



THE SOCIETY OF RECORDER PLAYERS

President: Jonathan Dove

Registered Charity No.282751/SC038422

MINUTES OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday 21st March 2025

7pm online

PRESENT:

Board of Trustees and Musical Advisers

Chair	Jim Grant	Musical Adviser and Vice President	Helen Hooker
Secretary	Liz Bassett		
Treasurer	Erica Crabtree	Musical Adviser	Caroline Jones
Membership Secretary	Penny Clarke	Musical Adviser	Sandra Foxall
Trustee	Stephanie Sutherland	Musical Adviser	Moira Usher
Trustee	Jill Taylor	Musical Adviser	Alyson Lewin
Trustee	Debbie Nicholas	Musical Adviser	Helen Hooker
Trustee	Rod Callow		
Trustee	Pamela Flanagan		

Branch Delegates

Bath	Meg North	Newcastle and Roxburgh	Joyce Watts
Beds and N.Herts	Glynne Parry	Norfolk	<i>absent</i>
Birmingham	Chris Buttery	North Cotswolds	Hazel Hodgson
Bristol	Rachel Mason	N. London	Helen Skelton
Cambridge	Christine Gibbons	Nuneaton	Joan Gibson
Cheltenham and Gloucester	Stephen Ayland	Oxford	Tina Friedrich
Cleveland	Sandra Foxall	Orkney	Bruce Mainland
Cumbria	Sue Gill	Peterborough	Phil Brown
Devon	Amanda Haste	Sheffield	Jill Lauriston
Dorset	Ruth Pealing	Somerset	Joyce Rudall
Durham	Kate Eagle	South Downs	Timothy Roper
East Berkshire	Bridget Bentley	South London	Sheila Richards
Edinburgh	Catriona Hillhouse	South Staffordshire	Karen Wilkins
Essex	Corinna Richards	Suffolk	Caroline Saul
Guildford	Harriet Oliver	Wales	Kay Byers
Ireland	Ciara Flanagan	Warwick	Helen Jones
Kent	Marion Scott	Weald of Kent	Ian Jutting
Leicester	Sophie Gray	Wessex	Penny Smith
Lincolnshire	Ian Ingram	West Riding	John Hartley
London	Joanna Brown	York Guilford	Mat Taylor
Manchester	Sue Pamp	Glasgow	Heather Easton

Mid Herts	Trevor Boyd	7 branches absent - 4 gave their apologies	
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Named Roles

E-News Editor	Neil Stafford	Tessa Rolph	Gift Aid Administrator
Publicity Officer	Mary Tyers	Web-Editor	Susan McLarty
SRP Magazine News	Jean Campbell	Web-Editor	Nigel Birch

Observers

HLM	Ulli Burchette	West Riding Branch	Jane Sellek
Vice-President	Evelyn Nallen	Wales Branch	Claire Halpin
HLM	Barbara Law	Cambridge Branch	Charles Nisbet
Personal Member	Timothy Finnegan	Dorset Branch	Sue Tipping

1. Welcome – Apologies for Absence - In Memoriam

- 1.1. Welcome: The Chair opened the meeting at 7.08pm by welcoming delegates from branches, SRP Trustees, Musical Advisors, named roles, Vice Presidents and observers, to the Conference.
- 1.2. In Memoriam: Conference noted with sadness the passing of the following members and friends of the Society since the previous Conference:
 - Ann Hankin – Somerset
 - Ray Mitchell – Oxford
 - Martin Evans – Newcastle
 - Peter Shaw – Dorset
 - John Hulme – Wessex
 - Frances Kelson – Wessex
 - Peter Macklin - Devon
- 1.3. Apologies for absence were received from;
 - Branches: Macclesfield, Hillfoots, Aberdeen; Tim Roper from South Downs; (3 other branches not in attendance)
 - Our President: Philip Thorby
 - Vice-Presidents; Michala Petri
 - Musical Advisers;
 - Role Holders; Sarah Bronnert (Competition Administrator)
 - Honorary Life Members: Mary Bonsor, Dr. Andrew Mayes, April Munday

2. Minutes of Conference 2024

Resolution: The meeting approved the acceptance of the minutes of Conference held on 2024 as an accurate record of the proceedings subject to one change – David Grosvenor (In Memoriam) is from York Branch.

Proposed: Alyson Lewin **Seconded:** Rod Callow

Carried unanimously with 18 abstentions from those who had not been present at the last meeting.

