

Wrablers 7th AGM - 29 January 2019 Minutes

Venue: *Good Agency*

Chair: JB

Attendees: JB, AM, MXM, MJM, RM, MS, PS, WT

Apologies : JL, CS, LS

With JL and CS away, and LS ill, we were quorate at 8 Wrablers and were able to proceed with the AGM

Item

1. Constitution - Review current constitution in light of recent changes

- *First page* 'Object' and Membership - unchanged
- 2. 'Decision making' was reworded for clarity and updated. It reads as follows:

Decisions are made democratically by a quorum of members. A quorum is defined as three quarters of the current membership. To be carried a vote must have 2/3 plus one of those present in favour (as long as they are quorate).

Decisions can be taken both in meetings and via electronic means (such as email and Doodle). Proxy votes are allowed.

A record of decisions is kept by the record keeper (currently Juliana) and uploaded to the Decisions Page at members.wrablers.co.uk.

- New Member recruitment has been updated to reflect what we actually do.
- Resignation - unchanged
- 5. Management - changed as follows:

The group is run as a collective and decisions are made on a consensus-driven and egalitarian basis. We aim to keep group management to a minimum and singing to a maximum.

- 5.1 Song Sponsors now reads:

The role of the Song Sponsor is to have a view on how the song should sound, to allocate parts and to be responsible for knowing start notes, and noting any changes to this, and keeping the song page on the website up to date.

(Note - it was felt Rob should have input in part allocation - see discussion elsewhere)

- Repertoire, Rehearsals and Rehearsal Elegance all unchanged, except to add the word next in line 6. - standing *next* to others.
- Feedback and Performances - unchanged
- 10. Musical director middle paragraph 'We will continue to book....' deleted.
- 11. Costs - amended as follows:

Members will pay an annual subscription of £20.00 to cover the purchase of new music and/or musical instruments, and sundry expenses. This subscription may be reviewed from time to time. Subscriptions are due in January every year.

In addition to this there are Musical director fees and Hall Hire for gigs. We have not yet had to pay for rehearsal space thanks to the initiative of several members.

Payment for the Musical director is 'as requested' by the Treasurer (usually in £50 payments).

Payments for Hall hire are handled separately and divided equally amongst members. Recently, charging an entrance fee to our gigs helps to offset these costs.

New members pay fees on joining. Fees are non-refundable.

Treasurer (Mercedes) is producing a summary of accounts.
Treasurer Chaperone (Robin) will be scrutinising the accounts.

- Appendix A - Warbler Person Specification - unchanged.

2. Rehearsals:

Does the current structure work? Is there anything we should do differently?

JB put forward a proposal that we meet weekly from May (instead of June) to prepare for the 13 July gig. She feels we are chronically short of time to polish songs and be relaxed and really ready for performance. Discussion followed - some in favour, some lukewarm, some opposed. Discussion deferred to when we are all present.

3. Musical Director Role and Song Sponsor Role:

Review and agree group roles

Song Sponsor Role is now described in Constitution.

We would like Rob to be more involved than has been so far in part allocation for songs, and in judging whether songs are fit for Warbler purpose *in advance*. JB to have a word with him about this, to make it part of his prep for rehearsals.

4. Repertoire Gang and Song Schedule:

Review and agree how the rep gang and song scheduling process works.

The Repertoire Gang are an example of 'a small sub group of members (perhaps on a rotating basis) [who] will undertake the admin and management roles necessary to ensure the smooth running of the choir' referred to in 5. Management section of the Constitution.

The Repertoire Gang are tasked with:

Selecting a set list for a gig from the full Warbler repertoire (including a mix of new and old songs, small group songs, and duets) and presenting the proposed set list and accompanying gig theme to the whole group.

All members are invited to source songs to offer for assessment of their viability and placement by Rep gang.

It seemed people were not aware of the long lead time involved in the process of sourcing songs, checking their viability, creating MP3s, deciding a theme (which may be suggested by the collection of songs found, or the other way around). To help with the transparency of this process, Wendy will produce a 'timeline' of the process. For example, at this point (Jan), the songs for the July 2019 gig are already prepared and the theme is decided - 'Summer of Love'. The gig gang are now working on songs for the Dec 2019 - with a theme that has already suggested itself - songs from the 1930s and 40s - working title 'Bring Your Own Spam'. So, at this point the summer 2020 gig is without songs or theme. In addition to providing the timeline - Rep Gang to 'shout out' what the theme is and when is a good time to receive song suggestions.

