



# The Society of Recorder Players

Registered Charity No. 282751, SC038422

President: Jonathan Dove

## MINUTES OF TRUSTEE MEETING Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023 by Zoom at 9.30 am

### PRESENT:

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

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed the SRP Trustees and Musical Advisers, and Liz Bassett, in attendance as an observer, as prospective next Secretary. Apologies were received from Stephanie Sutherland.

### 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 September 24th 2023 were approved.

**Proposed** Jill Taylor      **Seconded** Debbie Nicholas      **Carried**, unanimously

### 4. Matters arising from July minutes

There were no matters arising, other than those covered in the following agenda sections.

### 5. Any Other Urgent Business

The Secretary referred to some additional items that she wished to raise later as part of her report.

### 6. Treasurer's Report

6.1 The Treasurer had circulated a snapshot of recent financial activity, and reported that she has been busy completing the end of year accounts, which are nearly ready to go to the auditor. All branches have now submitted branch accounts, which is good news.

6.2 A summary of income and expenditure to the Central fund for the last 5 years was presented, together with a forecast for next year. This shows the reduced expenditure for the 2 pandemic years, allowing a larger surplus, which was expected to be used in the subsequent years of extra Pastoral Visits.

6.3 Current funds will cover the previously announced rise in the magazine costs for the current year, but an increase in subscriptions was proposed for 2024/5. The subscriptions were last raised in 2018-19. Trustees had resisted small increases during, and immediately after, the pandemic.

6.4 Trustees went on to continue their discussion, from the September meeting, about the possible effects on membership numbers by raising the subscription. Some of the previous arguments about including *The Recorder Magazine* as part of membership were revisited. A two-tier system is not administratively practical. An electronic version of *The Recorder Magazine* would not save a great deal of the expense. The Chair reminded Trustees that SRP is a charity that encourages the recorder, and *The Recorder Magazine* helps with this.

6.5 Some Trustees expressed the views of some members of their branches that they did not like the magazine, while some don't read any of the content. Other Trustees expressed surprise and disappointment that the magazine was not appreciated more.

6.6 Trustees were reminded that the economics of the scale of production of *The Recorder Magazine* allow SRP members to receive copies at a considerable discount on the cover price; this is not always appreciated by members. Whilst it might be possible to cover some of these extra costs from other funds, this would limit other charitable funding.

6.7 There was a proposal that members could be consulted on the continuation of the arrangement to support production of the magazine as part of their membership. This consultation would need to be via branch officials, and a reliance on passing this on to members. A discussion could take place at Conference, with suitably briefed branch delegates.

**Proposed** Val Giltrow-Tyler      **Seconded** Jill Taylor      **Carried** unanimously

**Action:** Secretary to prepare consultation document for approval, and subsequent distribution

6.8 Although charitable funds are available, it is not a good use of these if *The Recorder Magazine* goes straight in the recycling. If not spent on *The Recorder Magazine*, these resources can be spent on other things.

6.9 If Conference agreed to continue supporting production of the magazine, the proposal to increase the membership subscription by £5 would then be put to Conference.

**Proposed** Erica Crabtree      **Seconded** Val Giltrow-Tyler      **Carried** with one abstention

**Action:** Secretary to prepare Resolution for Conference

6.10 Trustees recognise that some branches are under financial pressure, particularly for venue hire, making branch membership fees higher than members might like. Their attention was drawn to some branches that are struggling to retain membership numbers, and recruit branch officials. These problems are not unique to SRP.

6.11 The Treasurer confirmed that the current auditor wishes to stand down, for health reasons, and that she is aware of a possible candidate who works in this field.

**Action:** Treasurer to consult with potential auditor

**Action:** Secretary to prepare Resolution for Conference

6.12 The Treasurer reported some difficulties with changing mandates, at national and branch level, on the Barclays account.

6.13 The Treasurer was authorised to pay the next half grant to NYRO, with the other half due in the spring of 2024.

The Chair thanked Erica, on behalf of the Trustees, for her report and all her work as Treasurer, which is much appreciated.

