

Oxford Proud Voices committee meeting

7pm 11th June 2025, hybrid / Hannah's house

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1. Apologies (chairs) – Johanna, Simon, Cookie
2. Minutes of last meeting (chairs)
 - a) Set up subgroups for planning upcoming performances, and put this request to the whole choir – **Debbie?** - on agenda for this evening
 - b) Set up music committee – **Simon?** - proposal has been circulated – **need to re-circulate with minutes – needs to happen!**
 - c) Newsletter
 1. Write piece for the newsletter about choosing rep – **Simon and Philip** – had item about individuals suggesting rep but still need to have item about process of deciding
 2. Write piece for next newsletter about ‘where your subs go’ – **Jon, everyone** else to feed back on framing - done
 3. Circulate newsletter to committee for feedback – **Debbie** - done
 - d) Put together a 2 pager about governance structure for next committee meeting – **Simon** - done – leave for away time in summer
 - e) Put together a proposal about charity status – **Jon** and Debbie to lead with support from **Simon** – **still to do and to decide who is leading**
 - f) Feedback from members – **elect section reps at AGM in September**
 1. Look at prompts for section reps to get feedback from members – **Ben and Cookie**
 2. Set up physical suggestions box for rehearsals – **Ben and Cookie** – **still to do**
 3. Create anonymous online feedback form – **Chris** – **still to do**
 - g) Draft a ‘welcome to the choir’ sheet – **Hannah; Philip** to share an example – done
 - h) Talk to choir about moving away from weekly payments – **Jon** and **Johanna** – done
 - i) Feed back to committee about Proud Voices roundtable – **Jon** – done
 - j) Continue to make sure people's email addresses are only used in Fastmail – **all** – done
 - k) 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 – **Cookie** **working on this – decided to have statement rather than policy**
 - l) Discuss how and when to collect demographics – **Hannah and Debbie**
 - m) Support Aym and Hannah with welcoming new people, using welcome sheet as a checklist – **all** – **happening, ongoing**
 - n) Plan celebratory social following this term's performances, and continue to think about the role of the social team – **Lorna and Ella** – **picnic in the works**
 - o) Send Chris your thoughts about making sure everyone knows who is in the committee, how to contact them and what for – **all** – **Chris to add ‘contact us’ page with hello, social media, chairs, treasurer, possibly others on case by case basis**
 - p) Look at Facebook account access – **Ross and Simon** – done

- q) Consider capacity for Tiktok – **Ross** – launched, mostly followed by other queer choirs
 - r) Use Announcements channel on WhatsApp for polls for performances, and make sure those not on WhatsApp are also included – **Yves** and **Katharine** – done
 - s) Invite choir members to get involved with t-shirt design – **Debbie?** - done!
 - t) Agree next meeting date – **Yves** and **Katharine** - here we are
 - u) Deep dive conversations on fundraising and community outreach during summer – **fundraising subgroup** – on agenda today
3. Chairs' update (Debbie and Simon) – amazing concert, strong presence at Pride, made the most of the stall despite weather and not getting to sing. Work to have stakeholder seat at next year's Oxford Pride.
4. Musical director's update (Philip) – delighted by performance at the concert – people worked hard, so focused and enthusiastic, especially given short time we have been singing together, we can look forward to more and more lovely things like that as we develop and grow over time.
5. Events
- a) Need for an events team – there needs to be a process going forwards for identifying and selecting what performances we're going to do and then. Might be separate from events team. Are we going to proactively going to seek opportunities or wait for them to come to us? Room for committee role – events coordinator – decide about e.g. what is the notice period for events, deciding about external bodies who would like us to sing.
 - b) Once an event has been agreed to, what is the work that needs to be done and OPV needs help with. Difference between our own events and other events that we've been booked for. For our own events:
 - 1. Find venues, negotiate with, sign agreements
 - 2. Medium and longer term, build relationships with venues
 - 3. Confirm all details with venues – when we can get in, accessibility, facilities (e.g. food/drinks in intervals), security
 - 4. Box office – produce content for online ticketing, pricing, managing funds, promotion, PR, media
 - 5. Door – who is going to be on the door, when to let people in (and not)
 - 6. Audiovisual
 - 7. Running order – everyone in right place at right time
- Philip has done this all to date with help from Jon and Denise but takes a lot of time and energy.
- If doing other events, don't have to sort venue but many of the tasks still need doing.
- Philip can teach people how to do this. Needs resource – step 1 is somebody to drive this process forwards with the choir as a whole and find out who can help with it. There might be someone who is interested in this – 'advancing'. Some of our members might know they're not around for long and it might be better if it's someone who is going to be here longer term. Ideally we would have someone to help right now – for Thame Pride.

Put this in a newsletter soon – and push in rehearsals. Sort Thame Pride tonight.

6. Finance update (Jon and Johanna)

- a) Overall concert made profit of £331.01 – mostly from ticket sales. All being well if we increase our numbers we may be able to break even in future but depends on numbers, venues etc.
- b) T-shirts – spent about £900 and recouped around £750, swallowed the cost of £150. Current account at £2500, just breaking even – incoming and outgoings breaking even – reserve fund untouched.
- c) Propose pushing direct debits before next term – we have more regular members than standing orders so some members not paying for rehearsals, would rather that was a conversation rather than people coming in and not paying. Will coordinate with Hannah and check in with people who are not paying – involving welfare team, and will include something sensitively worded for newsletter at start of next term. AGM also an opportunity to share finances with choir. Option for ‘friend of OPV’ category – e.g. give £100 a year and get a free ticket? Little and often donations work well – things that people forget about!

