

Association of Cathedral Voluntary Choirs Reps Meeting

Sunday October 20th 2019

Rochester Cathedral

Present: Douglas Henn-Macrae, Chair, Rochester
Rosemary Henn-Macrae, Minute taker, Rochester
Rosemary Clemence, Rochester
Chris Jarman, Hereford
Pauline Powell, Hereford
Maggie Fernie, Ely
Bill Herbert, Birmingham
Viv Lawrence, Derby
Ray Smith, Lincoln
Matthew Horspool, Coventry
Nancy McGiveron, Wells
Pauline Read, Guildford
Lynne Browning, Wells
Geoff LARBalestier, Wells

The minutes of the last meeting at Guildford on 27th May 2018 were circulated.

Matters Arising:

1. It was suggested at the last meeting that choirs club together to get a discount on ordering music. Douglas had made arrangements for a discount with the publishers of the music for this festival. This had worked for some choirs but not all. [See DHM's notes below.]

Feedback on this weekend:

- It was good to have reps from 3 choirs that had not attended previously and they appreciated the welcome they had received
- Discipline among some of the choirs lining up (especially Rochester) was poor – very noisy
- A lot of rustling of music during the services when there should have been quiet
- Some people didn't like the terminology of "home team" "away team" and the seating arrangements which created a barrier and did not feel very inclusive. Douglas apologized and assured those present that no offence was intended.
- Access arrangements for those with additional needs were appreciated
- The information booklet was very useful including the maps
- The hymn booklet was very useful, although some would have appreciated it before the weekend as not all hymns were known
- Audibility of Douglas as conductor during rehearsals was difficult
- Everyone enjoyed the dinner

- Timing of the rehearsal on Sunday, at 9am, was a rush for some. Perhaps another time, use more rehearsal time on the Saturday to enable a later start on the Sunday. There was a lot of free time on the Saturday that could have been used for more rehearsal
- Good to have all the essential information in July in plenty of time before the summer break.
- Offer of hosting need to have been circulated earlier as some had already booked their accommodation. [See DHM's notes below.]
- Good welcome on the Saturday. The practical arrangements and organization all worked well
- "Hear my words" by Parry as a choice of anthem – some felt this did not fulfil the ethos of inclusivity, as there were long stretches when not all were involved in singing
- Congregation however really enjoyed the Parry
- Website – would be good to include which individual choirs attended each event. Would have liked more of a welcome from the clergy at the services and the individual choirs represented named and welcomed at Evensong and the Eucharist.

Future Events

Lincoln may be able to host in 3 years' time, but not the next occasion as they have had changes in music leadership. Carlisle may be a possibility *[I can't find any evidence of this. Can somebody clarify, please? DHM]*. Douglas has been in touch with choirs to try and firm up the next venue and will keep following up. He doesn't get a response from a number of choirs, although there may be individuals who would like to come, as seen this year. It was suggested that it may be better to make phone contact with named individuals, and also direct information to the music admin departments at Cathedrals. Also suggested to ask Rochester's Precentor to circulate other Cathedral Precentors to ask about a possible next venue. Reps who would like to know more about what is involved in hosting the festival were invited to stay after evensong to hear from choirs that have hosted previously.

It would still be good to encourage individual choirs to link up for specific events.

Kevin Lindsay, the Choir Director from First United Methodist Church in Rochester, New Hampshire had sung in the festival and mention had been made about a possible tour to Rochester, New Hampshire in 2020. The invitation to join a tour was extended to members of other choirs from ACVC in addition to Rochester Cathedral Voluntary choir. If there was a possibility of an ACVC tour, would need to firm up dates ASAP. Douglas explained how tours he organizes normally work. It was suggested that it would be helpful to send an e-mail out to choirs giving that information.

Thanks were given to Rochester for organizing and hosting this year's event. Douglas expressed his appreciation for everyone's responsiveness and engagement in the music making and social aspects over the weekend.

The meeting concluded with lunch.

DHM notes referring to points raised above:

1. Home-stay accommodation:

e-mail sent to all choir directors and reps on 20th June:

“if any members of your choirs would like to come, but may have difficulty paying for hotels, some members of Rochester CVC have offered to host visitors.

Anyone wishing to take advantage of this offer, please contact Jeremy Cross.”

2. Music list and publishers/discount information:

e-mail sent to all choir directors and reps on 11th July.