## **7. Meeting with NYRO Chair - Ruth Bryson attended for this item.**

7.1 Ruth reported that recent focus had been on reconnecting with NYRO alumni in their anniversary year, and in appointing a new Trustee, who is a teacher, and a recent alumnus, with expertise in marketing.

7.2 15 young players had attended the summer residential course; reduced funding for music on schools has resulted in smaller attendances than pre-pandemic courses. The average age is younger, as the older cohort did not generally return post-pandemic. These summer students had less ensemble experience, which will be a focus for coming courses.

7.3 An unexpected late change to the school booking arrangements, requiring minimum numbers attending, resulted in a surcharge for the summer course. This was unavoidable, but not sustainable. Recruitment for future courses will have to take this into account.

7.4 Ruth explained that online course participants tend to lead to applications for the summer course, together with those finding the course on the website, rather than through leaflet drops. Applicants come from a wider, more scattered, geographical area than previously. Engagement with music hubs has been disappointing, and personal connections with teachers have been best.

7.5 To date, applications for grants from other sources have been disappointing, as some grant-awarding bodies will only support regional organisations, and not national organisations. Previous rejected applications are being reviewed for another opportunity.

7.6 Venue costs are a large element of the costs, especially for residential courses, and Trustees offered a few suggestions of ways forward.

The Chair thanked Ruth, on behalf of the Trustees, for explaining some of the difficulties being experienced by NYRO.

## **8. Secretary's report**

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

8.2 The Secretary was delighted to report that the proposed candidate for SRP President had accepted, and an announcement was to be made in the next e-News

8.3 Mary Tyers had asked to stand down as editor of e-News, due to other commitments, and an advert had been placed in e-News. Three people had put their names forward, and Mary is in talks with them about the role.

8.4 Marion Scott had been recommended as a new Pastoral Visitor, and Trustees endorsed the recommendation. Marion's name will be added to the list which is currently being updated.

**Proposed** Val Giltrow-Tyler      **Seconded** Jim Grant      **Approved** unanimously

8.5      The Secretary explained some of the changes to the way SRP details on the Charity Commission website are to be managed.

**Action:** Secretary to invite Trustees to set up their own accounts, and provide administration rights to another Trustee.

8.6      The Secretary reminded Trustees that the schools affiliation project should be discussed at a future meeting.

The Chair thanked the Secretary, on behalf of the Trustees, for her report and all her work in the role, which is much appreciated.

## **9.      Membership Report**

9.1      Penny reported that the total membership had just reached 1200.

9.2      Penny had spoken to Anthony Hall about an option to allow SRP members to log directly into the membership database, through username and password, to enable a search for membership details in the same way as they might consult the printed list. This should provide members and officials with all their needs, although it could not help the few members with no e-mail address. Members would still need to confirm their permissions with their annual renewal.

9.3      Penny had made enquiries with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations [NCVO], in the hope that they could provide support for our organisation, particularly with developing policies. Some useful advice had been received, and templates can be provided with membership. It was agreed to join for a 3-year period.

9.3      Liz expressed an interest in updating some of the SRP policies.

**Action:** Secretary to provide more background and current policy documents to Liz.

The Chair thanked the Membership Secretary, on behalf of the Trustees, for her work on these items, as well as her general membership work.

## **10.     Report from LIFEM**

10.1     Jill Taylor had manned the SRP table at LIFEM, together with Penny on the Saturday, and with some support from Ulli. She concluded that it is far too much for one person, and that she would be willing to be involved next year.

10.2     It was agreed that a presence is important for networking. Some recipients of WBF grants came and spoke of their gratitude, and what they had gone on to do. Questions were received on a variety of matters; about finding a teacher, membership, where affiliated groups are based, and how to sell instruments.

The Chair expressed his thanks to Jill and Penny, on behalf of the Trustees, for their involvement.

## **11. Update on SRP Festivals 2024 and 2025**

11.1 The Secretary confirmed that no branches had offered to host a Festival on 2025. It was suggested that affiliated groups could be approached. Other options, such as a Playing Day before or after the Conference, were discussed.

11.2 Caroline reported that there had been lots of bookings, and the main site was almost full, which was very welcome news.

