer edition. As the SRP buy most of the copies, it would be helpful to know if the deadline dates can be reviewed to be more convenient.

4.3 Item 5.9 The Secretary reported that the officers had held a meeting in January, to brainstorm some of the topics for which there is often inadequate time to discuss on Zoom meetings. Elements of this discussion would be referred to during agenda items today. She highlighted that throughout those discussions there was a thread of concern about the sustainability of the organisation whilst relying on volunteers to carry out the admin tasks.

4.4 A summary of the discussions around value for money from SRP membership has been presented as Musings from the Chair in the March e-News.

5. Any other urgent business

No other urgent business was raised.

6. Approval of Trustees' Report and accounts for charity regulators

6.1 Various iterations of the draft Trustees' Report had been circulated to the Trustees for comments and advice, and the most recent draft was a result of extensive review by the Officers at their recent meeting. Rod Callow thanked all those who were involved in compiling the Report, which was agreed unanimously. The Report was signed at a break in the meeting.

The Chair thanked the Secretary for pulling together and editing the final version.

Action: Secretary to upload Trustees' Report to SRP website, and later to the charity regulators.

6.2 The 2021-2 accounts were presented by the Treasurer to the Trustees in December, when the branch accounts element was incomplete. The final version (including the branch element) had been checked by the Officers, approved by the auditor, and circulated to Trustees for reference. This document was signed at a break in the meeting.

6.3 The Chair observed that there was a slight deficit in the branch accounts, and the Treasurer explained that some branches had moved to larger premises at a higher cost, and some had opted to use up some of their reserves during the year, rather than increasing local subs. As branches are not generally expected to accumulate funds, this was a good idea. It was also noted that some branches had received legacies from past members.

The Treasurer was thanked for all her work, especially in finalising these accounts.

Proposed Samuel Constable **Seconded** Rod Callow **Carried** unanimously

7. Update from the Secretary

7.1 The Secretary had circulated a report on various administrative matters, and updated Trustees on some of these matters at the meeting.

7.2 The report had referred to five branches who had booked no pastoral visits, and another seven who had only taken up one of the available five visits on offer. Subsequent to circulation of the report, Roxburgh and Orkney branches (two of the smaller branches) have both organised special events running over more than one day, and were commended on these initiatives, which will be supported as pastoral visits (with a workshop in Orkney).

7.3 Rod Callow asked what the Trustees know about the health of the branches. It was acknowledged that some have a small membership, and there are few young members in many branches. It is important that members enjoy the playing opportunities, and a lively branch committee is needed. The Treasurer mentioned that she has been visiting some other branches on occasion, as have the Chair and Secretary, and this is a good way to find out how those are getting on. It was acknowledged that there is still some reluctance to return to playing, in some places, and some events are still having to be postponed because of Covid and other illness. Steph reported a limited response from a recent circular about workshops to branch secretaries, despite some new offerings. The Chair highlighted that Summer School, the SRP Festival and some other courses are filling up very quickly, which is positive.

7.4 The Secretary had received an enquiry about Resources/Useful Links on the SRP website, and it emerged that there was no link to Tabea Debus' "Continuo Lines", which the SRP had supported with a £1,310 grant from the Arthur Ingram Fund in 2020. This will be added. An offer from another entity to provide "easy recorder music" material for the Resources section was referred to the Musical Advisers, who were of the opinion that this should not be added. These

enquiries highlighted the need to keep these links under review, and for any newly suggested material to be carefully checked for suitability. A further link was suggested by Caroline Jones, and will be investigated.

Action: Secretary to add a link to Continuo Lines and to look at the new suggestion

7.5 Practical arrangements for assessing prospective Pastoral Visitors were discussed; this is not always easy to arrange, but two more are in the pipeline.

The Chair offered a vote of thanks to the Secretary, seconded by Debbie Nicholas, and agreed unanimously.

7.6 The Competition Administrator had submitted a report in which she reported some difficulties in wrapping up the last competition cycle. Some of these might have been eased had she had sight of the contract between LIFEM and Charlotte regarding her expenses and the recording of her recital. The Trustees were fully in support of Sarah, and agreed that in future she should have sight of the contract, and clarify, with the Trustees, what this states, as the difficulties she reports were not acceptable, and should be avoided if at all possible. It is best to deal with these issues as and when they occur.

