



Revelation Rock-Gospel Choirs proposal of changes 2017

I feel we have reached a point in Rev's history where we need to ask some big questions about the future. This is not just my feeling, as I understand it, but is something several people have been saying to me over the last year.

We will be having an Emergency General Meeting in Coventry in place of June/July Forum to discuss and vote on proposals of how Rev should move forward (as discussed during the April 2017 forum meeting).

The proposal is comprised of four points, and a vote will be taken on each point separately. The following groups will get one combined vote per group (so there will be a sum total of 7 voting groups):

- Each active choir (i.e. Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Leeds, York – votes to be taken by the choir as usual at a rehearsal or via email as they choose, and then conveyed to the meeting by the choir's representative)
- Volunteer Staff Team (votes to be taken in person at the meeting or via email)
- Revvers that do not fall into either of the above categories, but who have attended a Rev event since January 2015 (votes to be taken in person at the meeting or via email)

We propose the following changes to the running of the charity Revelation Rock-Gospel Choirs and its associated network of choirs. The Trustees are looking into the legal implications of these changes if they are voted in; there have been specific queries over whether changing the name would require closing down and setting up a new charity with the new name, and whether that then could keep the "Revelation" part or not. These questions are still being looked into, which is why there are some 'if's around point 2. We will ensure there is clarity over this in time for votes to be taken for the EGM.

1. That Revelation's Aims & Values be amended to allow for the inclusion of community choirs as well as University-based choirs. Each current choir would have the choice between remaining a University choir or becoming a community choir (still within the network). The volunteer team would then be in a position to pilot one or two new community choirs (provided there are willing volunteers to organise this).
2. That the name of the charity and its associated network of choirs be changed:
 - That "Rock-Gospel" be replaced (or not) by one of the following options:
 - "Rock-Gospel" [no change]
 - "Gospel"
 - "Pop"
 - [complete removal – just 'choirs']
 - That – if it is found to be necessary for legal reasons – "Revelation" be replaced with a new name. There have been various specific suggestions, including "Revolution", "Phoenix", "Link" and just "Rev", but our proposal is for change 'in principle' so that the specific name can be chosen at a later date after further consultation.
3. That the phrase "Christian-based" in the Aims & Values be revised to "with Christian links" and that choirs be given more explicit freedom to choose how prominently and in what way they advertise and interpret this aspect.



4. That the current annual events calendar (WiM in April, RESITS in August, R@C in December) be cancelled for 2018 at least, and a new events calendar conceived from scratch, focussing more on shorter and simpler weekend events in the first year (with the hope of building back up to events like WiM/RESITS after a year or two).

We appreciate many of you who have been involved in Rev over the years may be wondering why we are proposing such changes. It is partly to do with a recognition of the fairly desperate situation a lot of our choirs are in – having lost 3 choirs at the start of 2017, and having 3 out of the current 5 choirs in a position of very low membership and instability. It is also to do with a recognition of the fact we no longer have the people-power within the network to address these issues properly or to sustain the types of event we have run in the past. Therefore we discussed a number of options at April Forum 2017, and came up with the above proposals within that discussion. ‘We’ here refers to those present at that meeting and others who gave their views to that meeting in advance.

We thought that branching out into community choirs would allow us to reach a wider demographic in the network as a whole. We felt this would create the potential for increased network event attendance, building up more resource for the organisation of those events. We also felt that giving current choirs the option to become community choirs may be freeing and helpful for some, where their membership is predominantly non-student and they struggle to meet Students Union requirements. We also believe that Revelation does not have the unique selling point in Universities that it used to, but that its values are worth perpetuating even if it is becoming harder to do that in the way we have been accustomed to.

We also discussed a feeling that there are a couple of things that add unnecessary complication when publicising Rev – the epithet “rock-gospel” and the “Christian-based” emphasis. We felt that “rock-gospel” could require a bit of explaining, and that maybe it does not actually describe our genre any more. It sounds like we do hard rock, when it’s mostly pop and gospel. We also noted that “Christian-based” was a phrase that many people had found off-putting when considering joining Revelation, although many others also joined primarily because of this aspect. We felt that a more accurate description of our choirs and network might be “with Christian links” – still acknowledging the association with gospel music, churches and Christianity, but sounding a bit less like we are a church or a Christian Union thing, which we aren’t.

We noted how event attendance has been dropping, that RESITS did not run in 2016 (although a replacement small-scale event took place in Ireland), and that WiM 2017 was very small compared to previous years (about 15 attendees, most of whom were team). We felt that these events have become more of a burden to those who feel they have to make sure they happen, rather than an enjoyable challenge and/or opportunity to do something new. The idea of starting from scratch on the events calendar was appealing, as we would actually be allowing people to do something totally new, and it could be smaller scale and lower effort for those involved.

We thought, in summary, that the changes now being proposed would allow Rev the chance to have a refreshing new start, to continue to perpetuate the ethos that we feel is so important without some of the shackling things that we felt might have been holding us back.