



The Society of Recorder Players

Registered Charity No. 282751, SC038422

President: Jonathan Dove

MINUTES OF TRUSTEE MEETING **Sunday 25th February 2024 in Bristol at 10.30 am**

PRESENT:

Jim Grant	Chair	Rod Callow	Trustee
Val Giltrow-Tyler	Secretary	Debbie Nicholas	Trustee
Erica Crabtree	Treasurer	Jill Taylor	Trustee
Penny Clarke	Membership Secretary	Steph Sutherland	Trustee
Liz Bassett	observer	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 Caroline Jones.

2. Conflicts of Interest

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

3. Minutes of previous Trustees' meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting held on November 25th 2023 were approved, subject to correction of the finishing time recorded.

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

4. Matters arising from November minutes

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

5. Any Other Urgent Business

5.1 The Secretary referred to a letter that had been sent to WBF sub-committee, referring to a request for funding that had not been approved, as not meeting the WBF grant criteria, with suggestions that SRP Trustees might revise the terms of reference of the grant-awarding funds. This topic was raised here, as it impacted on later agenda items, including requests for funding directly from SRP, alongside requests to WBF. The Trustees had a lively debate about various funding options, subject to submission of relevant details, and supported the WBF sub-committee in their right to refuse inappropriate requests. Refusal letters will provide reasons, and suggestions for alternative options. Trustees strongly endorsed that WBF funding was not to be used for teaching salaries. The terms of reference for WBF have recently been updated to reflect a few changes, but neither these nor the terms for the Philip Cole Bursary need to be changed in response to this request.

5.2 Trustees were alerted to the vacancy for an e-News editor, as the current editor has had to stand down for personal reasons. Holding responses are being sent to contributors and enquirers, and possible candidates are being sought.

5.3 A branch committee had requested clarification of the term “casual vacancy”, as used in the branch rules, and this will be considered in the next review of the branch rules.

Action: Secretary to note a future agenda item for a review of SRP Rules

6. Approval of Trustee Report and Accounts for charity regulators

6.1 The SRP Trustees’ Report was signed during the meeting, and will be made available on the SRP website, as well as uploading to the charity regulator sites in due course.

6.2 The Treasurer presented the final annual accounts to Trustees, which have now been audited. Previous versions presented to Trustees had not included all the branch accounts, some of which had been very slow in arriving. These continue to show that the reserves built up during the pandemic and post-pandemic periods are being spent on the catch-up events, with balances returning to more normal levels.

6.3 The subscriptions go into the Central Fund, and cover the running costs. Branches generally hold healthy reserves, and income matches expenditure.

6.4 Accounts for the Arthur Ingram Fund show the costs of the competition administrator, and the variation as the competition is on a 2-year cycle, reflected across the two years of accounts displayed in the report. As the Pastoral Visitors scheme returns to a one visit per year arrangement, more money will be available in this fund for other purposes.

6.5 The Treasurer shared the cc17a version of the accounts which is required by the charity regulators. The different presentation, splitting income and expenditure across the unrestricted and restricted funds, shows the accounts in an interesting way. These show the charitable nature of SRP activities, with bank interest shown against each account from which it was accrued.

6.6 The Treasurer’s Report to Conference was shared at this point, as it shows a five-year summary of the finances, and confirms that the surplus built up in 2020 and 2021 will be used up mainly by the increased cost of *The Recorder Magazine*. It was noted that bank interest and any surplus from the SRP Festival cannot be predicted.

The Treasurer was thanked for the vast amount of work that was involved in finalising the accounts, which were approved.

Proposed Jim Grant **Seconded** Rod Callow **Carried** unanimously

7. SRP Website and succession planning and archiving

7.1 Following a discussion point from the secretary about hacked e-mail addresses, the Trustees were alerted to some current technical difficulties with the website, which is impacting on safe receipt of e-mails to all who should get them, and is preventing members from accessing new log-in accounts to the website. Trustees are grateful to Anthony Hall for addressing these matters, but this is taking a lot of his time, and causing stress. The Treasurer reported that her in-box is reported as full, but has no wish to retain SRP documents on her own computer; there may be a need to provide a data repository elsewhere.

7.2 Trustees recognise that these are serious problems, and expressed their concern, and the need for succession planning, both in terms of the system and the way it is managed. The Trustees

themselves do not have sufficient time and knowledge of the set-up, or how it is managed, to take anything forward, and would require independent professional advice about moving to a new system.

