

Vox Holloway AGM 23rd June 2025

Present:

Penny Crick	Damian Stanfield	Liesbeth de Block	Ros Davies
Paul Cairns	Ellie Whittaker	Rita Bartlett	Peter Whincup
Joanna Sholem	Francesca Raphael	Inga Wolf	Robert Williams
Stevie Porter	Lincoln	Kate Brook	Tammy Walker
Charles Johnson	Claire Dawson	Hugh Richarson	Marion Barber
Bruna Cattini	Aygul Erce	Tricia Kelly	Guy Comley
Pippa Stobbs	Robin Simpson	Robin Chandler	Katherine Heffernan
Fiona Ledger	Jonathan Sedgwick	Mishmish Dev	Katie Warner
Judy Grahame	Barbara Grender-Jones	Lucy Watson	Polly Barker
Juliet Michaelson	Heather Gardiner	Pete Sutton	Tricia Zipfel
Douglas Campbell	Joshua Winfield	Kate Chapman	
Marion Cullen	Elisabeth Dabell	William Irwin Hunt	
Angela Burnett	Martin McEnery	Sophie Laws	
Maggie Tomlin	Helen Roe	Anderson Inge	
Fay Clark	Sarah Bennison	Jane Hodges	
Elaine Spicer	Julia Steen	Jo Tunnard	
Peter Scott	Martin Buck	Archie Onslow	

Apologies: Harvey Brough, Caroline Millar, Sheena Cruse.

Minutes of the last meeting: Approved

1: Introduction

Tricia Zipfel (TZ) welcomed the membership to the meeting.

2: Overview of 2024 – Polly Barker (PB) and Lucy Watson (LW)

LW ran through the 2024 Concert. we extended our reach by performing in five key venues across central, north and east London, in addition to St Luke's – blending classical works with our own original repertoire:

- Feb In The Studio With The Specials Aka - St Luke's
- Mar The Sun Does Shine - Hackney Empire
- Jul The Village Green Preservation Society & Arthur- Alexandra Palace
- Nov A Ceremony Of Carols, Rejoice In The Lamb & Now We Are () Six - St James' Piccadilly
 - Freedom Song (Chamber Choir) - Ragged School Museum
- Dec Bells Of Paradise (Chamber Choir) - St Luke's

Other successes included:

- Winning a national award for our documentary, *Between the Bars*
- Being invited by Making Music to do a seminar on Vox/The Sun Does Shine
- Having our podcast broadcast 3 times across the UK prison estate
- Having it picked up by the BBC Radio 4, Illuminated, and selected for Pick of the Week

PB ran through partnerships and projects both here in the UK and in the USA:

- Singing with University of Southampton Voices and Campsbourne School at Ally Pally
- An ongoing relationship with Equal Justice Initiative in Alabama and Anthony Ray Hinton re The Sun Does Shine
- The opportunity to sing Freedom Song in the iconic Ragged School Museum and potentially do more work with them in future
- Building links with UK former prisoners via Irene Taylor Trust and the national Prison Radio Association
- Our links with local and some national criminal justice organisations enabled us to allocate 50 free seats for TSDS, many to former prisoners and their families.

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- One of these campaigns, AMICUS has asked us to do follow work with them and sing at a major event in the Inns of Court this November.
- We initiated a thorough Strategic Review that asked difficult questions and scrutinised how we operate with a view to an even better future for the choir. More on that later...

3: Financial Review Jonathan Sedgwick (JS)

JS noted that we are as a registered charity required to do annual accounts that need to be in the public domain (a copy of the accounts is on the website) and be approved by the members. An independent examiner reviews and signs off the accounts. JS wanted to thank the independent examiner Graeme Tait who has volunteered to do this for us again this year.

In 2024 we did 3 out of 4 major concerts in large venues. JS ran through the main points of income for 2024.:

- Concerts at Hackney Empire and Alexandra Palace
- Increase in choir numbers – and therefore subs.
- Grants – 2 from Arts Council and 1 from The Backstage Trust.
- Donations – money from choir in addition to subs.
- Marmalade and jewellery sales.

Outgoings

- Musicians and freelancers
- Event costs

Thanks to St. Luke's for continuing to accommodate and support the choir. JS noted that the core running costs of Vox are very low.

We are building up a reserve year on year and our cash position remains very strong. We are considering a new commission for 2027.

Tricia offered thanks to JS for his work as treasurer. And to others who had helped Vox over 2024:

- St. Luke's for their ongoing support.
- Ed and Steph for the Sun Does Shine film, *Between the Bars*.
- Sam Liebmann and choir member Abigail Morris who, with support from Teezo Kargbo from Sierra Leone, put together the podcast.
- The Accenture consultants who worked pro bono on the Strategic Review, and Alicia Francis, who did the 1-2-1 interviews and helped put together the report.
- Artists such as Wills and Christina, Rick and James, David Le Page, Dan and Kate and many others, who have worked with the choir over the past year.
- All the Vox volunteers including Maggie and Lizzie. And the extended Vox family who get roped in for concert duty, especially Tom, Mike, Carmel and Freddie.

