IPSWICH HOPSITAL COMMUNITY CHOIR - INAUGURAL STEERING GROUP MEETING

M I N U T E S

Present	**Role**
Nick Coleman (NC)	Chairperson
Alix Vince (AV)	Section Rep (Sopranos)
Fiona Hamilton (FH)	Section Rep (Altos)
Phil Riches (PR)	Section Rep (Tenors)
Alex Howell (AH)	Section Rep (Basses)
Anne Pope (AP)	Administrator

No.	**Item**	**Action Owner**
1.	**Introduction**	
	NC welcomed everyone to the inaugural Steering Group meeting and thanked AP for doing the prep work. He explained that this forum would provide an opportunity for the choir to have their say via the Section Representatives and for democratic decision-making to take place. It was noted that discussions were to be kept impersonalised.	
2.	**Repertoire**	
	NC circulated a list of songs the IHCC had covered to date evidencing an extensive and varied repertoire. Following discussions it was felt that the acapella version of I Will Follow Him should be removed as this was a little too ambitious for the whole choir to perform well. NC intends to introduce more contrast between more difficult and easier tunes by for example introducing more unison sections in new arrangements. Input in respect of current and future repertoire was encouraged with comments from the Section Reps as follows: AH • Some of the original versions were written before the formation of IHCC with the result that some of the basses are singing at the top of their range which should be borne in mind for future arrangements. This was noted by NC. AV • It would be nice to introduce some more upbeat tunes, particularly show tunes where you can get some nice harmonies and the songs sound theatrical with the added benefit that the audience can relate to them. Suggestions were Oklahoma, West Side Story, South Pacific, Guys and Dolls, Hairspray and perhaps more modern shows too. NC stated that musical theatre is the most difficult to sing and will stretch the choir but it was felt that this would be a good thing as long as the song is one which most are familiar with and like. •	

2.	**Repertoire – cont'd**	
	FH • The altos want some 'quick wins'. They have felt that the last couple of months has been hard work and would like to balance that by a song they can learn quickly, i.e. Georgy Girl. • It's good for people to feel a sense of achievement. Long Time Ago has been difficult to learn but sounds lovely. Perhaps we could try songs such as American Pie and The Frog Chorus (We All Stand Together) and/or more current songs such as Katie Perry's Fireworks? • Now that we have a s~~tt~~eering group information can be fed back from the choir to NC and vice versa. AH • Downtown is relatively easy to learn and is a balanced song. AV added that a simple song sung well is better than a difficult song sung badly. • All of Me (John Legend) is slow but recent PR • There needs to be a balance of modern and more upbeat tunes NC will consider all suggestions but any decision to not arrange a song would be entirely because it wouldn't work for the choir, i.e. a long instrumental and/or lots of 'oohs and aahs' and not because the song was not his cup of tea. He then produced a list of songs for consideration and the following upbeat 'quick win' tunes were identified as follows: • Ain't No Mountain High Enough • Viva La Vida The list was further reviewed according the previous discussions, with some songs being discounted. Finally, following discussions around the **James Bond medley NC concluded that he would re-visit this but with some modification to include six part harmonies negating the need for solos**. All agreed this would be welcomed by the choir.	**NC**
3.	**Gigs and events**	
3.1	**Capel Fun Day – 6th June 2015**	NC
	We have been asked to arrive at 1pm for a 20 minute slot and should be finished by 2pm. The dress code will be single tone coloured tops with either denim (blue preferable) jeans, skirts or shorts. We will sing the following songs although the order is yet to be decided: Colour My World Georgy Girl I See You The Riddle Together In Electric Dreams **NC to e-mail details of dress code and play list.** It was noted that some new members of choir do not feel ready to perform yet so the **quorum was requested to encourage as many people as possible to turn up for this event and to support those who feel less confident.**	**NC** **ALL**