7.3 The Secretary reminded Trustees of the possibilities provided by PLATFORM, available through Making Music. Once SRP has joined the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), some useful advice might be available from that organisation.

Action: Chair to contact Anthony about the need for succession planning

Action: Trustees to explore suitable organisations to provide professional advice

Action: Erica and Penny to set up membership of NCVO

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 Officers now have Charity Commission accounts, and other Trustees will be invited to set up their accounts before the next meeting.

8.3 Two branch officials had enquired about how long to keep branch documentation. As there is a requirement to store financial records for 6 years, branch officials will be advised to keep all formal branch documents for 6 years, although they may also wish to retain other items of interest to future branch officials for that period and longer.

Action: Secretary to send advice to branch officials

8.4 As Samuel Constable has not attended the last five meetings, with little or no contact from him in the last year, the Chair has, with sorrow, operated the Constitution, in accordance with elements 21.1e and 21.2b to remove him from office, thereby creating a Trustee vacancy.

Proposed Jim Grant **Seconded** Jill Taylor **Carried** unanimously

Action: Chair to confirm in writing

8.5 Following discussion at the last Trustee meeting, the Secretary had written to all branches to enquire how they are managing, under the current financial pressures. Only six branches chose to respond, with a mixed experience of the effects. Two are thriving, but aware of being vulnerable, another finds more players choose to pay as visitors and three are fairly stable and managing well. Rod expressed disappointment with the level of response, and asked whether this raises concern about the relationship between Trustees and branches, and whether the current structure remains appropriate.

8.6 Trustees related their experience at various branches they had visited during the year. It is apparent that some branches have trouble recruiting committee members.

Action: Secretary to invite branch officials to provide opportunities at branch AGMs to put questions to the Trustees.

8.7 At the request of Trustees at the last meeting, the Secretary had written to all branches with an explanation of the need to propose an increase in membership subscriptions, and inviting branch officials to collate their members' opinions. The intention was to explain the situation and gather some indication of the general feelings before discussing any proposal at Conference.

8.8 Responses were received from 12 of the 49 branches, and the majority of these responses received to the consultation supported the £5 increase proposed by Trustees – few with any comment.

8.9 The Trustees confirmed that the increase in subscriptions should be taken to Conference.

Proposed Val Giltrow-Tyler **Seconded** Erica Crabtree **Carried** unanimously

Action: Secretary to prepare a formal resolution

8.10 From the consultation Trustees have been asked to lay out the basic costs of membership, without the contribution made to support the production of any version of *The Recorder Magazine*.

Action: Treasurer to include this in her presentation at Conference, for delegates to report back to their members

8.11 In response to a question, the Treasurer explained that supporting production of *The Recorder Magazine* from the Arthur Ingram Fund was not a viable option.

8.12 Trustees have been asked to seek proper costings from the publishers for an online version of *The Recorder Magazine* as part of SRP membership, and the likely consequent implications on the cost to our membership.

Action: Secretary to request more details from the publishers of *The Recorder Magazine*

8.13 Trustees were also asked to assess how the membership options could be modified to allow members to opt for a paper copy or an online edition. It was noted that this would be extra work for branch membership secretaries, and have an effect on working with the membership list.

Action: Secretary to add to the next Trustees' agenda.

9. Treasurer's Report

9.1 The Treasurer had circulated a report of the current financial situation, noting that, with some prompting, all branches had passed over their central subscriptions.

9.2 The report draws attention to the increased costs of *The Recorder Magazine*, which, together with the cost of Conference, will result in a shortfall this year. The costs of the competition, on a 2-year cycle were highlighted, together with the average cost of a workshop.

9.3 Following the suggestion of a new workshop with two tutors (keyboard and recorder), which has the potential of incurring high expense, a special participation fee of £20 was agreed.

Proposed Erica Crabtree **Seconded** Val Giltrow-Tyler **Carried** unanimously

9.4 The Treasurer reminded Trustees that the current Auditor is retiring, and suggested giving him a suitable gift.

Proposed Jill Taylor **Seconded** Steph Sutherland **Carried** unanimously

9.5 Heather Locke is the proposed new Independent Examiner of Accounts. She has her own business, focussing on the charity sector, will provide an independent examination of the accounts (as required by the charity regulators). She will only be paid on completion of the work, and would need to be re-elected each year.