4: Approval of the annual report and accounts

Tricia Zipfel invited the membership to approve the Annual Report and Accounts 2024 and recommend them to the Charity Commission. The membership approved them by a show of hands. There were no objections and no abstentions. The report was approved unanimously.

5: Elections

Current Committee:

Polly Barker informed the choir that, according to the Vox Holloway constitution, the Committee consisted of three elected Executive Trustees (Chair, Treasurer, Secretary), and two elected Trustees. They were elected for a term of two years. In addition, up to four Co-opted trustees could be invited to join the Committee by the elected members at any time.

Currently the Executive Trustees were Tricia Zipfel, chair; Jonathan Sedgwick, treasurer; and Sheena Cruse, secretary. Caroline Miller, and Polly Barker are elected Trustees. Lucy Watson, Eleanor Whittaker and Joshua Winfield, are Co-opted Trustees.

PB noted that a request had been sent out asking for other nominees but none had been received and that trustees who were coming to the end of their 2 year term were standing for re-election.

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Tricia Zipfel – Chair – Proposed: Helen Roe, Seconded: Tricia Kelly. Was elected

Jon Sedgwick – Treasurer – Proposed: Angela Burnett Seconded: Sarah Bennison. Was elected.

Sheena Cruse – Secretary – Proposed: Fay Clark Seconded: Francesca Raphael. Was elected.

Caroline Miller – Proposed: Jo Tunnard Seconded: Hugh Richardson. Was elected.

Polly Barker is embarking on the second year of her two-year term and therefore would continue in post.

6: Strategic Review

Tricia Zipfel outlined the Strategic Review. The committee will put a project plan together over the next few weeks, but there is currently an action plan which is available to view on the internet.

The aim of the SR is to look at the role and form of Vox going forward. The key areas of debate:

- Who we are and what makes us special
 - Community focus and rootedness
 - Artistic Ambitions
 - Relevance – making music related to social justice issues.

We need to communicate these aims better, initially via values, mission statement and welcome pack. We felt we needed to change the legal structure to enable us to grow and to protect the trustees. We want to encourage more members to take on a leadership role. We are going to examine our roles and make it easier for members to step up and take on more work and responsibilities. The new sub-committee groups will be one of the first elements of this.

- Marketing and communication
- Concert planning
- Membership and pastoral support
- Fundraising and outreach

Funding – we want to try and find some core, long term funding that would enable more planning and support.

Artistic vision. This has to connect with and inspire the choir, reflect what members care about and also be informed by the feedback we get from our audiences. This means planning much further ahead. We want to have a 3-5 year artistic strategy for Vox. We would like to commission another big work by 2027. We would also like to take something to the Proms sometime after 2028.

Improving the quality of our singing. This came strongly out of the feedback. We have already begun to act on this, hence the recent workshop, and have future plans.

Maintaining the culture of Vox – especially with regard to new members and sharing the load. Trying to ensure the choir is as diverse as possible and reflects the local community. The choir is less diverse than it was before covid and there are ideas to address this in the action plan.

7: Decision to Change the Constitution: Joshua Winfield (JW)

JW outlined the proposal to incorporate the charity into a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). We would still be regulated by the Charity Commission. The main reason to do this is to provide limited liability to the trustees and members. JW gave an example of recent problems when working with the BBC under our current unincorporated status. A secondary advantage is that the CIO will be a legal entity in itself which makes things like signing contracts slightly easier. A side benefit is that we would be registered as Vox Holloway, the name which had been previously retained by Justin Butcher who has kindly agreed for us to take the name on.

JW is re-drafting the constitution to slightly change the structure of the trustees to allow for a larger number of trustees to be voted in rather than co-opted. It would also allow us to include 2 non-singing trustees if needed on an ongoing basis – not formally elected but with specialist skill that the trustees feel would be useful.

Timeline

1. We will vote on the key amendments this evening to enable us to begin the changeover process.
2. The committee will then register the name of Vox Holloway.

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3. There is then a procedure to transfer the assets from one entity to another without leaving the trustees exposed to financial liabilities.
4. Once assets are transferred, Vox continues as a new charity, and at the next AGM we vote to wind up the old charitable entity.

8: Vote on the constitutional change

1. Amending the current constitution.
 - Inserting an amendment power for the members to wind up the charity by 2/3 majority
 - Once the decision to wind up the charity is taken, the trustees stay in office to carry out the winding up
 - To give the trustees the power to take the resolution forward and transfer the assets.

JW asked if anyone was against the amendment resolutions – no one was opposed and this was carried unanimously.

2. The resolution to authorise the trustees to take the process forward – this was carried.

9.0 End

Tricia gave thanks and ended the AGM