7.7 Clarification will be sought about responsibility for paying the recitalist's expenses.

Action: Secretary to discuss with Sarah

7.8 Sarah also reported on plans towards the next competition, pointing out difficulties with posted music arriving with the competitors in time, due to postal strikes, and asked if it would be possible to provide the set work as a pdf for all competitors in the future. This led to a discussion about copyright restrictions and the implications for branches generally. Provision of photocopies for approved situations, such as during the pandemic, can be subsequently misunderstood and misused.

The competition administrator was thanked and encouraged in her continuing work on behalf of SRP.

8. Update from the Treasurer

8.1 The Treasurer had referred to the year-end accounts earlier in the meeting, and provided a summary of recent activity.

8.2 The Treasurer proposed an ex gratia payment of £500 to Suffolk branch in recognition of their efforts in holding the 2022 Festival after the difficulties of the previous two years of Covid and lockdown. That Festival had made a loss, and, although the branch does not bear the cost, neither does it receive any benefit for the enormous amount of time and effort involved.

8.3 There was much discussion about the matter, from referring to historical background, when no-one was paid for anything, that the branch is acting on behalf of SRP, and to the current situation where the Festival organisation has become more intense. It was agreed that this would not set a precedent, but would be a one-off gesture payment.

Proposed Erica Crabtree **Seconded** Jim Grant **Agreed** unanimously

9. Report from Membership Secretary

9.1 Penny had circulated a report, and provided an update on current membership numbers. Figures are constantly changing as there is a delay from submissions by some branches, especially of new half-year members. It seemed that some members may have been slow to return to meetings

in the autumn, and then unsure if it was cost-effective to join, preferring to attend as a visitor for the remainder of the year.

9.2 Penny had provided the Officers with a breakdown of the actions that are required to produce the printed SRP membership list, and this opened a discussion about the value of the list, particularly as it is not a true reflection of membership numbers, as members can withhold their details for GDPR. Details of branch officials are only correct if those details are correctly entered onto the database at branch level. The branch listings in the printed list are drawn automatically from those submissions.

9.3 The Membership Secretary offered to check the proportion of members who have chosen not to be included in the current list.

9.4 The Chair reported that he finds the list really useful, to view the SRP community, but acknowledged that this may be because he is chair of the organisation.

9.5 Rod pointed out that the printed list had been described as indispensable for a few of his branch members, particularly those not online.

9.6 Caroline spoke of the benefits that she has obtained from the list throughout her career, and it was observed that visiting conductors and musical advisers are likely to report the same benefit.

9.7 It is possible to obtain information in different ways; from the SRP website for officer and named post holder details, lists of musical advisers, Vice-Presidents and Honorary Life Members, for the list of pastoral visitors, and from a branch secretary for contact with named individuals.

9.8 The large amount of work involved in the level of detailed checking and formatting required to produce a printed list is not a job that can be shared, and may not be cost-effective. Penny felt it would be possible to provide a twice-yearly pdf compilation of membership for the Trustees, and individual branch lists can already be produced by branch membership secretaries.

9.9 Other Trustees spoke of how members of other organisations obtain similar membership information – often through a local secretary.

9.10 Other possibilities might be to have a members' area of the website, through which the list could be accessed.

9.11 In bringing the discussion to a close, the Chair observed that it had been useful to air these views. The needs of members, branch officials, national officials, students and professionals will vary. The Trustees should continue to get opinions from their own member contacts, and the officers will get some advice on the topic, which would be re-visited later in the year.

9.12 There was discussion about corporate membership, which is advertised on the website, with the benefits of delivery of *The Recorder Magazine*, a copy of the membership list, and "other communications", for a fee of £75. There are only 2 corporate members now; *Recorder Shop London* and *Mollenhauer*, and it is unclear if they continue to see membership as a benefit. It was noted that ceasing production of the membership list would remove the visibility of an advert within the list, and would also withdraw one of the listed benefits of corporate membership. The corporate members are currently listed on the SRP website.

9.13 Further discussion about the merits of continuing to offer corporate membership was deferred to a later meeting, pending a decision about the printed list.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the membership secretary for her continued work and for her report, seconded by Sam Constable, and agreed unanimously.

10. Report from the Walter Bergmann Fund

10.1 Debbie had submitted a report which had been circulated to the Trustees, and provided some more details at the meeting.

10.2 Debbie and Jill are in regular contact about the applications, which continue to be very varied. A lot of time is spent checking applications

10.3 Debbie directed Trustees to a printed report from Palisander about their work in schools that had received financial support from WBF. Jill will refer to this at Conference.