Proposed Erica Crabtree **Seconded** Jill Taylor **Carried** unanimously

The Chair thanked Erica for all her work as Treasurer throughout the year.

10. Grant application from NYRO

10.1 Papers were received from NYRO – the better presentation and content was acknowledged, together with recognition of the efforts that the staff are taking to try and make the organisation thrive. However, it was also recognised that the budget is very optimistic, and they appear to have received no other grants and relatively few donations.

10.2 Trustees acknowledged the unexpected high cost of hiring the venue for last summer's course.

10.3 The SRP grant to NYRO last year was £3,000, which equates to most of the NYRO Administrator's annual fees, which are recognised as being below expected levels for the work done. Without this money, the organisation would struggle to survive.

10.4 The cost per participant is high, but the organisation offers one way to help the players of the future.

10.5 Trustees debated the value gained by supporting NYRO at the level requested, before agreeing to a grant of £3,000, plus an additional £1,000 for 2024-2025, to be used for the enhanced promotional activity proposed in the application, and in the expectation of seeing these improvements during the coming year.

Proposed Erica Crabtree **Seconded** Jill Taylor **Carried** unanimously

Action: Secretary to inform the NYRO Administrator

11. Grant application from Birmingham Recorder Festival

11.1 The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC) Spring Recorder Festival is to be held in Birmingham in April 2024, with a full weekend of activities for players of all ages and abilities. The emphasis is on promoting the recorder.

11.2 A grant application has also been made to the Walter Bergmann Fund (WBF), which may be able to fund two workshops and contribute to the costs of a concert; all aimed at young players. A grant from SRP of £1,000 was agreed.

Proposed Erica Crabtree **Seconded** Rod Callow **Carried** unanimously

Action: Chair to respond to the organisers

12. Grant application from Banbury Early Music Festival

12.1 The Banbury Early Music Festival is a September weekend event including events for recorder players.

12.2 A grant application has been made to WBF who are to consider covering the costs of workshops aimed at children.

12.3 The Trustees agreed that they would like to offer some support, but would require a more detailed breakdown of the finances, and further details of the recorder-related content of the Festival, before making a commitment.

Action: Secretary to respond to the organisers, requesting more detailed information.

13. Membership Report

13.1 The membership secretary reported that the total membership had reached 1310, already nearly at last year's level, and 33 affiliated groups, which is a good number.

13.2 Reports of some branches that appear to encourage players to attend regularly as visitors, rather than joining, are worrying.

13.3 In response to a question, Penny reported that she had been in discussion with Anthony Hall about alternative ways to provide membership information previously provided by the printed list. He has suggested that this could be done by mimicking the functionality of the printed list, so that a member could look up the members and their role(s) of any branch, or search for a member in a similar way to that currently done by a branch membership secretary or treasurer (and which would continue, with a totally different level of access). For the former a member would select the required branch to see the members displayed. To search for a member, the enquirer would start to type their surname.

13.4 Lists of honorary members, affiliated groups and visiting conductors could be searched in a similar way, although those lists are already available in the public information on the website.

13.5 Trustees felt this would be a good course of action, and would like to progress this, when convenient. This information will be presented to Conference, then progressed with a formal request to proceed, when Anthony has time to do so.

Action: Membership Secretary to liaise with Anthony Hall, at his convenience

The Chair thanked Penny for her continuing work with the membership

14. Report from Workshop Co-ordinator

14.1 The Workshop Co-ordinator had sent a list of workshops that have already taken place, and those booked for the future.

14.2 Some course information on the website has been updated, and an online recorder maintenance course is now being offered as an in-person course. Some branches are combining this with an afternoon playing session conducted by the course tutor.

14.3 Steph reported that some participants of the level 2 conducting workshop are uncertain where to put this into practice, and Trustees suggested that they should be encouraged to approach branches themselves.

The Chair thanked Steph for her enthusiasm in setting up and promoting the workshops

15. Report from Walter Bergmann Fund

15.1 The February meeting of the sub-committee has been deferred to March, so there was little to report, apart from elements referred to earlier in the meeting.

15.2 Prompted by the letter referred to earlier, the draft terms of reference for WBF have been updated, and will be presented to the next Trustees' meeting for approval.

Members of the WBF sub-committee were thanked for their continuing work on behalf of SRP.

16. Preparation for Conference 2024

16.1 Trustees were updated about the arrangements for attending the Conference in March. 31 branches had arranged to send a delegate, with a few more anticipated. It was noted that the Festival had filled up quickly, and some potential delegates were on the waiting list.