Break

We swapped the Agenda around after the break:

7. Subs :

Review and agree subs for year. Suggestion £20.00.

Agreed. Agreed also that for paying our Director, the present system of everyone paying £50 'when Mercedes tells us to' is working fine. There are some stragglers which M will chase but... if you have a nagging feeling that might be you, please check your bank account and do the right thing!

New members are to pay fees on joining. Fees are non-refundable.

6. Decisions:

And how they are recorded/implemented.

Significant administrative decisions to be recorded on the Decisions page of the website by the Record Keeper (currently JB). Please prompt JB if something is overlooked.

Changes to songs are the responsibility of Song Sponsors (such as decisions to transpose the key of the song, changes to who is on which part, who the sponsor is, etc.)

5. What's working well and not so well:

Everyone to share one thing working well and one working not so well.

We each had our say, in under 2 mins each on a kitchen timer.

WT:

- + Rob is working well, and could do even more so.
- We're still turning up to rehearsals not knowing our parts. We need to make an extra effort to learn songs.

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RM:

- + Having Rob has made us focus more and sing better and therefore feel better
- Still not disciplined enough in our stage craft and in rehearsals - it's not up to Rob to fix this

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PS:

- + Individuals announcing songs spontaneously on the night worked well
- We are not polished in how we react to applause - bow or not, and how to bow.

MS:

- + Having Rob as conductor is very beneficial
- Want Rob to get involved in checking songs and allocating parts. Not good that he hasn't.

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MM:

- + Performance is slicker, gig production good.
- Our tendency to interrupt one another in rehearsal. We need to respect the chair, and remember when we're not the chair.

AM:

- + The advent of Rob has made us been better as a group. We get a lot more out of rehearsals because of him.
- Old vs New thing with songs - when we have learned a song pre-Rob we seem reluctant/unable to take instruction on it. Also newer members do not know old songs but sometimes do not get enough rehearsal time singing together with those that perhaps do.

MX

- + We've managed the transition to Rob well. New members good.
- Tension around discipline when we are together. We come together to work and be the best we can be.

JB:

- + Rob - a very good thing for Wrablers
- Admin could do with a tidy up. Minutes for rehearsals are rarely filed anywhere, song pages not kept up to date, etc all wastes rehearsal time. Also echo the points about discipline, or rather, the lack of it in rehearsals. It's disrespectful of the person trying to lead/chair and can be distressing.

We updated the Jobs list. See separate page.

AOB

Since we had a few minutes left, we discussed the discipline thing, as it had been mentioned by so many as a negative.

Observations made were:

We probably do this because we started out as friends - i.e. without a leader, so carry on as if rehearsal is a social event. There is considerable frustration around people carrying on chatting seemingly oblivious when others are ready to start rehearsal/a song/intervene as chair.

It is likely that those of us that do this are unaware in the moment that they are doing it, as discussions about this phenomena up to now have had little effect.

Attempts have been made in the past to give more authority to individuals who are supposed to be in charge to help the situation - the roles of Chair and Song Leader arose from this. Perhaps we also need to look at the role of the rest of the group - those who are being led. After all, harmony is not a one-way street! Look at how to be a better choir member - attentive, focused, anticipating instruction, taking responsibility for the timekeeping and when not to chat and distract others. The trouble with appointing leaders and chairs is that we can think we give away the responsibility to them so we can muck about and have fun!

Borrowing from teaching a suggestion was made that when there's a din, shouting 'Shut up!' just adds to the din, whereas a different sound such as a tinkly bell might remind people what we're primarily there for. [Worth a try. I probably have a tinkly bell somewhere . JB]

8. Le Pub

Wrablers have left the building

Indeed, we did! Finished at 9pm on the dot!

*Minutes written by JB on 31-01-2019, and emailed awaiting any corrections.
Corrections made on 01-02-19.*