

VOX HOLLOWAY STRATEGIC REVIEW – APRIL 2025

Why a review:

Since its foundation in 2009, Vox Holloway has grown and developed in remarkable ways. Our home base is still St Luke's, but we also perform in other, larger venues around London; we have grown in size from around 50 to 90 members – at times we have had 120 singers; although not-for-profit, we are financially stable and weathered the pressures of Covid 19 well; we have an eclectic repertoire which includes a large body of original music either composed or adapted by Harvey Brough, our musical director; we regularly work with some of the best musicians in the country; we support other charities and have created a number of innovative and impactful projects, which have gone beyond the choir's core remit, stretching our ambition, and raising our profile. We have achieved all this as the external environment affecting community organisations, the arts and voluntary sector projects in general has become more fraught. Trustees felt that this was an important moment to take stock and think about the direction we want to take Vox over the coming 5-10 years.

This report:

The review was conducted via an e-survey of both current and past members of the choir, to which 75 people contributed, and in-depth, individual interviews with all the trustees, some musicians and key people linked to the running of the choir. The work was undertaken by independent consultants. The initial findings were discussed by a small focus group of about 10 members and then by Trustees with Harvey in March.

This report outlines the conclusions drawn from this process and sets out actions to improve and strengthen the choir going forward. Some of these are already being implemented, others are planned. Our intention is to facilitate further discussion with members prior to confirming decisions at our AGM in June.

1. PURPOSE and VISION:

The key features that make Vox Holloway special to choir members and others closely involved with the choir are:

- ***Its community focus:*** the commitment to being welcoming and inclusive, the warmth and friendliness people experience, and the support offered to members no matter how much or how little singing experience they might have. Also, the choir's enthusiasm to work with local schools, other local choirs and to contribute to a range of local activities.
- ***Its artistic ambition:*** performing a wide range of music that challenges and stretches singers. Working with a brilliant composer/musical director who creates new works and adaptations specifically for Vox and collaborating with other professional writers/musicians/soloists who help us perform to the highest standard. Also, Vox offers members opportunities to record our music and perform in venues that are unusual for a community choir.
- ***Its relevance:*** a commitment to bring together the arts with issues of social justice and human rights, to raise awareness and, as much as possible, to support other charitable projects locally, nationally and internationally.

Core values:

Vox Holloway aims to be:

- **Inclusive:**
Open to anyone who loves to sing; welcoming and supportive; rooted in our diverse community; accessible financially and culturally
- **Excellent:**
Ambitious in terms of our repertoire and our performances; committed to constantly improving and aiming for the highest standards
- **Relevant:**
Seeking to connect the arts with current issues around social justice; raising awareness and inspiring people; supporting other charities; singing for a purpose as well as for fun
- **Collaborative:**
Working with internationally acclaimed artists; partnering with other choirs and with relevant charities
- **Dynamic:**
Innovative and risk-taking; outward looking; keen to explore new opportunities, to listen and to learn.

Communications:

Although we have been effective in communicating what is special about Vox to funders, our own members often find it hard to discern what Vox Holloway's core purpose is. We need a clear, simple and compelling narrative to:

- Share with new and existing members
- Help recruit new members from diverse backgrounds
- Resonate with potential funders
- Encourage wider support – in kind as well as financial
- Motivate key people who might be able to sponsor Vox via more substantial, long-term donations.

Draft vision statement:

"Vox is a dynamic, community choir under the artistic direction of Harvey Brough. It brings together amateur and professional musicians to create beautiful, diverse and original music that can uplift and inspire people. It also raises awareness of social issues by taking relevant music into the heart of communities and by supporting other charitable causes."

