**Minutes from Steering Group Meeting 4/5/25 6pm**

Attendees: Alison, Carol, Chris, Holly, Karen, Kate, Sheila, Theresa, Annie

Apologies: Chris

**1. Items to discuss with Ian:**

* Could he post by Sunday evening what he would like the choir to prepare for Wednesday?
* Could he be firmer about singers looking up and not being glued to their music?

**2. Review Last SG Meeting 9/2/25:**

* All actions were carried.
* Ian was sent the revised contract, which he has signed and returned.
* Karen has spoken to Amy at Hartwell CC but so far has had no response.
* Kate: with increased subs and new members, the Choir has a healthy balance of £4000. How can some monies be used up for the benefit of the choir? Suggestions: an outdoor banana banner, lanyards for name badges, accompanist for the piano at the Summer Concert. [also – see point 5] It was requested that SGM’s offer ideas and suggestions to the next Steering Group Meeting.

**3. Attendance/Holiday Forms:**

* Alison: early days to assess efficacy. Forms outlining September absences are not yet needed and only clog up the system.

**4.** **Updating of Protocols:**

* Holly has read and amended the policies. These were passed on to Theresa to proofread. Kate will then put them on the web-site. Holly was thanked for her work.

**5. Official Choir Photo:**

* Theresa would like us to enlist a professional photographer – photos can then be used for advertising and publicity.
* General agreement for Choir to wear T-shirts and have both a serious and a joyful photo taken.
* Stephanie Loke in Hanslope and John Smith in Towcester were both suggested. Theresa was happy to enquire and report back.

**6.30pm Ian present**

**6**. **Choir Engagements 2025:**

**I] MK Choirs Festival Saturday 12 July; workshop Saturday 14 July:**

* Theresa has already emailed Choir members. Kate asked for times to be emailed also.
* 1.20pm slot. Big Sing 3.20
* Ian agreed to having an accompanist.
* In response to the question re list of songs, there are to be 5. Ian suggested Abba medley – Karen questioned the quality of the singing of this, also it has to be returned by 14th May.

Sunshine on Leith

Lovely Day

River Song

Balancing the Scales

I’m Still standing ?

I Wish I Knew How ?

* Craig must have the final list by 10th May.
* The African song is an extra to the above.
* Theresa suggested a few members, 4/5, doing Makaton signing with Sunshine on Leith – this would give us a USP.
* Ian commented that gestures would help with the words and all singers should do it.
* There would be an instructor to teach the signing.

**ii] Hanslope Village Hall Spring Fair: Saturday 15th November:**

* Request from Carol.
* It was generally felt that this might be too much with other performances at this time. We would have to regretfully decline.
* Ian pointed out having two concerts with different repertoires is hard work and this date would make it too early for Christmas songs.
* Carol commented that the VH is badly in need of funds and the Choir added to the fund-raising events; Ian suggested teaming up with another group – perhaps a brass band – and staging a concert to raise money for the VH. This met with general agreement.

**iii] Saturday 29th November Hartwell Christmas Tree Lights 6.30pm:**

* It had been suggested by the P/C that the Choir sing more before the Switching on of Lights and less after.
* Theresa further suggested that we sing all our sings before and then have refreshments, socialise etc, as we tended to lose our audience after the Switch on. This was agreed.

**Iv] Choir’s Christmas Concert 2025**

* The consensus was that we stage two concerts on the same day , either Saturday 13th December or Sunday 14th.
* The idea of combining with schools and the timings of two concerts was discussed. 2.30 – 4.30 and 6.30-8.30 or 6 – 8 pm.
* Hanslope and Hartwell schools are to be approached first before plans can be fixed.
* Ian felt the concert to be too long last time. Perhaps the schools could replace some/all of the individual acts.
* More planning to be done on this at the next meeting in July.

 **iv] Mini Concert and Carol singing at Merrifield Residential Care Home:**

* The Choir was given an unexpected and uncalled for £100 cheque after the last mini concert.
* Theresa gave thanks but emphasised that no future payment was needed.
* Saturday 6th December or Sunday 7th December were suggested for a Christmas return to the Home. Ian to check dates and get back.
* Ian suggested a Wednesday evening might be a good alternative slot. Possible issues with residents’ early bedtimes. Theresa to check with the Home.

**AOB**

**Sectionals:**

* Ian expressed the difficulty of getting all to be present for the Bass sectional – was there a more efficient way of sorting out when all would be available?
* The decision was made that this time it would have to be on 7th May.
* Someone to be nominated from each section [Bass and Tenor] to coordinate the optimum date for future sectionals?
* Ian expressed his pleasure in the increased numbers in these sections.

 **Song choices:**

* Ian was keen for people to make suggestions for future choices.
* Sheila asked about Les Mis. Ian agreed we should go back to it, but that creating learning tracks was time-consuming though not impossible.
* Holly: Power in Me. Ian had forgotten about this and agreed it should be included.
* It was agreed to let Ian have a copy of the back catalogue of songs that could be revisited.

**Heads Up:**

* Ian suggested that getting people walking round the room helps to do without folders and allows you to hear what other singers sound like.
* Karen suggested a video recording of the Choir might help people recognise that their heads are perhaps down too much and understand better the need to look up at Ian.

**TTT rota:**

* Karen requested that the members be approached to put their name on a rota so that it doesn’t always fall on the same people.

**Uniform:**

* As the Choir funds are so healthy, the cost of any future T-shirts can be covered. Fleeces will need to be paid for.

**Numbers:**

* 45 on the books at present.

**Meeting ended 7.40 pm**

**Date of next SGM: Sunday 13th July**