



NEWS



The Executive Committee met virtually using Zoom on 6th March and 4th July 2021. We next plan to meet on Saturday 11th September.

Working together

FCOCA is a special organisation that appeals to former choristers, but we have much in common with other organisations. The aim is for FCOCA, CMT (Cathedral Music Trust), RSCM (Royal School of Church Music) and CSA (Choir Schools Association) to work much closer together but retain our own identity. We have met senior committee members of each, and Nick (our Chairman) recently had a very helpful meeting with Alexander Armstrong, recently appointed as the Choral Ambassador for CMT.

International Chorister Day – 19th September 2021

International Chorister Day is a new initiative from the RSCM to celebrate the opportunities and experiences available to choristers at all levels from grand cathedrals to local parishes. RSCM is collecting “stories” from existing or former choristers about experiences of being a chorister, and want our help.

Further details can be found at the RSCM webpage www.rscm.org.uk/get-involved/international-chorister-day/ where you will find details of the showcase event in Croydon (including how to join) but also other events happening - they will be adding to the list over the next few weeks.

Also coming soon on the RSCM webpage is a place for sharing your experiences of being a chorister. If you are a Twitter or Instagram user, then this hashtag will feed directly to it: **#InternationalChoristerDay**

Alternatively, you can email your material to enquiries@rscm.com and they will include it for you – or click [here](#) to complete a simple form. For some inspiration, have a read of and listen to some of the stories that are already up there.

2021 AGM – 16th October

This year's AGM will take place via Zoom on Saturday 16th October. We chose not to meet in person again this year but decided to keep the original date.

Further details will be sent out later by email and published on the Website. We hope to refresh our branding, constitution, and Festival preparation notes to make things simpler and easier to understand.

We are also looking for people who wish to join us on the committee to help drive The Federation forward and keep it relevant to existing members and attractive to new members, especially former girl choristers and younger former choristers.

2021 FESTIVAL (Ely)

Unfortunately, the Festival due to be held in October this year in Ely had been cancelled. We hope to meet up there next year and have been advised that **the proposed dates are 9th to 11th September 2022**. The Executive Committee would like to take the opportunity to thank the Ely former choristers for their efforts, patience, and determination in these difficult times.

The 2023 Festival is planned to be held in Warwick and will form part of St Mary's and the choir's 900th anniversary.

WHAT DO MEMBERS WANT FROM THE FEDERATION?

Nick Hodges, our Chairman, has continued his pledge to speak to all current (about 50) member associations, to gain an understanding of the challenges facing our members and to discuss what the Federation could be doing to help. After some more very constructive meetings, comments include the challenges of encouraging others to get involved, getting younger members and former girl choristers involved (who often don't like formality and like things to be more family orientated), and share information at national level and cross organisation. More meetings are already in the diary. Feedback has already led to proposals to update our branding and documentation (to be proposed at the AGM), changes to our website and social media presence, as well as inform us on how we should project ourselves to the outside world.

DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

Arnold and Ollie continue to look at the development of The Federation. They shared with the committee their initial ideas with suggestions including: updating our database or investing in a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system; to build the value of membership; improve our image; make members feel loved again; create a membership pack. It was suggested that we make 2024 a special year for Former Choristers and Choristership in general. Ollie has taken over control of our Facebook page.

ONCE A CHORISTER MAGAZINE

The 2020 edition of Once a Chorister magazine was published to our website in November last year. If you have not already done so, please do go to the website where you will find the link on the Home page.

As mentioned in our last newsletter, Honorary Secretary, Alastair Pollard hopes to publish the 2021 edition of Once a Chorister magazine on our website in November 2021 and is inviting interesting information and articles to be emailed to him by the end of October 2021. (Secretary@fcoca.org.uk) so it's time to get writing.

Please send your own Association newsletters to Alastair (Secretary@FCOCA.org.uk) so that they can be published on the Federation website, alongside the magazine. You may feel that, because of COVID, not a lot has happened in the last 12 months but you'll be surprised. There has been a lot of very enterprising activity in our choirs to keep the interest and skills alive. Do please share these experiences with other OaC readers.

REGALIA INSURANCE

We mentioned in the last newsletter that, at the March Executive Committee meeting, it was agreed that The Federation will cease to offer insurance for Association regalia to its members and ask Associations to make their own arrangements for insuring their regalia (if they have any) from June 2022. The Executive Committee has undertaken a review of its insurance arrangements, and has re-affirmed its earlier decision, which will now be brought to the AGM for ratification. The Executive Committee would welcome your comments on this decision but urges Associations who currently have their regalia insured through the Federation arrangement to begin considering what alternative arrangements can be made.