3.2	**Ipswich Hospital Awards Ceremony – 15th June 2015**	
	This event will take place between 4pm and 5.30pm during which time the IHCC will have a 20 minute slot. Song list is likely to include Long Time Ago and I Vow to Thee My Country. **NC to confirm full programme and specific timings when known and to advise of the agreed dress code as follows:** **Ladies** - plain black blouse or t-shirt with black skirt or trousers, or a plain black dress, together with black shoes. Please make sure that dresses and skirts are an appropriate length for an official engagement where we are representing the hospital. **Men** - plain black shirts and trousers together with black shoes. Black jeans are not acceptable. Both men and women to include a blue (any shade) accessory, i.e. bow tie/neck tie, necklace, scarf etc.	**NC**
3.3	**Music in the Park – 5th July 2015**	
	We have secured a 25 minute slot in the Bethesda Baptist Church (4.30pm-4.55pm). Dress code will be the same as per 3.2 above and **NC will include these details in his e-mail. NC to also devise a programme mindful that we will be performing in a church.**	**NC**
3.4	**Ipswich Has Got Talent / Choir Of the Year – various dates**	
	AP advised applications were now being invited for this year's IHGT show that we have performed in for the past two years. Discussions ensued around previous experience which included poor sound system, lighting and poor organisation. It was also felt that in the lead up to this event focus is on getting our performance perfect which takes away from the fun element of choir. The consensus was that we wouldn't enter this year but consideration could be given to entering in future years. Discussions then centred around the BBC Choir of the Year which we had auditioned for last year. This is a bi-annual event and it was agreed that we should enter again next year.	
4.	**Membership qualification**	
	We are currently an 'open choir' requiring no audition to join. The benefit of this is that we have reasonable numbers but this can also present difficulties in that some people are more keen to practice and rehearse than others. NC stated that we need a balance between who we are and what our aspirations are and sought views from around the table. AV felt that due to the fact that we are a community choir we will never be fantastic because not everyone will be able to achieve a high musical standard. AH pointed out that most people attend rehearsal after a hard day's work and just want it to be fun. He further stated that if the current members went through a selection process requiring them to meet a minimum standard it was likely that we would not have some of the current members in our choir It was noted that the tenors sometimes need extra help and this often results in the rest of the choir becoming restless. Discussions ensued as to how we could improve rehearsals to bring everyone up to speed. Further discussions linked with item 5 below.	
5.	**Rehearsal arrangements**	
	It was noted that the change of day from Thursday to Wednesday had seen a drop in numbers. The change of day is due to NC's commitment to Anglia Ruskin University Chamber Choir. This could be changed back to Thursdays during the summer but would need to revert to Wednesdays during term time. It was felt that this solution wouldn't have any real benefit and that choir rehearsals should therefore remain on a Wednesday evening, with the	

	current start time of 6.15pm, but with the duration extended to 2 hours to include a 10 minute break after the first hour. This will be trialled for one month from early-July. The warm up will start promptly at 6.15pm and the first hour will mainly concentrate on new material. After a 10 minute break the last section of choir rehearsal will include some familiar back catalogue repertoire. In this way those who on occasion need to leave choir early will still be up to speed with new songs and will simply miss out on the less serious element, while those who stay for the duration will benefit from leaving choir rehearsal on a more relaxed and fun note. To assist with the pace of learning new material **AH will endeavour to learn both the tenor and bass parts and will take the men for separate instructionon those sections where they are struggling.** The following additional suggestions for improving rehearsals and the resultant singing were as follows: PR – improve the positioning of people by interspersing those who are more confident amongst those who are less so. This would also work when someone new joins – section reps could ensure they are put next to someone who is more experienced. AH – **NC to 'mix it up' during the warm up**	**AH** **Section Reps** **NC**
6.	**Website and social media presence**	
6.1	**Website** PR advised he has undertaken some research into domain names and found that IHCC is very popular and was not therefore a viable option. Discussions around a suitable name ensued and it was felt that the word choir was key. The consensus was that ipshospchoir.org.uk was the best option if available. **PR to check if this is available and, if so, purchase it at a cost of £10.** PR advised he was happy to take responsibility for building and maintaining our website but would need to charge a hosting fee of £60 + VAT per annum to cover running costs. The website would need to be updated and everyone will need to take responsibility to advise PR of any changes/updates required as and when they occur. Over time the website could be a central place on which members can write blogs and where weekly notices and information e-mails can be uploaded. **PR will arrange to add e-mail contact lists for the whole choir and separate contact lists for all choir sections. NC to provide him with the full contact list.** **PR will build a test site for consideration by the steering group prior to going live.** NC stressed the importance of branding and consistency across all areas of social media and **will ask at rehearsals next week if there is anyone in choir with the skill to develop a suitable logo/branding for us**.	**PR** **PR** **NC** **PR** **NC**
6.2	**Social Media** The use of Facebook and Twitter was discussed with the following comments noted: • **Facebook and Twitter logos should appear on our website once built** • The differences between Facebook and Twitter were noted with fb being good for a 'quick hit' and the latter being recognised as the 'here and now' whereby you tweet and get people talking about you • FH suggested re-activating interest on our Facebook page due to a decrease in posts recently. Interest could be generated via the individual section 'info' e-mail groups to be set up • PR isn't very familiar with Twitter so **AH agreed to continue updates on Twitter for the time being**	**PR** **Section Reps** **AH**