Strap-line:

to be voted on at the AGM

ACTIONS:

- Refine our communications to better express our vision going forward
- Ensure this is reflected appropriately in all our internal and external comms
- Take steps to strengthen our community focus (*see below*)
- Review our artistic ambition and improve our longer-term planning (*see below*)
- Clarify how we want to develop our charitable and educational objectives (*see below*)

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2. GOVERNANCE and STRUCTURE:

2.1 Legal structure:

Vox Holloway is an unincorporated registered charity. As we have grown, the complexity of our operations has increased and with it the legal and financial risks to Trustees. To provide limited liability while retaining our charitable status, we propose to register as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This would address any liability issues and provide a more formal structure for managing contracts and intellectual property rights. It would also help us to clarify our membership.

ACTIONS:

- Josh is reviewing our constitution, and a draft CIO constitution will shortly be available.
- A decision to adopt this proposal will be taken at the AGM in June 2025.
- If approved, members of the CIO will need to pay a membership fee of £1 which will provide membership for one calendar year from January to December.
(All singers will be required to become members. Non-singers, whether friends of Vox or former singers, may choose to become members. A membership record will be kept based on the payment of the fee.)
- These arrangements would ideally be put in place by September 2025.

Proposed: We should think about what Members might get for their £1 per year, beyond being able to vote at the AGM. How might we use membership to reach out to a wider interested group? Benefits might include: a regular newsletter about Vox, discounts for tickets, opportunities to donate, and to get involved in our charitable projects etc.

2.2 Leadership:

Vox Trustees work well together as a team. All are choir members with a wide range of relevant skills and experience. They are mutually supportive and most have served as Trustees for many years. We face three challenges:

- how to preserve the knowledge and expertise Trustees have acquired, maintain a degree of continuity, and at the same time ensure turnover in Board membership, encouraging new people and fresh ideas, and avoiding complacency
- how to maintain a critical perspective and challenge our own assumptions as necessary
- how to balance strategic/governance responsibilities with the more immediate operational demands of running the choir.

ACTIONS:

- Review the range of skills/experience needed for the Board of Trustees – gaps identified include younger members, people with more choral experience and the need to improve diversity.
- With that in mind, co-opt younger choir members to ensure they have a strong voice (*Ellie Whittaker has now been co-opted. She also has experience designing and delivering support services for national health charities*)
- Consider co-opting (two) external Trustees, ie. non-choir members, to provide a different perspective and constructive challenge.
- Devolve some operational tasks to joint Trustee/member working groups, in order to encourage more people to take on a leadership role and give Board members more time to focus on strategic planning and high-level decisions. (*see below*)

2.3 Accountability and Openness:

Members feel that Vox is generally well run, and they appreciate the amount of work that Trustees and many members do to 'keep the show on the road', especially given that we have no paid admin support. However, despite weekly emails, occasional surveys and regular informal contact, the committee can appear remote, which leads to complacency and lack of awareness. This in turn inhibits accountability, wider member involvement and in the longer-term makes succession more difficult.

ACTIONS:

- Clarify and communicate the roles and responsibilities of Trustees
- Produce a 'Welcome Pack' for members, to provide information about Vox, including our vision and values, our governance structure, the names/roles of Trustees and other members with key responsibilities, decision-making processes, volunteering opportunities, how members' voices are heard, what we expect of members, and the 'protocols' that shape how we work
- Expand volunteering opportunities by devolving some operational tasks to sub-groups involving both Trustees and members. Initially we propose 4 groups:
 - Marketing and Communications
 - Concert planning/logistics
 - Membership involvement and pastoral support
 - Fundraising and outreach
- Enable those choir members who would like to do more to shadow Trustees and find out more about Vox governance
- Undertake a regular skills survey of choir members.

2.4 Compliance:

Vox complies with all the requirements of the Charity Commission, but there are some gaps in our internal policies and procedures, and our information management systems are haphazard. This is largely due to the lack of any admin support, but unless the details of how we operate are recorded and accessible, this could create difficulties for future management.

