

# Oxford Proud Voices committee meeting

7pm 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025, hybrid / Jon's house

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## 1. Apologies (chairs)

Ross, Aym

## 2. Minutes of last meeting and update on actions (chairs)

- Safeguarding – not yet added to website, pending comments today
- Committee contacts – also to discuss today
- Oxford Pride organising group - no volunteers :(
- Welfare/safeguarding team – now Ben and Cookie
- We have secretaries now, and Ross doing social media
- Fundraising - Em and Caro have submitted to National Lottery Community Fund and will be applying for new round of Community Impact Grant about to open – funds for resilience and projects like Various Voices
- Sum Up machine working, Jon and Johanna added as signatories to bank account
- Sliding scale of payments sorted – but more to say today
- Social events calendar – to be discussed today
- Choir term dates reminder - sent
- What to expect in rehearsal – posted
- Decide on frequency of committee meetings – beginning and end of each term?

## 3. Chairs' update (Debbie and Simon)

- Amazing concert, well done!

## 4. Musical directors' update (Philip)

- Great concert, looking forward to next terms' performances at Pride and URC
- It would be good to set up a sub group for planning of those performances – this should be shout out for whole choir (Debbie?)
- Choosing music – working towards members making suggestions but needs bit of education process first about what's suitable – something to work on from September – introduce choir to things to think about and how to formally suggest a song (not on open chat!). Will set up music committee – including musical skills, rights, someone with EDI hat/eye to values. Rep can be a challenging thing for any choir to agree on. Simon and Philip to write piece for newsletter about this.

## 5. Governance (Simon)

- Simon has put together 2-page doc of proposed structure of choir – as starting point, whether or not we go for charity status, we would have a committee to do day-to-day running and some decisions, and a board to be critical friend and look at big picture/strategy, be a guardian of the values of the choir, meeting once a quarter and including members from outside the choir. If we go to charity status that would be a formal board. **Simon to share the 2-pager.**
- A few things we don't have right now that would be good:
  - Music committee
  - EDI – need a person or group of people to be focusing on this – healthier and more sustainable if it doesn't fall to just one person
  - Accessibility – might go with EDI or safeguarding or somewhere else – examples of good accessibility questionnaires from other choirs but need to then use the results!
- Do we have enough capacity for all this, e.g. setting up a board?
- Charity status – balance between benefits (tax relief, fundraising) but also some burdens (accounting, form filling) especially as still a young organisation – have we got enough people to put time into running that part of things? **Simon and Debbie will put together a proposal for us to look at in more detail next time.**
- Decisions – being transparent with choir about how decisions are being made
- Feedback from members
  - Reps for each section? Could be committee members for now. Check with section a week or so before committee meeting. With a few prompts – e.g. how are we doing, physical environment – **Ben & Cookie to look at prompts**
  - Suggestions box – physical and digital – **Chris to set up online form, Ben & Cookie to work on box**
- Values, vision and mission – choir is only 6 months old, what's on the website based on how Debbie and Simon saw the choir when setting it up, but we as a group need to talk about what the choir means. Lots of ways of doing this – do we need to do that now or down the line when more capacity?
  - For safeguarding policy usually need to set out what the organisation stands for – so values in general and wording in policies need to be synergised
  - Might be easier to do values than vision and mission – need allocated time for that not in a committee meeting, make it really inclusive, hopefully will have more members this term who will also shape who we are as a choir and add capacity. Nice to do in September a year after we've started. → **Revisit at the end of next term with a view to organising something in September.**