	• It's vital to have a consistent message across all social media platforms. However, mindful that they are all different forums, they will need to be kept up-to-date in slightly different ways whilst maintaining common branding	
7.	**Other publicity** The need to increase the number of members was discussed and the following methods were suggested: **Mail shots** AV had been approached in this way and felt that it was a very effective method of reaching the correct target audience **Posters** A poster campaign had previously been provided by the hospital but FH felt this could be re-visited. A slogan such as 'You Don't Have to be a Doctor or Nurse to be in the Hospital Choir' was considered to be an effective message targeting patients as well as staff. AV advised approximately 300 pass through the Eye Department each day so the potential for getting new members on board via a poster campaign was significant. **Postcards** A smaller advertisement could be produced in postcard form and placed on waiting room tables around the hospital etc. NC again stressed the importance of consistent branding throughout all forms of future advertising	
8.	**Social events**	
8.1	**Charity BBQ – 12th July**	
	Following the recent earthquake disaster in Nepal this event will now raise funds for this cause. **FH/PR will send revised details out to all.**	**FH/PR**
8.2	**Christmas**	
	FH had received limited interest following her e-mail suggestion to attend the late night Panto at The Wolsey Theatre again this year. Following discussions it was felt that because of the lead up to Christmas being both expensive and busy for most people we would simply go for drinks in the Dove following our last choir rehearsal of the year (16th December). Consideration would then be given to holding two social events per year – possibly in January and July. **AP agreed to take on the role of Social Secretary**.	**AP**
9.	**Any other business**	
9.1	**New Members/Welcome Pack**	
	FH suggested preparing a welcome pack for new members to include the following: • A folder • Welcome sheet with details of our website/fb and twitter names • A sheet on which the new member can fill in their details • Details about the Committee to include names, roles and photos for ease of identification • spare copies of music scores **PR has a laser printer and is happy to provide copies of music and welcome sheet** requesting £5 to cover the cost of paper used **NC and AH will prepare a Welcome Pack** with steering group to review prior to going live	**PR** **NC/AH**

9.2	**Choir costume**	
	It was noted that both men and women find the shirt provided for day use is rather hot and uncomfortable to wear and that our formal dress is not necessarily appropriate for all gigs. This was particularly apparent from the feedback received following our audition for the BBC Choir of the Year in 2014. It was also noted that some new members have no items of costume at all. The website should include details of where to purchase the shirt and how much it is. We also need to secure an English supplier for show performers' costumes (our current evening wear is from America). **In the interim appropriate dress code will be chosen according to the gigs we are performing at and NC will advise the required dress code for our next three gigs via e-mail to all.** **Steering group to consider long term costume options at next meeting.**	**NC** **ALL**
9.3	**Finance**	
	A bank account will need to be set up to hold current funds and NC will look into this asap. Assuming two signatories are required it was agreed that NC will be the Treasurer and AP will have the authority to counter-sign. All in agreement with this decision.	**NC**
9.4	**Gig Promotion**	
	From early July onwards there are no gigs in our calendar. AP had recently agreed to take responsibility for promoting the IHCC and securing gigs for us. AP hasn't progressed this to date and welcomed suggestions as follows: • 'Piggy back' on performances that the Ipswich Hospital Community Band already have. (**PR has a contact in the band – Paul Cawthorn – and will pass his contact details to AP)**. Paul has links with St. Peter's Church • Ip-Art Festival – **NC to pass contact details to AP** • Mini festivals, i.e. Bill's Fest in Grundisburgh, Martlesham Green, BT Family Day etc. **AP to research the above and set a calendar of possible events for us to get involved in** **It was agreed that the IHCC performance programme should ensure an appropriate balance is struck between the hard work involved in preparing for performances and the fun nature of the choir** AH suggested it would be nice if **NC could make an announcement at the beginning of our performances in future and to say a few words in between songs. NC agreed to this.**	**PR** **NC** **AP** **ALL** **NC**
9.5	**Subs**	
	AH suggested the **re-introduction of subs at each choir rehearsal. This was agreed but will not be implemented until the bank account has been set up**.	**NC**
9.6	**Pitching**	
	AH asked whether it would be possible to record pre-pitched notes at the beginning of our backing tracks to negate the need for NC to pitch us with pitch pipes at the start of each tune. **NC agreed to do this where possible for our performances.** AV added that some people find it difficult to pitch with pitch pipes.	**NC**

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~~9.7~~	~~**Format of Music Scores**~~	
9.7	**Format of music scores**	
	PR requested that all music scores currently in landscape be re-formatted to portrait as this works better in our folders. **NC will do this and PR can then upload onto our website.**	**NC/PR**
10.	**Date of Next Meeting**	
	The next meeting will be held at 8.15pm on Wednesday 15th July at 30 Valleyview Drive, IP4 5UW	**ALL**

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