ACTIONS:

- Incorporate compliance reviews into Trustees roles and responsibilities
- Regularly review compliance so that any issues can be addressed proactively, and ensure that Vox follows good practice guidelines in relation to safeguarding, equalities, finance, grievance and complaints etc
- Address any gaps in formal policies and procedures
- Ensure that there is a clear process, agreed with Harvey, for acquiring the necessary licences and permissions relating to copyright and other similar issues – identify specialist legal advice if necessary
- Ensure there are written agreements with Harvey, as Musical Director, and the other professionals with whom Vox has a contractual arrangement (*Note: agreements should cover, as appropriate: remuneration; planning, preparation and performance expectations; ownership of compositions, recording rights, performance rights and other intellectual property.*)
- Migrate to a google-based information system and implement policies and procedures to properly manage data held by Vox and to comply with data-protection regulations

- Use this system to streamline operations, improve collaboration and create an archive to preserve the choir's legacy
- Since much of this depends on having regular admin support, work towards a position where Vox can afford a part-time admin worker – precise role to be determined.

3. STRATEGY:

3.1 Strategic planning:

Overall, Vox has a strong sense of direction and purpose. But we struggle to plan more than about 6 months in advance. As mentioned already, one problem is that the practical demands of running the choir take up most of the Trustees' time, making it hard to carve out enough time for long-term planning, compliance, risk management, high-level decision-making and funding. We hope that the decision to delegate key operational tasks to joint working groups will create space for the Board to be more strategic, while maintaining their overall management responsibility. Appointing external Trustees (2) should also help the Board be more strategic.

In the short-term, the effectiveness of the Board would be enhanced if meetings were designated as either strategic or operational. A specific number of strategy meetings should be held on an annual basis with a regular timeframe for other Board meetings.

3.2 Decision-making, risk-management and control:

Vox's programme is determined by Harvey as our Artistic Director. We depend on his vision, his ambition and his confidence in us, to help him create and deliver exceptional music. It is clear from the Review that Trustees and choir members trust him and value his artistic leadership. Harvey is the reason many people joined Vox in the first place.

But creating the music for 4 concerts per year, while hugely rewarding, is a lot of work and a responsibility that is shared by the Trustees. Working together to plan programmes well in advance would enable us to set clear goals, identify any necessary parameters eg scale/funding, allow for effective risk management, and ensure that decisions were informed by feedback from members and 'owned' by everyone. We want to do this in a way that preserves Harvey's artistic freedom and eases the pressure on everyone. (*see Artistic Vision below*)

Trustees and Harvey are well aware of the demands that promoting and delivering our concerts puts on choir members, including bringing in the audience. We need to set realistic expectations and support members to do this outreach and promotional work. In recent years, financial and other risks have increased, so it is important that our artistic ambitions and operational practicalities are aligned.

3.3 Succession:

While the Review was positive about Vox leadership, it raised the question of sustainability, given our reliance on a few key members and on Harvey. This is both a strength and potentially a weakness in the longer-term that we feel ought to be addressed at some point. Proposals to facilitate turnover in Board membership are outlined above. Ideas about how to safeguard our artistic leadership are considered under 'Artistic Planning' below.

ACTIONS:

- Create space for the Board to address strategic planning as outlined above
- Work with Harvey to develop a three-year strategy setting out our music plans and outlining the organisation's future direction

- Make sure that our strategic vision is clear to members and that our programmes and activities tell a powerful story about who we are and what we are trying to do.
- Ensure that Harvey has the space that he needs as Artistic Director to shape our creativity and ambition
- Ensure that plans are communicated effectively to choir members and that there are opportunities for them to contribute
- In terms of special projects/new work, develop criteria and processes to help Harvey and the Board identify which issues to focus on and which charities to collaborate with.

4. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

In recent years, the choir's finances have become more complex. But they are well managed, with minimal overheads, sound cash flow, clear financial reporting and a healthy balance sheet. We weathered the Covid crisis well by continuing to operate online as Virtual Vox, and we have been able to take on more risky projects. These include more ambitious concerts, and a range of innovative projects related to our outreach work, such as a documentary, a radio programme and education work. Our success in securing repeat funding from the Arts Council, Backstage Trust, other one-off donations, alongside our core income from membership fees, donations and gift-aid, has made this possible. We have also invested in several recordings that have yet to generate a return, although they contribute to our legacy.

Almost all our fund-raising is project specific but going forward we need to increase core income to cover generic costs, such as developing new projects, regular admin support and occasional technical assistance. We are reluctant to increase member fees significantly – partly because we want to remain accessible to all, but also because already, those who can, make generous additional donations every term which is a huge help.

ACTIONS:

- On the back of this strategic review, identify a small number of 'sponsors' who might be willing to invest in Vox for (say) the next 5 years to help us achieve our vision
- If successful, employ a part/time admin support worker – precise JD to be determined

Other suggestions (yet to be considered):

- Explore corporate sponsorship and partnerships
- Launch a donation and legacy appeal and make it easier for members and other supporters to make regular one-off donations
- Use artwork created for performances to produce merchandise which could be sold at concerts and online
- Establish a dedicated fund/commercial arm to generate income and fund Vox activities such as long-term initiatives and commissioning or developing new works.

5. OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT:

5.1 Complexity:

The operational side of Vox has become much more complex and onerous since 2009, yet it still relies on a relatively small number of volunteers. Some of them have a lot of time to give to the choir. But if we want to remain ambitious and innovative, and take on further challenges, this raises the question of how sustainable this is?

5.2 Admin support: If we can find the resources, Vox would benefit from the support of an admin worker (say) 2 days per week. We need to think more about the precise JD, but tasks could include some of the following:

- Setting up information management systems and migrating information to a chosen platform
- Coordinating and overseeing the logistics of Vox's concerts, events, and recording projects
- Supporting the development of policies and procedures
- Assisting with volunteer recruitment and support
- Supporting grant applications and fundraising and administrating funded projects and initiatives
- Supporting compliance processes, securing rights and licences
- Supporting marketing and publicity, helping with the digital online presence and social media
- Assisting with membership management, including registration, payments, and record-keeping
- Organising and liaising with venues, suppliers, stakeholders and partners
- Music material management
- Chasing payments
- Providing administrative support to the committee such as scheduling meetings
- Developing and maintaining project plans, checklists, and timelines.

It is unlikely that we could find one person with the time and skills for all this, but it is indicative of the work involved in managing an organisation like Vox.

ACTIONS:

- Continue to explore the possibility of core funding that could be used to support the organisational demands of Vox including regular admin support
- Undertake a membership survey to identify key skills and explore ways in which members could help to cover some of the management tasks.
- Be clearer with members about the opportunities for volunteers and give priority to guidance/training as necessary to ensure that tasks are delegated effectively and that members don't feel overwhelmed
- Budget where necessary to employ outside technical support for key events – stage managers, lighting/sound engineers etc
- Explore the possibility of partnering with a local college/university and offering placements to students from relevant courses.

6. ARTISTIC VISION and PLANNING PROCESS:

6.1 Artistic direction:

Harvey's artistic leadership is central to the dynamism, culture and success of Vox. Everyone recognises that we are incredibly lucky to be working with someone so unique and that, because of Harvey, we can sing a choral repertoire that is quite distinct from most other community choirs. Many original works have been premiered and, in some cases, recorded by Vox. He has connected us with some of the nation's best musicians, setting a high standard which is both challenging and exhilarating. This is what attracts and retains many choir members.

Harvey is also committed to a non-auditioned community choir, to working with children and other groups and to breaking down the barriers that tend to exist between the 'professional' and the 'amateur' worlds of music. His confidence in us and his gentle encouragement is inspiring and has enabled us to achieve more than we might have imagined possible.