3. There were no matters arising not otherwise covered by the Agenda.

Caroline Saul from Suffolk Branch however, asked for further clarification of 4.13. The Chair explained it had been discussed further with Jerry Burbidge and while cutting the number of printed copies would incur further costs. It would be possible for members to access an online copy *in addition to* their printed copy.

4. Reports from Officers and post holders

All reports had been previously circulated to delegates.

Chair

4.1 The Chair, Jim Grant, had nothing further to add to his formal report and there were no questions.

Secretary

4.2 The Secretary, Liz Bassett, thanked members for helping her to manage her first year as secretary despite a few mistakes along the way.

4.3 Chris Butterly from Birmingham Branch commented that the recorder had rather than dwindling, stopped being an instrument which is offered for junior schools but become more of an adult hobby. Corinna Richards from Essex Branch felt such a generalised comment was not helpful and asked where this evidence had come from. The secretary replied that it had come from music academies.

4.4 The Chair thanked the secretary for all her work.

Treasurer

4.5 The Treasurer, Erica Crabtree, added to her report. She referred to queries from the Birmingham Branch about the effects of the increase in subscriptions.

The Treasurer drew the delegates attention to the central fund and what the subs pays for. She explained that the society made a loss last year, paying out more than was received in subs. The subs did not cover the running of the society. She explained the subs would not need a further increase in the coming year. This year so far subs have brought in just under 40K (already higher than last year) and the money will cover the increased costs. The Treasurer pointed out that trustees are aware of pressure on finances and have made cuts such as cutting face to face Trustee meetings from four to two. The online conference has saved costs too this year. However the magazine has been paid for from the increase also and remains important to our aims. The central fund will break even this coming year. The Treasurer then referred to her notes for further information on this matter.

4.6 The Treasurer had had another query from a member about our investments and monies as a whole and why we were not spending more of the money and monies held as a whole. This matter is again referred to in her notes. We do appear to have a lot of money – approximately £300,000 on the balance sheet, however £100,000 belongs to the 49 branches and the other £200,000 is looked after centrally. Trustees are aware of the need to spend it but also to generate income from it. Some money is invested in a fixed rate investment bond; some is in a COIF deposit account and some is in current accounts. The Treasurer assured delegates that it will dissipate in time – grants provided from the Arthur Ingram Fund and any costs of large projects such as website work will ensure it falls.

4.7 One branch delegate commented that the rise in subscriptions in the member's branch has certainly not affected numbers.

4.8 Tessa Rolph, our Gift Aid Administrator, thanked Erica the Treasurer for all her work and pointed out how much is involved in keeping the accounts. She also asked about

the Independent Examiner (IE) Report. The Treasurer explained we have a new IE who is happy with the accounts and will sign them off once they are part of the charity report which is submitted in May. Tessa asked if the signed form could be circulated to all branches in due course.

4.9 Caroline Saul from Suffolk Branch sought clarification regarding NYRO entries in the accounts. under central fund income – donations received and paid over are not the same. This is a timing issue; all the donations do go to NYRO and it balances out when it all gets reconciled at year end.

4.10 John Hartley from West Riding asked why the magazine costs had gone up and what measures were taken during the year to avoid this. The Chair explained costs had gone up for some time as well as the printing costs from Recordermail leaping up. The SRP absorbed some of these costs from reserves. The Chair reminded delegates this was approved at last year's conference after extensive discussion. John voiced the concern of West Riding in that people may choose not to renew subscriptions and that costs should not continue to rise unilaterally. 4.11 Barbara Law (HLM) reminded delegates that the magazine is not just for the society but for others also. It supports education amongst other things. The Editor is not paid except for a small amount from Peacock Press.

4.12 The Chair reminded the member this matter has run for a long time and was finalised last year and the Secretary reminded delegates that a survey was done across branches last year about the magazine and the majority favoured the magazine.

4.13 Mary Tyers, the Publicity Officer, felt we should remind members that we are a charity.

4.14 Tina Friedrich agreed that the magazine and the finances are not just for SRP membership.

4.15 Sophie Gray thanked Barbara for all her work on the magazine.

4.16 Philip Brown from Peterborough Branch asked why the cost of the festival went up so dramatically. The Treasurer explained that both income and expenditure increased as the festival included accommodation which was not the case in Edinburgh.