Penny Clarke proposed a vote of thanks to Debbie and Jill, seconded by Samuel Constable and agreed unanimously.

11. Grant application from NYRO

11.1 The NYRO administrator had submitted some background information, provided her administrator's report and accounts for 2021-2, together with a budget for the following two years, in support of the grant application. As reported last year, the organisation is celebrating its 21st birthday, and the application was based around this anniversary.

11.2 Erica confirmed that half of last year's grant was paid out in the autumn, and she proposed sending the balance, without any constraint of matched funding. After some discussion this was seconded by Debbie Nicholas, and agreed with 1 abstention.

11.3 It was observed that SRP was the only organisation recorded as providing a grant last year, and the administrator should be asked for evidence of what the organisation has done to raise funds from elsewhere, to inform next year's application.

Action: Secretary to ask the NYRO administrator to add evidence of seeking grants from elsewhere in the next application.

11.4 Trustees spoke of the value of having the NYRO Chair to speak with them last year, and wish to maintain this contact, and also recognised that this application was better presented than some.

Action: Secretary to invite Ruth Bryson to attend a future Trustees' meeting.

11.5 Three funding options were described in the application. It was agreed that SRP was not in a position to fund an upgrade to the NYRO website, being in a position of wanting a review of its own website. The third option of a grant of £3,000 to maintain access to all during a cost-of-living crisis received support from most Trustees. NYRO would be encouraged to seek support for their birthday celebrations, the remaining option, from their alumni, and supportive parents.

Proposed; Jim Grant **Seconded;** Steph Sutherland **Carried** with one abstention

11.6 There had been a suggestion of involving NYRO in the 2024 Conference events, but the dates may not match (as both events are limited by the availability of suitable accommodation).

12. Conference and Festival 2023

12.1 The Conference will commence at 4.30 on Friday; timing of the meeting is usually left up to the hosts to see what can be accommodated, and is unlikely to be convenient for everyone.

12.2 At the time of the meeting, nomination of Conference delegates had been disappointing, with the result that it is possible that the meeting could be inquorate. In that case the business meeting would be unconstitutional, and none of the resolutions could be accepted and progressed. The Secretary was asked to chase up branches that had not responded, and to encourage more branches to actively seek a delegate. Difficulties of train travel, with planned strikes, was not helping.

12.3 Some branches had asked if it was possible to stream the Conference, but the Trustees have no authority to consider this without a change to the Rules, which is awaiting approval at the forthcoming Conference.

12.4 The documentation for delegates is in preparation and due to be sent out in the next few days. Rod is the only nomination for the Trustee vacancy, and no branches have submitted a resolution. Wessex branch have submitted a question about the website, which was referred to later in this meeting.

12.5 The Secretary reported that there was a possibility of allowing time for delegates to interact, with each other, and with officers and Trustees, after the official business, if there is a room available, and if some refreshments can be purchased. This had been suggested at the 2022 Conference.

13. Festival 2024

13.1 Caroline updated the Trustees with plans for the next Festival, in Haberdashers' Monmouth School, between 22nd and 24th March 2024. There is suitable provision for playing rooms and shops, and for the massed playing. A ceilidh is suggested for the evening event. Conference would be on the Friday afternoon. There is on-site overnight accommodation for some participants, with a separate boarding house and two Premier Inns in the town. There are limitations on parking spaces, but a minibus arrangement can be used to ferry participants from Newport station.

13.2 John Hawkes has been commissioned to write a Festival piece, with optional parts for large instruments, and possibly for Welsh harp. It was confirmed that the commission is a Festival expense, but printing and distribution of copies is a Society expense.

13.3 A provisional budget has been prepared, a bank account is being opened, and co-signatories are confirmed. The school require an advance payment to secure the accommodation.

13.4 Initial details will appear in the 2023 Festival booklet, and a website page can be set up soon.

13.5 In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Festival booking system currently links to PayPal, which can create some financial problems, but this link may be disabled. The booking system is useful for providing lists of delegates etc.

The Secretary proposed acceptance of Caroline's offer, with authority to proceed, seconded by Samuel Constable, and accepted unanimously.

The Chairman offered thanks from all the Trustees to Caroline for all her work in the planning.