## 6. Finance update (Jon and Johanna)

- Budget – we have a bank account and SumUp so can be cashless, and all chairs and treasurers are signatories. Ended last term in the black, made more than we spent - currently have £2000 in the account once settled outstanding expenditure. [Chris → chase outstanding expenses.] Around 40 regular members all on different payment schedules so hard to forecast income – period of calibration.
- Payment options for members
  - Gradually moving towards direct debit / cashless, now in position where can be fully cash free. Want to make paying subs as easy as possible but also make sure there is some accountability (while allowing for fact that some people may not be able to pay – but better if this is part of a conversation).
  - Ideally move away from weekly payments to direct debit / termly subscriptions – important to keep financial accessibility, but weekly payments don't motivate people to commit to attending rehearsals; also allows for a process at the start of each term where treasurers can check in with people. Could have policy if people join after beginning of term – have a few weeks to decide if want to join, pro rate what you could afford x number of weeks.
  - Also need conversation about people joining near the end of term from a musical as well as financial perspective. Need to build as much certainty as we can – Johanna has done some modelling about where we could get to with certainty. Currently making a surplus but not incurring full costs (e.g. lighting lent by Philip for concert). Also about investing in the choir as community, not a transactional service – something we can all model and nurture. Can still have one or two people who pay weekly but as product of conversation. Philip has 'Welcome to the choir' piece of paper setting some of this out → Hannah to draft one of these, incorporating subs info, Philip to share example.
  - Jon and Johanna proposing policy of moving away from weekly payments, ideally to monthly → everyone agrees. Share with choir in person. About encouraging not insisting, emphasis on regularity rather than amount, making sure the options are clear.
  - Transparency – info about where subs are going – something in the next newsletter → Jon to write, everyone else to feedback on framing. Full accounts will be shared at AGM in September.
  - Debbie to circulate newsletter to whole committee for comment and input. Long term would be good to share that or pass it on to a group.

## 7. Fundraising (Debbie)

- Three streams: grants, corporate sponsorship (how do we decide what kinds of corporate sponsorship would be acceptable?), community fundraising (e.g. bake sales, quizzes) – opening out to choir who may want to be involved in this?
- For things like – supporting people to attend events we'd like to go to, e.g. Nov gig in Manchester
- Jon attending round table by Proud Voices this week about fundraising. Jon to feed back to committee.

- Easier to approach donors if we have specific things/projects in mind – e.g. hardship fund, specific event. Also about partnerships and relationships – what can we offer in return?
- Thanks to Em and all who have contributed to fundraising so far
- Next funding application is for Oxford University Community Impact Fund
- Could be useful to have some deep dive conversations in the summer/into September – fundraising being one of these, also outreach/community relations

## 8. Safeguarding (Ben and Cookie)

- Been looking at what safeguarding policy is and needs to be.
- Do not have any legal responsibilities – important to have strong topper talking about values etc and then the rest as a reference, rather than too long and not looked at. Less about legal/statutory obligations and more about welfare and values, e.g. signposting.
- Code of conduct – anchors any conflict resolution and makes it easier – strong and clear conflict resolution and complaints procedure. Thoughts about training?
- Separate conversation about this – Simon, Ben and Cookie (and anyone else interested) to meet to discuss and put proposals together to come back to.
- GDPR – already have policy on website. In practice - making sure email addresses only in Fastmail. Chris, Hannah, Simon, Ross to revisit in September.

## 9. Membership (Aym and Hannah)

- Role is currently – answering emails into hello@, welcoming people when they attend a session, taking attendance register, taking contact details and adding to Fastmail, maintaining ‘attending’ mailing list. Would be delighted to be less involved with payments.
- Membership forms – expanding on what we’re collecting at the moment, while keeping personal data to a minimum. Something about the demographics of our membership, postcode – useful for fundraising, EDI. Maybe a separate form to collect anonymously – so not tied to record. Established members – not bombarding new people. When do we do that? → Hannah and Debbie to discuss.
- How best to welcome new people – nuts and bolts of making sure new people feel really welcome, make sure not alone in tea break. Handout. Section reps to introduce people to/look out for new people. Badges? Making sure to tell people where the toilets are or where quiet spaces are. Substitute welcome person? Role of the socials team and welfare? Can lean on any of the committee to do this. Can use the welcome handout as a checklist.
- Loving, demonstrative space – but that can make it harder to come into.
- Having a table that people who arrive can go to is really important – especially for new people to orient themselves.
- Useful to have a register – keep as is for now and review at end of term

