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PRESENTATION OF RSCM
LONDON AREA COMMITTEE
TO LONDON FORUM

The RSCM in the Diocese of London has a brand new, lively and exciting committee made up of eminent and well respected musicians, under the expert chairmanship of Michael Turvey, whom I'm sure many of you know. This committee, and its individuals, are a fantastic resource for every parish in the Diocese – and I do mean every parish.

If you are a parish with a robed choir, then you probably already know about the type of courses and Festivals that are being arranged. But, are you a parish which is struggling to find musical leadership and looking at the possibilities of Cantor led worship – or had you not yet considered this as an option? I know that Rosemary Field is intending to run courses for Cantors next year. Rosemary has vast experience and huge success in this area, having previously been the Diocesan Music Advisor to the Diocese of Portsmouth.

Are you a parish where the week in – week out congregational music has simply got tired, but you are nervous to introduce anything new – or is it simply the case that you do not have anyone to teach or communicate it to your congregations? The RSCM Committee is there as a resource to help you – only a 'phone call away – which could result in someone coming to teach your faithful a new Eucharist setting, or whatever is needed.

Are you a parish with a thriving music group looking for more adventurous targets, or are you a parish where instrumentalists are inflicting musical pain upon their congregation? Or do you simply want help with setting up a group, or do not really understand what role instruments can play in worship? Or, if you have a band, where do you find the instrumental parts for a flute, bassoon and bagpipe?

Experienced expertise is available to you from your local RSCM Committee.

You may be a keyboard player who has become a reluctant organist who has to play on a Sunday because there is no-one else. If you feel you need individual help – shout for it. There really are people who are ready and very eager to help. Rosemary Field, I know, has plans to lead a course entitled "From Pianist to Organist". Details of this, as well as the Cantors' course are available. Other events on 'Reading Music', 'Leading and Rehearsing', 'Choosing Music for Services', and an Organ Studies course are also planned.

A Church Music Convention is to be planned locally for next year which will be an aid to all church musicians, from every background, churchmanship, and style. You will be foolish not to take advantage of it, clergy and musicians alike.

One of the thrilling things about church music is that, at whatever stage we may be at, we never stop learning - there is always something fresh and uplifting that we haven't experienced yet – and that fresh experience comes from working, meeting, and learning from each other.

The RSCM has traditionally had the deserved reputation of being an organisation which has responsibility for the traditional robed choir in a Cathedral or large Parish Church situation.

It still does that well, but we are anxious that the barriers of misunderstanding that we only do that are broken down. The RSCM is an advisory body for every parish and every church musician, at whatever level, and encompassing every style. That is why the make-up and chemistry of your London Committee embraces musicians from a diversity of backgrounds and churchmanship.

The 'Voice for Life' training scheme is now very well established and used by many choirs. Of course, the joyous thing about this scheme is that it can include secular choirs as well – and for the first time – adult singers. More and more adult singers, from teenagers to the retired, are taking advantage of this well structured training scheme. It really does work well, and is a constructive goal for all singers.

The publication "Sunday by Sunday" continues to be a good resource to many churches. If you have not come across it, then get one. Every Director of Music and incumbent should have one. It gives detailed help with the choice of hymns and service music for every Sunday of the year as well as relevant music which ties in with the themes of the readings. So if you are selecting hymns by lottery, "Sunday by Sunday" will be a great help to you.

As well as the more relevant local events, the RSCM continues to organise events nationally. Leaflets about some of these courses are available, as well as a list of committee members and useful contact details, and information about forthcoming events in this area.

So, do please take advantage of the RSCM – it is there to help, support and encourage – and to enrich everyone

I wish you all well in the music-making of your churches. Remember – we musicians have the ability to make or break a liturgy. We should be setting the right environment for folk to come into for worship. Our pastoral and outreach opportunities are immense; so let us all build on what we already do, and help create that contagious environment. Music is the bicycle upon which the liturgy should ride.

Good luck – thank you for listening.