14. External Publicity

14.1 The Secretary updated Trustees about the modified specification for someone to help with publicity, formed from the document prepared by the working party, and Sarah's suggested modifications. This has been sent out to Musical Advisers for advice on how to take this forward, and

to the working party members, and the Secretary has been asked to contact music colleges with recorder teachers, with which we are keen to foster links, to see if they know of suitable individuals to approach about taking on the publicity role. A “music with IT” graduate could be ideal.

14.2 The Chair cautioned the Trustees that, as an unincorporated charity, the Society cannot employ individuals, but can contract for work to be done, for example by using an agency. As a charity the Society benefits from gift aid. Conversion to an incorporated charity would create a legal entity that could employ people, and own buildings, but that may not be a route to pursue at present.

14.3 The best publicity is thought to be word of mouth, but the Society still requires assistance with wider external publicity. There was an informal suggestion to piggyback onto a role that may already exist at e.g. Early Music Shop, Benslow Music Trust or NYRO. Enquiries could be made.

Jill and Sam left during the later stages of this discussion, to connect with transport.

15. Website

15.1 The Trustees were alerted to Anthony Hall’s request to advertise for help with maintenance of the SRP membership system and other software, as a previously interested party has been unable to do so.

15.2 The Secretary reported concerns expressed by the Officers at their recent meeting about the possibility of improving the SRP website to provide a good profile of the SRP to both members and the public.

15.3 The Officers had also expressed concern about the lack of coherence of information presented on the branch web pages, with some branches still not up to date.

Action: Secretary to re-state the important elements to include on branch websites.

15.4 Wessex branch have asked a question, to be responded to at the Conference, about whether it was still the committee’s intention to overhaul the website to make it more friendly. Their branch members report that, although it is easy to get to the branch pages, it is time-consuming to track down other information. The Search facility is considered as not always very helpful, and the general appearance is considered to be tired, unattractive and outdated.

15.5 The Secretary pointed out a number of modifications that have been made recently, to improve some sections, such as clearing some out-of-date entries in “Players Wanted”, re-naming the group header “Community” as “Recorder Community”, re-arrangement of the Competitions page. Enquiries have been made about the implications of some other suggested changes. Although these are small modifications, they do help improve the presentation.

15.6 It was agreed that the requirements, and the failings of, the current website vary according to the needs and experience of the person enquiring.

15.7 The Officers had reached a consensus that a replacement website will probably be needed before too long, and that advice would be required to point Trustees in the right direction.

15.8 Penny offered to make some enquiries about whether moving away from WordPress is a good idea.

15.9 Making Music, of which SRP is a group member, offer a product called “**Platform**”, which on initial observation would seem to be suitable.

15.10 The Handbell Ringers of Great Britain are a similar sort of organisation, and offer a fresher looking website. Information will be sought about this site as a possible alternative.

16. Report from Jean Campbell

In her report Jean reported on her difficulties recruiting members to review some aspects of the Festival, especially with a tight deadline.

Action: Chair to update Jean on his proposed discussions with the editor of *The Recorder Magazine* about deadlines

The Trustees thanked Jean for her report and acknowledged her enthusiasm.

17. Charity Commission updates

There was insufficient time to discuss the latest communications from the Charity Commission, which will be deferred to the next meeting

18. Policies and documents for review

The Secretary has divided the long list into policies, guidance and other documents, highlighting those outstanding for review. There was no time for a discussion, but some progress could be made by devising a process, and asking pairs of Trustees to look at specific documents.

Action: Secretary to devise a process for policy reviews

19. Dates and venues of future meetings

The Treasurer asked the Chair and Secretary to consider reversing the order of agenda items, to allow more time for some of the topics that get deferred by appearing last on the agenda, and to consider shorter Zoom meetings on one topic

Action: Chair and Secretary to discuss options

Friday 31st March 4pm for 4.30pm SRP Conference, George Watson's College, Edinburgh

(later moved, at short notice, to Heart of Midlothian Football Club Stadium)

Sunday 7th May by Zoom

Sunday 23rd July, in-person, Bristol venue to be confirmed, all day

(subsequently confirmed as Downend Folk House, Bristol, BS16 2RW)

Action: Secretary to book venue for July meeting, and to complain about lack of most of the requested refreshments at this meeting.

At the end of the meeting the Secretary announced her intention to stand down at the 2024 Conference, this being prompted by the amount of her time that the job takes.

The meeting closed at 5.10pm

NB Subsequent dates have now been arranged for;

Sunday 24th September, Saturday 25th or Sunday 26th November, both by Zoom

Sunday 25th February 2024, in person