6.2 Diversity and succession:

Harvey's leadership is central to Vox's identity and success. His commitment to the choir and members' commitment to him is strong, making Vox both stable and secure. In that context, the Review did raise questions relating to diversity of music and longer-term sustainability and succession. The latter is not an immediate issue, but the Board would need to address it at some point. In terms of diversity, Vox already works with other musicians – accompanist/ sectional leaders – and these partnerships are valuable to both Harvey and the choir. We also offer a unique learning experience for younger conductors and singers. It is possible that creating more opportunities of this kind, commissioning new works, connecting with more diverse artists including composers, mentoring younger musicians, could not only strengthen the foundations of the choir but also help attract a more diverse membership. We should give this further consideration as we move forward.

6.3 Our repertoire:

The Review also reflected interest from Trustees and other members, especially those who have been with Vox for many years, in having more input into discussions about the **shape of our programmes** going forward. This doesn't mean 'design by committee' – we rely on Harvey, as artistic director, to determine what each term looks like and what sort of challenge would be good for Vox. But opportunities to help shape the music we sing would increase members' commitment and ensure that logistical and practical considerations were part of the planning process. To avoid this becoming unwieldy, Trustees would need to ensure that we get the **balance right** between members' desire for input, Trustees' governance role and Harvey's artistic freedom.

In terms of content, Vox embraces all kinds of music – jazz, Gospel, folk, classical, pop, world music... etc. **Members** would like the opportunity to put forward ideas; to know well in advance what is planned; and to be invited to give regular feedback. They know our audiences well and have useful things to say about the scale of performances, the venues we use, the content of performances and the themes we sing about. We need to create more opportunities to listen to their feedback.

6.4 Creating new work:

Where the choir is **embarking on a new work**, potentially focusing on a controversial theme, member 'buy-in' is important, especially if we are also asking them to help fund-raise. And although, again, it is impossible to make decisions about new work 'by committee', more explicit opportunities for discussion about new projects would be welcomed by many.

Following the success of *The Sun Does Shine*, Vox needs to be thinking about the **next 'big project'**. This means investing in research and development work and giving Harvey the time and space to find the right source of inspiration and think about where he wants to take this. Ideally, we would aim to produce something by 2027.

In the past, **partnerships** with other charities and additional projects have tended to emerge in opportunistic ways. Members would like more say in selecting partners, and Trustees would like to clarify the criteria for additional projects to ensure that they align closely with our overall vision, objectives and resources.

6.5 Planning process:

What came across strongly in the Review was the need for a better planning process. In 2020, we developed an 18-month programme of concerts to mark our 10th anniversary. This plan was immediately sabotaged by Covid 19 as we were forced to fall back to holding Vox rehearsals online. Since then, plans have been developed on a term-by-term. Members would like to know well in

advance what we have planned. And, if we are to operate more strategically, we need to be clear about our artistic direction of travel, and have specific plans agreed at least 2 or 3 terms in advance.

Based on the Review, factors to consider in shaping our plans are:

- Range of music – to maintain a variety of genres and music styles
- Balance of new work and repeat performances – where timing is key
- Pace - overall number of concerts, ideally no more than 4 per year
- Level of challenge/ambition – as judged by Harvey
- Role of Chamber Choir – embed more within the core programme
- How we reflect social issues – whether through new works or promoting existing works
- The scope for original compositions – and finding the resources to support that work.

There will sometimes be **unforeseen opportunities** that we may decide to respond to beyond the ‘core plan’, so a degree of flexibility is necessary. **New work** requires research/development and therefore, if we want a new work in (say) three years’ time, we need to start planning for that now. In terms of **our ambition**, we would like to find a bigger stage for key works like *Freedom Song* and *The Sun Does Shine*. One idea is to get one of them into the BBC Proms Programme for 2027 which again would mean reaching out to key people now.

In the meantime, our priority is to clarify **plans for Sept 2025 – July 2026**, to communicate them to members asap and to invite feedback.