4.17 The Chair requested that the CCC17a be edited to refer to the Chairman as Chair.

4.18 The Chair thanked Erica for the vast amount of work she has done on the reports. All agreed.

Resolution: The meeting approved the acceptance of the accounts for 2023/2024

Proposed: Sue Pamp **Seconded:** Caroline Jones **Carried unanimously**

Membership Secretary

4.20 The Membership Secretary, Penny Clarke, informed delegates that the total number of members is 1339, which is virtually the same as last year and should be ahead in fact when finalised – there has been no drop in numbers. The SRP are looking hard at a replacement membership system.

4.21 The Chair gave thanks to Penny for all her hard work and for keeping everything going for so many years.

Workshop Co-ordinator

4.22 The Workshop Co-ordinator, Stephanie Sutherland, referred to the records for 3 years – up to 132 workshops have been provided. Stephanie reminded delegates that further topics can be added if requested. She reminded delegates that those booking workshops must follow the guidelines for booking a workshop, found on the training workshop page.

Walter Bergman Fund (WBF)

4.23 Debbie Nicholas, the WBF Committee Secretary had nothing further to add.

Sophie Gray from Leicester Branch asked whether the Walter Bergmann Fund would award funds for sets of recorders to classes in schools or whether it was just for "high fliers". Debbie reassured her the funds are not just for high fliers and such schools can certainly apply for funding for such things. Debbie reminded delegates that all applications are subject to agreement and cannot be presumed.

4.24 The Chair gave thanks to all members of the committee and to Debbie as Secretary.

Competition Administrator Report

4.25 Sarah Bronnert was thanked for all her work on organising the competitions and for her report.

Magazine Editor

4.26 Jean informed delegates that this is her sixth year of working on the SRP pages of the magazine. Jean said it was a pleasure to work with Barbara and that she had had a number of positive comments from members about the pages.

4.27 The Chair thanked Jean for making the SRP pages such a high proportion of the magazine and for the high quality of her work. The amount of time taken was acknowledged.

5. Election of Independent Examiner

The delegates approved the appointment of Heather Locke

Proposed: trustees Seconded:

Carried unanimously by delegates

6. Election of Chair

6.1 Three candidates have been nominated:

Evelyn Nallen

Proposed: Christine Gibbons of Cambridge Branch

Seconded: Glynne Parry of Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire Branch

Jane Sellek

Proposed: Sandra Foxall of Cleveland Branch

Seconded: Leoni Stapiro of West Riding Branch

Moira Usher

Proposed: Margaret Harvey of Suffolk Branch

Seconded: John Fenn of Norfolk Branch

6.2 Helen Hooker paid tribute to Jim's time as Chair. She reminded delegates Jim joined as Chair in 2019 and has done much for the SRP in that time including helping the society through Covid and updating the Rules and the Constitution.

6.3 Jim acknowledged the three candidates and gave them the opportunity to say a few words.

6.4 Barbara Law asked about pecuniary interests for any trustee appointed who is involved in conducting etc and therefore gains financially. It was explained by the Chair and Treasurer that currently trustees only receive travel / expenses. If anything else is paid it has to be declared. The Trustees in meetings always declare any pecuniary interests regarding things discussed and those involved do not take part in voting. Pamela reminded delegates of section 5 in the Constitution – Benefits and Payments. The section explains when trustees may or may not receive benefit.

6.5 Non-voters left the meeting during the vote to avoid confusion and a poll was taken. Moira Usher was voted on as Chair with a majority of votes.

57 members were then admitted for the rest of the meeting (though some left prior to the end)

7. Resolutions:

7.1 The delegates approved Val Giltrow-Tyler as an Honorary Life member of the Society, in recognition of her services to the SRP.

Carried unanimously

7.2 The delegates approved Christopher Orton as an Honorary Life member of the Society, in recognition of his services to the SRP.

Carried unanimously

7.3 The delegates approved Miriam Monaghan as a Musical Advisor for the SRP.

Carried unanimously

7.4 The delegates approved Lyndon Hilling as a Musical Advisor for the SRP.

Carried unanimously

7.5 The Wessex Branch proposed that a completely new website be designed for the SRP by a specialist company in the coming year.

7.5.1 Penelope Smith from Wessex Branch briefly explained the reason for the proposal. The website is difficult to manoeuvre having a lot in it. It is difficult to find things.

The Birmingham Branch member commented that their own website page is difficult to use and to find things on.