7. Fundraising (Debbie)

- a) Waiting to hear result of National Lottery bid
- b) Oxford Community Impact Fund – eligible for, Em/Sara to apply
Debbie to send round email about Various Voices – make sure people benefit from early bird rate and reassure that we are fundraising to help cover costs
Jon to share fundraising roundtable notes with committee
- c) Look into possible partnerships – e.g. BMW or Waitrose – but maybe want to have strategic decisions about choir’s values etc. Difference between donation vs sponsorship – some of this is covered in fundraising roundtable notes.

8. Welfare/social (Ben and Ella)

- a) Feedback from Proud Voices EDI implementation meeting – Cookie has notes. Many of the choirs bigger and more established so experience different challenges. Using rehearsal time to work on EDI stuff, e.g. conversations with section reps. Pay it forward.
- b) Making sure people feel free to have the choice to opt in/out of photos – what is the strategy especially for long-standing members. Ross checks in with people about this fairly regularly (especially new people) and makes sure people who don’t want to be in images are not in the frame. Worth having written record of this – ask about in membership survey/form along with access needs? Also something to think about re: concerts and family/friends recording – consider announcing a policy and explaining why? Don’t always have control especially for public events – so more on us to inform people that they are likely to be filmed.
- c) Thinking about rehearsal space – feels urgent to find a bigger space especially with new recruits – not room for people to fully express themselves, overwhelming from sensory perspective and will be harder as we move into autumn/winter. Music during break adds to this overwhelm (preference vs access need). Current set up is also not fully wheelchair accessible.
- d) Memory issues – two people have been and not come back because they don’t feel confident with the way we learn – OK for some people to have the words

Ella to have call to discuss these things with Philip

- e) Katharine and Yves to look for alternative rehearsal spaces – make sure have detailed description of accessibility and include photos on website – Chris can help with this.
- f) Guidelines for vetting individual performances – as we think about EDI/welfare involvement in deciding what we sing as a choir, do we need something similar for individual performances. Maybe just people checking in with Philip and welfare team about plans for individual performances. Not necessarily about gatekeeping what gets performed but e.g. content warning and how that is given, e.g. a bit ahead of time. Online or written programme would help with this. And asking people to choose their material with the values of the choir in mind. Ella to discuss with Philip.

9. Membership (Hannah)

- a) Average attendance this term = 48. New singers this term, also some people leaving.
- b) Membership forms – looking at copying Manchester Proud Chorus version with some reworking. At what point does someone become a member? - basically once people are attending regularly, though welcoming people who come in and out Make sure not forcing people to provide information they don't want to share. → Chase Mike Lake from MPC
- c) Chris, Ross and all to make sure it's clearer on leaflets/website that first rehearsal is free and choir is 18 and over (but be careful with how worded, avoid 18+!)

10. Thame Pride transport arrangements

- a) Make spreadsheet and share with choir – postcode, if can drive, how many spaces – and get people to coordinate. Share info about train + shuttle. Katharine to do this

11. AGM 16th September

- a) Who is eligible to attend. What posts are up for election and how vote? Won't invite new members to join this session. Incentivise attendance with some baking! Debbie to send email out to all committee members about this.
- b) Volunteers for membership co-secretary, section reps and events roles. Other roles proposed/seconded – election if more than one person wants to stand.
Debbie to speak to Simon about involvement with the choir and whether we need a new co-chair.

12. Strategy 'time away' to include values and governance

- a) Half a day at a weekend, space with breakout spaces, facilitated by someone who is not in the committee. One person who might be suitable is Debbie's sister who has considerable training and experience in organisational development. Debbie to circulate info

In September – after AGM, once committee has been endorsed by choir membership.

13. Any other business and next committee meeting – end of this term, 30th July

- a) Leaving cards – Jon to sort for Blodwyn – photo of OPV pebble
- b) Summer plans – socials team to coordinate, committee members can help make sure there is something most Tuesdays. Badge making, karaoke, casual singing.
- c) Next newsletter – aiming to keep it short. Probably another role in the choir. Ella to help Debbie with this one, Yves to help proofread.
- d) Thanking people who lead sessions – agreed this is a good idea, Ella to get something for Lindsay.

Actions

- 1) Recirculate Simon's proposed music committee structure and set up → **Debbie**
- 2) Decide who is leading on charity status and work on this → **Debbie, Simon and Jon**
- 3) Feedback from members – **Ben** and **Cookie** to set up physical suggestions box, **Chris** to create anonymous online feedback from
- 4) Welfare statement and code of conduct → **Cookie** working on this
- 5) Celebratory social – **Lorna** and **Ella** organising picnic
- 6) 'Contact us' info to be added to website for relevant committee members (hello, chairs, treasurer, social media) → **Chris**
- 7) Event committee – include in next newsletter and push in rehearsal → **Philip**
- 8) Send round reminder about Various Voices → **Debbie**
- 9) Share fundraising round table notes with committee → **Jon**
- 10) Discuss welfare points (rehearsal space, music during breaks, memory issues, vetting individual performances) → **Ella** and **Philip**
- 11) Look at alternative rehearsal spaces → **Yves** and **Katharine**
- 12) Make sure promotional materials and website clear that we are for people aged 18 and over → **Chris, Ross** and **all**
- 13) Share info about Thame Pride transport and car sharing spreadsheet with choir → **Katharine**
- 14) Email committee with proposed AGM plans → **Debbie**
- 15) Circulate info about potential 'away day' facilitator → **Debbie**
- 16) Leaving card for Blodwyn → **Jon**
- 17) Coordinate summer plans for socials instead of rehearsals – **Lorna, Ella, Ben, Cookie** and **all**
- 18) Next newsletter → **Debbie, Ella, Yves**
- 19) Thank you to Lindsay for running rehearsal and DIY Pride → **Ella**