6.6 Chamber Choir:

The Chamber Choir was originally set up to enable Harvey to incorporate more complex works into the choir’s repertoire; to enhance concerts by creating greater variety; and to give more experienced singers a greater challenge, thus encouraging them to stay with Vox. It has made a positive contribution and early concerns about it potentially being ‘elitist’ seem to have abated. But greater clarity is needed about its role, how it fits in Vox, how members can join, and how stronger singers can directly support the choir.

6.7 Our audiences:

Vox has always been able to rely on the loyal support of families and friends of choir members and people in the local community. But over time, members say this has become more difficult, especially if we repeat performances within a relatively short timeframe. Recently, we have performed more concerts in larger venues around London and, as a result, our reputation has grown. But these events have stretched our capacity. The need to reach out to new and wider audiences and deliver a successful programme every term presents a real **marketing and promotion** challenge for all choir members. If we want to continue to raise our profile, we need to find new ways to attract wider audiences and build a support base beyond the local community.

ACTIONS:

- Create opportunities for young composers/musicians to work with Harvey and with Vox – seek ways to include more women and prioritise cultural diversity in our programme planning
- By summer 2025, set out a detailed 12-month programme plan and outline objectives for the next 3 years
- This should include plans to develop a new composition, ideally for a performance in 2027
- Start to explore the possibility of taking *TSDS* (or *Freedom Song*) to the Proms in 2028
- Clarify the role of the Chamber Choir and embed them more into the full choir

- Expand our audience base through wider promotion and marketing efforts including even more effective use of social media
- Set up a clear process for member feedback every term.

7. MEMBERSHIP:

7.1 Engagement

The choir is seen as welcoming and inclusive in its approach and supportive of members with additional and diverse needs. Membership is affordable, no audition is required, and aids are provided for those with limited music reading skills. But both Trustees and members suggested that more could be done to enable it to be more welcoming and engaging of new members.

7.2 Diversity:

Vox membership is currently less diverse than it has been in the recent past. As one member commented in the survey: “the issue of recruitment is more significant than welcoming new people, especially in relation to diversity in age and ethnicity”. Most members are female, middle-aged and white, but we also have a consistently strong male section. We would like to attract more young singers and more people from diverse backgrounds. A significant number of members have age-related or other disabilities and generally they find Vox to be very supportive in making sure that the music, the venues and activities are inclusive and accessible. We are committed to giving this priority and to seeking regular feedback on these issues.

7.3 Participation:

Many members contribute to the running of the choir, but sometimes they find it difficult to know what is needed and how best to help. There is a willingness and generosity towards the choir that is not tapped into as effectively as it might be. While members are happy to let Trustees determine the strategic direction and make key decisions, some would like more information about what is being decided and an opportunity to influence discussion, even on an informal basis. Some talked about an ideal level of ‘satisfying involvement’ – for example, better understanding why artistic pieces are chosen, or identifying the causes Vox might fund-raise for, or having more involvement in related projects.

The following ideas were put forward by members who responded to the survey, some of which have already been actioned by the committee:

ACTIONS:

Engagement:

- make sure new members are properly welcomed
- support new singers with an identified mentor /guide; help them to meet others
- put a ‘buddy system’ in place whereby new people help with tea etc so they feel useful
- be less cliquey – encourage people NOT to simply talk to those they already know well
- revive the ‘welcoming/pastoral group’ – 2 volunteers from each section
- provide a Welcome Pack that outlines how the choir works, protocols, people and values
- help-line or WhatsApp group for members to ask questions/raise issues
- the music can be quite intimidating for new people – think about how to ease them in and encourage them
- organise an occasional ‘talent-show’ so choir members can perform for each other, or create something in a small group and showcase what they can do
- bring back end of term party – we need more time to socialise

- structured events where we mix people for a purpose (eg the AGM)
- emphasise the value of name badges.