11.3 Recorder MusicMail will be printing the commissioned piece soon.

11.4 The new President will be invited to conduct the final playing session.

Caroline and the team were thanked for their commitment in getting the Festival organised.

## **12. Plans for Conference 2024**

12.1 Resolutions and other documentation will be prepared for Conference to approve the appointment of the new President, Secretary and Auditor, and Mike Wilkinson as an Honorary Life Member.

12.2 The Secretary confirmed that the administrative timetable for actions leading up to Conference is quite tight next year, and she will share the timetable with Liz.

## **13. Dates of next meetings**

13.1 The next Trustees' meeting will be on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February at Downend Folk House in Bristol. This will focus on preparation for Conference, and consideration of the NYRO grant.

13.2 Liz enquired about Trustees' preferences for meeting dates, and she will poll Trustees for preferred days, times of day etc.

## **14. Report from Walter Bergmann Fund**

14.1 Debbie reported that the recent meeting had been good, but complicated, with some queries still to be resolved.

The Chair thanked Debbie, in behalf of the Trustees, for her work, and for keeping the Trustees up to date.

## **15. Report from Workshop Co-ordinator**

15.1 Steph had sent a list of workshops that have already taken place, and those booked for the future.

15.2 Steph had written to request an increase in the fee paid to workshop tutors, from £300 to £350. This has not increased since 2015. The Musical Advisers confirmed the amount of time and effort in preparing to run such workshops. The overall increase in expenditure is not large; between

6 and 10 workshops in a typical year. Trustees agreed that the increase should apply from any workshops arranged to take place from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

**Proposed:** Stephanie Sutherland **Seconded:** Val Giltrow-Tyler **Agreed** unanimously

The Chair asked the Secretary to thank Steph, on behalf of the Trustees, for her work, and for her useful sheet of workshop details.

## **16. Report from Jean Campbell**

16.1 Jean Campbell had submitted a short report, which the Trustees received with interest. Jean had expressed concern about duplication of information in the SRP News in *The Recorder Magazine* and that in e-News. Trustees felt it useful to have some information in both publications, particularly as each has a different readership.

**Action:** Secretary to thank Jean for her report, and to pass on the Trustees' comment.

## **17. Report from Competition Administrator**

17.1 Sarah Bronnert, Competition Administrator, provided a summary of the competition, reporting Jiyeon Bang as the winner.

17.2 Jill informed Trustees that the competition had attracted a large audience.

17.3 Sarah also reported a difficulty that Jiyeon experienced after the competition, when she was mugged and had her mobile phone, which was her only means of payment, stolen. Sarah had tried to help from her home, and reached out to the team at LIFEM for assistance, as they were nearby. However, they were unable to help Jiyeon out.

17.4 Sarah had spoken to Val after the event, who wrote to the LIFEM team and Jan at Moeck, to register her own concern, and to suggest that, in future years, an individual might be designated to support the competitors during their stay. Other "what-if" guidance was suggested for next time.

17.5 The Chair asked for it to be reported that the SRP Trustees were sorry to hear of Jiyeong's difficulties, and thanked Sarah, on behalf of the Trustees, for her report.

## **18. Occasional branch survey**

18.1 The Chair had suggested a branch survey, to enquire about the number of members attending branch meetings, the availability of the larger instruments, and the sort of repertoire being played, on the basis that it could affect any provisions Trustees may consider to make, and any music that they might commission.

18.2 Other questions were also suggested to establish how branches are coping post-pandemic, knowing that some are finding it difficult to make ends meet. Trustees acknowledged the difficulties of retaining branch officials, which is affecting all voluntary organisations, particularly with bank mandates, risk assessments etc

18.3 There was uncertainty about how any such information would be gathered, collated and processed.

18.4 All the officers are in contact with branches and encourage channels of communication to be kept open.

18.5 Trustees are interested in hearing more from the branches, and to support the branches and those with responsibilities, but it was decided not to take this forward at present.

## **19. Corporate members**

19.1 The Chair enquired about Corporate members, as the cessation of a membership list means that corporate members could no longer benefit from an advertisement in that list.

19.2 The Membership Secretary explained that the two previous Corporate members had been alerted to the change, and had chosen not to renew this year.

The meeting ended at 3.05pm