**Annual General Meeting – Free Range Choir**

**Sunday 28th February 2016**

**Chair: Steve Boothroyd**

**Director: Frances Bernstein**

**Notes: Alison Hulme**

**Finance**

Steve reported that the by the end of the year outgoings would exceed income with a loss of around £500 by the end of July and expected to break even (by using last years excess balance) by the end of the year.

The reasons are:

* 4 more rehearsal sessions per year (at £105 / session)
* numbers of members fluctuating and overall going down.

Steve outlined a number of potential solutions:

* raise fees
* try to recruit and retain new members
* reduce number of rehearsals.

It was agreed to consider setting up a working/steering group to “make things happen” and consider the above in more detail including what could be done about retaining new members. It was agreed to consider using 4-6 non rehearsal meetings for smaller groups or social events. It was proposed to increase fees from Easter Term to £50.

**AP – Working Group to take forward – consider buddy system for new members and to take forward social events.**

**Decision - Members to pay £50 from the start of the Easter term.**

**Issues from last years meeting**

Steve raised a number of issues raised last year that hadn’t been addressed:

* Content of Programme / Repertoire – this was discussed amongst the group, there were varying views as to what the focus should be. Frances asked for specific feedback on repertoire and whether the programme was too difficult, easy and balance between serious and light. Various views were given, Frances agreed to take them into account in planning the choir’s future repertoire.

**AP – Frances to consider views in planning future repertoire**

* Preparation time – focus should be on “polishing the parts” not note bashing. The group agreed that members had a responsibility to use the learning files to learn the notes and words. Rehearsal time could then be spent on bringing the songs together and performance/presentation/vocal technique.

**AP – All – members to learn notes and words from learning files in advance of choir rehearsals.**

**AP - Frances and team - to try and get learning files available for all news songs before work starts in rehearsal sessions.**

Discussion continued around planning future repertoire and how Frances could make her plan available to members. This would give people the opportunity to do some pre rehearsal learning.

**AP - Frances to develop her plan so that it could be put on Free Range Web site in the members only area**

* Performance and Presentation Issues – The issue of how we could improve and polish our performance and how we could make our performances more entertaining for our audience was discussed last year but not addressed. This was discussed once again and agreed that issues around performance should be taken forward by the working group. Frances said that she would welcome input from others regarding performance/presentation/content.

**AP – Working Group to take forward – issues around performance**

Discussion continued around reducing the weekly choir session from 7.30 – 9.30 to 7.30 – 9.00 as a number of members (particularly those that had done a days work) felt fairly exhausted by 9.00

Frances raised concerns about reducing both the length of choir sessions and the number of rehearsal meetings and felt that the repertoire would have to be reduced as a result.

In order to mitigate the affect of reducing the length of choir sessions it was agreed that :

1. rehearsals should start promptly at 7.30

2. warm ups should be limited to 15 minutes

3. members had to commit to doing note and word learning in their own time.

This would enable an hour and a half of quality rehearsal time to focus on performance and perfecting technique etc

FR would not reduce the time we have the room booked for on Tuesdays. The final half hour from 9.00 – 9.30 would be used for small group rehearsals or for discussing social or performance issues etc etc

A vote was taken on this

**Decision - It was agreed to trial a reduce rehearsal sessions to 7.30 – 9.00**

**AP – All – members to learn notes and words from learning files in advance of choir rehearsals.**

**AP – All – members to arrive before 7.30 in order that rehearsals can start promptly at 7.30.**

**AP – Frances – to limit warm ups to 15 minutes**

Steve asked for volunteers to join the working group. This will be an open group and members can join at any time.

The following members put their names forward :

Steve, David, Alison, Helen (Kingstone), Frances

The following members said that they would like to help but unable to attend meetings. They would however be willing to contribute by email :

Hilary, Brian, Stan, Jill

**AOB**

**Headingley Street Choir Festival is to be held on 11/6**. Members were asked to Doodle as soon as possible.

**AP – Members to doodle**

**Future Workshops.**

It was agreed that we should continue to work with Sally McLean and that she should be booked for workshops in November 2016 and Spring 2017 (Residential)

**AP – David - to book Sally McLean**

**Next Years Residential**

It was agreed that we should once again have this at the Beamsley Project

**AP – David - to book the Beamsley Project**