## 10. Socials (Lorna and Ella)

- Thinking through EDI and welfare of socials – a lot of hats
- Learnt that need time to plan socials
- Now more events on the horizon, both performances and fundraising people are self-organising – thinking about identity of socials team and what can help and what is feasible
- Budget for socials?
- Role not as “socials” but “the social” – thinking about accessibility and EDI
- Beautiful and imaginative things like cards at Christmas
- Supporting social things during the holidays – people need that space
- Build in celebrations after performances

## 11. Communications (Simon and Chris)

- A lot of activity on WhatsApp – thinking about what should be on WhatsApp and what should be on email. E.g. things that need a decision – make sure they don’t get lost in a WhatsApp thread.
- Contacting the committee – making sure everyone knows who to go to for what, and how to contact them – potential screenshot on teamOPV to look at → everyone to send Chris thoughts on this. Add this info into welcome handout.

## 12. Social media (Ross)

- Access to Facebook account → Ross and Simon to look at this together
- Promoting activism and events → hold fire until values discussion
- Tiktok – has Ross got capacity for this? → Ross to consider

## 13. Upcoming events and performances (Debbie)

- Concert 6<sup>th</sup> June, Pride 7<sup>th</sup> June with timings to follow soon – waiting to hear if we can march in parade and have a stall
- Thame Pride 21<sup>st</sup> June
- WhatsApp polls for signing up – use Announcements channel. Make sure people who aren’t on WhatsApp have a way of responding – Yves and Katharine

## 14. Apparel / t-shirts (Debbie)

- Anyone who’s interested to be involved – set up sub group?
- Individuality at concert was gorgeous – but might be other times when we want to be seen and identified, e.g. at Pride

## 15. Any other business and next committee meeting

- Next meeting – half term (27<sup>th</sup> May?)

### Actions

- Set up subgroups for planning upcoming performances, and put this request to the whole choir – **Debbie?**
- Set up music committee – **Simon?**
- Newsletter
  - Write piece for the newsletter about choosing rep - **Simon and Philip**
  - Write piece for next newsletter about ‘where your subs go’ – **Jon, everyone** else to feed back on framing
  - Circulate newsletter to committee for feedback – **Debbie**
- Put together a 2 pager about governance structure for next committee meeting – **Simon**
- Put together a proposal about charity status – **Simon** and **Debbie**
- Feedback from members
  - Look at prompts for section reps to get feedback from members – **Ben** and **Cookie**
  - Set up physical suggestions box for rehearsals – **Ben** and **Cookie**
  - Create anonymous online feedback form – **Chris**
- Draft a ‘welcome to the choir’ sheet – **Hannah; Philip** to share an example
- Talk to choir about moving away from weekly payments – **Jon** and **Johanna**
- Feed back to committee about Proud Voices roundtable – **Jon**
- Continue to make sure people’s email addresses are only used in Fastmail - **all**
- Welfare and code of conduct – **Simon, Ben** and **Cookie** and **anyone else interested** to meet to discuss, and put proposals together to bring back to committee
- Discuss how and when to collect demographics – **Hannah** and **Debbie**
- Support Aym and Hannah with welcoming new people, using welcome sheet as a checklist – **all**
- Plan celebratory social following this term’s performances, and continue to think about the role of the social team – **Lorna** and **Ella**
- Send Chris your thoughts about making sure everyone knows who is in the committee, how to contact them and what for – **all**
- Look at Facebook account access – **Ross** and **Simon**
- Consider capacity for Tiktok – **Ross**
- Use Announcements channel on WhatsApp for polls for performances, and make sure those not on WhatsApp are also included – **Yves** and **Katharine**
- Invite choir members to get involved with t-shirt design – **Debbie?**
- Agree next meeting date – **Yves** and **Katharine**
- Deep dive conversations on fundraising and community outreach during summer – **fundraising subgroup**

**Items for next meeting**

- Review use of register

**Items for September**

- Values, vision and mission
- Fundraising
- GDPR