7.5.2 The SRP Secretary shared a meeting she had attended with Rod Callow (trustee); and the two web-editors. Suggestions from the meeting were

- To use google analytics to find out who uses what pages and how often to ensure we know what we want the website to do
- A meeting with Branch members to find out what they want to use most and where best to place these things
- The need to clear out historical items to help reduce storage and clear the search engine – a recent search of the events page had led to 600 historical events being cleared. The point was also made that branch pages that are also part of the website require clearing too.
- The use of photos to reflect better the different members of the society and the diversity of recorder players – the use of a slider or carousel to change photos regularly. Helen Hooker, Musical Advisor, pointed out the complexities of GDPR with regards photographs.

7.5.3 Other comments from delegates included a help booklet to aid branches manage their own pages; the need for accessibility;

7.5.4 Nigel Birch, web-editor, commented that the site is not maintained and curated well enough. He pointed out that a lot can be done with what we have before spending a lot of money on something which could become just as unwieldy.

7.5.5 Susan McLarty, web-editor reinforced that in order to improve the site or move to a new one, work would be required to find out who all the different users of the site are, and what they use it for. Who it is for influences what is on it. The webeditors only put on what they are asked to in the places they are asked to.

7.5.6 Tina Friedrich from Oxford Branch spoke as a website manager and explained that the project would be a lot of work. She clarified that it is not problems with the website but the templates used and cautioned that redeveloping the site would be a large expense - the site we have drives the music libraries and membership system and most branch pages and there

is a large chance all these things would not work on a new system. A lot of systems are integrated into the website and it is driven by wordpress which is a good site. Tina recommended engaging a professional to help improve navigation and such other things. Tina suggested user- interface designers and consultancy.

7.5.7.Rod Callow shared his view that it is complex issue and work is needed to identify problems and to work on them. He also suggested the cost of any potential new site – could be up to £10,000

7.5.8 Moira Usher, incoming Chair, commented that it was something that had been considered for some time and now needed prioritising.

7.5.9 The Membership Secretary informed delegates that the data base may not be part of the system in future.

7.5.10 Concern about the feasibility of doing this project within a year was voiced by the Secretary.

7.5.11 A member with a background in ICT advised consideration to desired outcome and what we wish to achieve before beginning actual work will pay dividends. Advice not to rush off straightaway to buy a new system was given.

7.5.12 Jean Campbell explained that some members had tried to push for years for the website to be worked on and felt tonight had been the most positive response. She felt that if trustees would start to explore this more Wessex would be pleased with this outcome.

7.5.13 Pamela Flanagan made a suggestion that Wessex amend their resolution.

Penny Smith from Wessex branch thanked delegates for their considerations and said she was encouraged with their thoughts.

7.5.14 John Hartley from West Riding Branch felt his branch would be pleased with a proposal that the committee take on board the discussion and that something be done rather than just going for a new website.

7.5.15 The Wessex Branch delegate therefore proposed to amend the resolution.

Amended Resolution: Wessex propose that the trustees pursue the revision of the SRP website in consultation with appropriate personnel, in the coming year, as a matter of urgency.

Proposed: Penny Smith Seconded John Hartley

This proposal was agreed to unanimously.

8. Future Festivals

The secretary informed delegates that the decision about whether to hold the conference online or again face to face in 2026 has to be made. The Dorset and Somerset Branches are already organising conductors for the 2026 festival on 10th-12th April.

The 2025 Festival is nearing and Barbara informed us of 9 strong applications to take part in the Fringe Festival. She will be selecting 4 groups. All are of a high standard and will really enhance the weekend as well as provide an opportunity for the young players and the SRP to interact with each other.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Barbara Law commented that all SRP members are entitled to attend conference and queried how many branch and how many non-branch members there were. Barbara asked for consideration as to who represents the rest of the membership aside from branches and whether we should move to a voting system by all members.

9.2 The Chair reminded delegates that the number of branch and other members is on his report. He explained that personal members are not officially represented but the membership secretary invites them to the Conference. The Constitution would need to change if personal members were to be given a vote.

9.3 Sandra Foxall thanked Caroline Jones for all her work over the last three years as one of the two musical advisors attending the trustee committee meetings. She is rotating off after this meeting and Lyndon Hilling will be attending alongside Sandra.

9.4 The Chairman thanked all for their participation and closed the Conference at 22:04pm.

DRAFT