

Minutes of the CCC Committee Meeting - Thursday 3 September 2026

Present:

Marie Brewer, Ian Abrey, Chris Sanders, Mary McCarthy Harris, Phil Almond, Jane Wilde

New Musical Director

We have received 2 formal applications. There are another two or three possibles. The deadline is mid September.

Jeannette Ager has indicated she would be prepared to take the choir for the spring term, if we need an interim. Marie to approach David Wordsworth to see if he would like to be in the mix of candidates from the summer term 2027 onwards (David is unavailable till then). **MB**

Chris suggested that it was important for us to have an idea of whether the choir wants a conductor who will integrate into the choir musically and socially and lead us forward, or whether we are happy with someone thinking of us as a stepping stone in their career.

Choir questionnaire - responses

Mary outlined the main findings from the questionnaire sent to the choir regarding future direction.

1. Most are happy with the level of variety and challenge in our recent repertoire.
2. The need for the programme to attract an audience was stressed.
3. Most enjoyed the pace and energy of Calum's rehearsals. Chris said he would like the new conductor to teach us more.
4. Perhaps a need for more sectional rehearsals?
5. Better preparation for concerts and knowledge of the year's programme much earlier!
6. Voice reps to report to the committee. To be discussed further at the AGM.
7. Start time for rehearsals. Though some would like choir to start earlier, we should wait and see what our new conductor is happy with.
8. We should try to improve the friendliness of the choir! We will make an announcement saying that anyone wanting to go for a post-rehearsal drink after rehearsal is welcome! At the AGM, we should discuss the way forward re socials and possibly ask for a volunteer to be social secretary.
9. Look at the seating of sections - difficult to hear when a section is strung out in a line. For the last couple of rehearsals, try to seat people next to those they will be adjacent to in the concert.
10. Subs. Not everyone can sing in every concert, so some people have requested a reduction in subs or paying termly. We decided not to offer this (as it affects our overheads) but to reiterate our policy of being willing to listen to anyone struggling to pay their subs or pleading a special case.
11. Recruitment. Mary is keen for money to be spent on recruitment of new young singers, perhaps by leafleting in Berkhamsted. She, Ruth Lewis and Phil Almond to form a group to look at recruitment, perhaps including an Open Rehearsal or Come and Sing day.

Finance

Ian presented a draft summary of the accounts. We are in a healthy position.

We have made a gift aid claim (to the tune of approx £1300) and our first corporation tax return (we will not have to pay any).

We made a surplus of just over £1000 (mainly because of the gift-aid received) for the year.

Ian to have gift-aid forms available at the AGM, as not everyone in the choir has completed one.

Rehearsal costs have risen, as Calum received a pay rise, but we agreed we may have to pay a new conductor more going forward in any case.

Ian is happy to maintain subs at the current level of £180 per annum. This was agreed by the meeting.

AGM

We agreed that 15 October would be a good date for our AGM. Marie will give a brief summary of the problems the committee faced in the run-up to Calum's resignation. Jeannette will take the choir for a vocal technique session in the first half. **MB**

Next Term Dates

Calum cannot come to rehearsals on 24 September (getting a sub), 15 October and 3 Dec (getting a sub).

Members

Pauline Summers is leaving the choir. Marie to ask Jeremy Biddle if he is planning to sing or not, as he is currently still on the list of members. **MB**

Christmas Concert - 23 December

Phil reported on the status of the orchestral players. Philip Aird is booking all the string players. Phil Almond has recruited all the remaining players except the continuo, as he needed clarification on the rate to pay the player.

All 3 vocal soloists (Olivia Bell, Philip Conway Brown and Max Catalano) have been booked. We agreed to offer them £300 each, which brings the total for soloists and orchestra to £4010.

Phil will contact Calum to find out the time of the afternoon rehearsal on concert day. **PA**

Chris will bring the Creation vocal scores to the first rehearsal, but will be on holiday after that. Phil volunteered to take over the distribution of scores during that period. **CS, PA**

Future Concerts

We agreed on the St. John Passion at our Spring Concert and sacred music (from European Sacred Music and past tour music - a mix of accompanied and unaccompanied works) in our Summer Concert.

Website

Progress on our new website has been very slow, mainly due to bad luck befalling the new web designer.

AOB

We agreed that Phil will need to be voted on to the committee at the AGM and should then be put on the list of trustees. **MB, CS, IA**

Next meeting

17 September, 6.45 pm at Sacred Heart.

Minutes

JW