Diversity:

- more targeted outreach to bring in people who haven't sung in a choir before, eg via churches, schools, community organisations
- offer taster sessions and workshops
- include works by ethnic composers in our repertoire
- ensure our repertoire reflects a range of cultural traditions and experiences
- organise focus groups with groups we want to attract
- aim for a more diverse choir leadership – Trustees and musicians
- broaden advertising
- perform in more popular community settings.

Participation:

- create several small working groups to focus on specific aspects of Vox, eg concert planning and logistics; promotion and marketing; IT and social media; fundraising; pastoral care; social events/food/wine.....etc
- and other one-off groups for specific projects to extend member involvement

ANNEX A: Additional recommendations from the member survey – some have been implemented:

Rehearsals:

Members made many suggestions as to how we might improve rehearsals, including:

- more emphasis on warm-ups and singing technique
- advance notice of what we will cover each week – helps to focus practice
- more sectionals early on until we know the music
- ensure good sightlines (esp in concerts)
- occasional workshops to focus on skills and singing technique
- more note-bashing and work on understanding our cues re timing (though some also complain about too much note-bashing)
- 'less is more' – more teaching, less 'run-throughs'
- help with how to sustain voice strength and stamina
- more learning by ear – less focus on reading the score
- focus on getting that first note – plus breathing – diction
- reduce the amount of chit-chat – it's disrespectful and makes it even harder to hear H/J
- better management of people who sing too loud or are out of tune
- more attention to needs of people with disabilities
- arrange seating to mirror concert lay-out early on
- start promptly and maybe have shorter breaks to maximise singing
- would help to have a shared written set of values and behaviour

Performances:

Suggestions relating to performances included:

- more care re seating arrangements and sightlines
- shorter concerts
- more variety – eg classical and contemporary composers

- avoid too much repetition – ideally at least 18 months before we repeat something
- social justice themes can be heavy for some people (though most people felt positive about this aspect of Vox)
- need more focus on uplifting music re love, joy, community, harmony.....
- how we present ourselves in concerts – eg standing/sitting together, handling scores
- ensuring good quality sound systems – and lighting sometimes
- making sure the band doesn't drown out the choir
- involving children's choirs and partnering with other choirs is important
- include lyrics in the programme

Plus: The things some people said they DON'T like.

- The feeling of being a backing group for soloists
- working on too many pieces in one term – need to focus on less and make it perfect
- the pace can be too much sometimes – feeling pressurised
- when we don't have the right balance btw vocal sections
- being drowned out by the band at concerts
- seating arrangements at concerts not always helpful
- not sure why we record so much
- too much repetition
- Chamber Choir sometimes seems to 'take over'
- learning new music as a whole choir can be hard – we need more sectionals
- members could help more with practical tasks – tea etc and on concert days
- would like us to be more diverse – esp ethnically
- acoustics at St Luke's are very problematic – not being able to hear Harvey
- not enough classical repertoire.

ANNEX B: Challenging questions which still need further discussion – crunch points:

- In line with our vision and values, how can we ensure that we are as diverse as possible, that we reflect the communities in which we live, and that we reach out to and build links to all parts of the wider community?
- How should we manage our level of ambition – what is our appetite for risk? How can we best plan ahead in terms of programmes/funding? More work is needed to develop a 3-year plan and to set an overall direction for where we want to be in (say) 10-years' time.
- Linked to this - how do we maintain the sort of eclectic and innovative repertoire that makes us distinct? How can we best combine original and existing work; balance new and repeat performances; include a range of genres; be guided by Harvey, and also supportive of other composers/musicians; encourage a diversity of input in terms of gender and ethnicity?
- How can we better align our charitable initiatives with core musical activities and engage the whole choir more effectively?
- How can we address the question of succession – both in terms of our Organisational and our Artistic Leadership?
- How can we implement the Strategic Review action plan in a way that makes us a more effective organisation, and at the same time, preserve our creativity, flexibility and freedom to respond to unforeseen opportunities, inspirational moments and unexpected circumstances?