Action: Secretary to update the Festival Guidelines to add an element to reserve some delegate places in the Festival bookings process, for a limited time.

16.2 The draft reports had been circulated to Trustees, and the final paperwork for delegates will be finalised following this meeting.

16.3 A resolution for the increased membership subscriptions will be added, following the earlier discussions. The new values were confirmed as £30 (Full), £42.50 (Household), £10 (Youth), £60 Affiliated groups and £35 (overseas members).

Proposed Penny Clarke **Seconded** Jim Grant **Carried** with one abstention

16.4 The Secretary wished to thank Alyson Lewin for her input as Musical Adviser over the last 3 years. Sandra Foxall will be the next Musical Adviser on the committee, alongside Caroline Jones. The Chair also thanked Alyson for her valuable contributions.

16.5 Further to the confirmation of a Trustee vacancy reported earlier, a nomination had been received for the position for Pamela Flanagan (Ireland Branch). As the only nomination Pamela will be elected as a trustee at the 2024 Annual Conference. Pamela will be due to attend trustee meetings again as Musical Adviser from 2030.

Assembly time from 2:30pm onwards.

Action: Secretary to review Musical Advisers' rota to ensure the role does not overlap with Pamela's time as a trustee.

[Update from Secretary - Pamela is due to attend Trustee meetings from 2030]

16.6 A resolution from the Ireland branch requests that in the future organisers avoid referring to the Conference and Festival as 'National' and use the inclusive term 'Annual' on all their forms and publicity material. They would also like International Bank Transfer details to appear on the Festival Registration form as standard, rather than having to request them. These will be presented as two resolutions at Conference.

Action: Secretary to add two resolutions to Conference documentation

Action: Secretary to identify where the term 'National Festival' is used, to be altered in due course to 'SRP Festival'. (The Conference will remain as the SRP Annual Conference.)

Action: Secretary to further modify the Festival Guidelines to allow the incorporation of international bank transfer details to future booking information.

16.7 A delegate had asked for clarity on claiming accommodation expenses; this will be stated on the delegate's claim form.

17. Update on SRP Festival 2024

17.1 The Secretary reported that there had been some difficulties obtaining First Aid cover for the Festival, although this was now arranged.

17.2 The Treasurer reported that a SumUp card reader was required, which had involved a lot of paperwork, and a requirement to formally authorise Mirjam Morat to set this up to receive payments, on behalf of the Trustees

Proposed Erica Crabtree **Seconded** Jill Taylor **Carried** unanimously

The Chair acknowledged the great work being done by the Festival organisers

18. Update on SRP Festival 2025

The Secretary confirmed that no offers have been received for organising a 2025 Festival, so it is likely that the 2025 Conference will be online, with no Festival. Offers will be encouraged for 2026.

19. SRP policies

Liz will look at the Complaints policy as a priority, and others will be updated in turn. Support is available from Making Music and NCVO.

20. Report from Jean Campbell

20.1 Jean had sent her update about what she has prepared for the Spring edition, and her plans for the Summer edition of SRP News, which the Trustees were interested to read. The Summer edition will include some reports from the SRP Festival.

20.2 Jean suggested that future Festival organisers consider an advert in the body of *The Recorder Magazine*, rather than taking up space in the SRP News pages. The Chair thanked Jean for her interesting report.

21. Any Other Business

21.1 Liz suggested that the Trustees might consider appointing to future Trustee vacancies on the basis of skills required, at the next opportunity.

Action: Trustees to consider skills mix that would be ideal for future vacancies

21.2 The Treasurer explained that the Ireland branch is not covered by the SRP arrangements for branch insurance, and they have received an annual payment in lieu of this towards their separate payment. The branch has advised a large increase in this cost, and have requested a larger contribution. The Trustees were minded to increase the contribution, but to urge the branch to ensure other quotes have been obtained.

21.3 The Chair outlined the basis of the schools' affiliation scheme, for which there seemed to be little appetite from branches, with the exception of Ireland. It was agreed to close down this scheme, whilst retaining the affiliation for the two existing establishments. Educational establishments can still apply to SRP Trustees directly.

Proposed Jim Grant **Seconded** Debbie Nicholas **Carried** unanimously

22. Dates of next meetings

The next Trustee meeting is proposed for Sunday 5th May 2024, by Zoom

The meeting closed at approx. 16.20