

SUSSEX VOICEWORKS

H A N D B O O K

Welcome to Sussex Voiceworks. We hope that you enjoy singing with us, learning more about music, and making new friends. This handbook is designed to give you some insight into how the choir operates, and answer those questions that new members often ask.

Background:

Sussex Voiceworks, a member of the National Federation of Music Societies, and a Registered Charity, has been in existence for many years. The choir is affiliated to the charity 'Making Music'. We are a mixed choir with members of all ages who enjoy tackling an exciting repertoire in a lively social environment.

Membership:

Sussex Voiceworks does not audition potential new members. There are therefore no preconditions or requirements for membership, other than enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to attend rehearsals. Some degree of musical literacy is preferred, but the ability to read music or to sing from sight, although useful, is not mandatory.

Joining:

New members are always welcome throughout the year, although there is obviously greater advantage in joining at or near the beginning of either half of the season, in September and January. Potential new members are invited to come and sing with the choir for a few weeks before making any decision.

Membership Fees:

Fees, set by the Committee, are as published from year to year.

Members who meet the tax threshold are encouraged to gift aid their annual subscription, which can be paid as a lump sum, or spread over two instalments. Details of concessions are available from the Treasurer.

Pro-rata fees for January-June are available, but no instalment plan is available for these.

Rehearsals:

Rehearsals are held at St Peter's RC Hall, West St, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 5WG. We rehearse weekly between September and June, with breaks for Christmas and Easter holidays, between 7.15 – 9.15pm on Monday evenings.

Members are required to bring a 2B pencil to mark music, and it is suggested members bring bottled water.

There is a fifteen minute break during the rehearsal. Notices are given during the break and members should ensure that they listen carefully to these notices, which contain useful information. Other information may be posted on our website or emailed/posted to members.

Registration and Attendance:

Members are expected to arrive in time to register and to be in their place by 7.15 pm when the rehearsal will begin. Please tell the Membership Secretary if you know in advance of any rehearsals you will be unable to attend.

A condition of membership is to attend as many rehearsals as possible, and it is expected that everyone will attend a minimum of 70% of regular meetings, except in abnormal circumstances. Rehearsals immediately preceding a concert are considered to be essential and members are expected to make such rehearsals a priority.

Concert Attendance:

Members who are in arrears of fees, and/or who have not attended sufficient rehearsals, will not be eligible to sing up for any major public performance. The Director of Music has the sole right to over-ride this rule, and may also invite non-members to sing at such performances. Evening public concerts are preceded by a mandatory afternoon rehearsal. The Director of Music alone has the right to excuse any member from these rehearsals.

Committee:

A Committee, elected by members at the AGM, administers the affairs of Sussex Voiceworks. Apart from the normal Officers, the Committee includes members acting in a range of roles, including Membership Secretary, Music Librarian, Tour Manager etc.

Paid Professionals:

The Director of Music and Accompanist are paid professionals engaged on behalf of the choir. Other paid professionals may be engaged from time to time. All other officials are voluntary.

Social events:

The Committee arranges social events during the year, past examples include a quiz and a post-concert party. There is an annual Choir Dinner in June.

Website:

The choir has a website www.sussexvoiceworks.co.uk.

Concerts and Public Performances:

Throughout the year members present and participate in numerous concerts and events in both innovative and traditional venues. These usually include Christmas and Summer Concerts and occasional charity functions such as carol singing. The choir also performs extensively in the UK and has travelled abroad in the past. Tours are biennial, and are voluntary.

Concert Discipline:

All Choir members participating in public performances are required to wear the concert dress as approved by the Director of Music and Management Committee

The Director of Music has the authority to grant permission to amend in any way the agreed Concert Dress. Such permission is likely to be given in very exceptional circumstances only, and would apply for one specific occasion, and for one specific individual.

All music must be held in black plain undecorated folders, and/or with individual scores covered in black.

Choir entrances, exits and general platform department is under the direction of an appointed member of the Choir for all public events.

Music:

The Music Librarian will make every effort to provide a copy of every score to each choir member, but this cannot be guaranteed. There will be an annual charge to cover the cost of providing music scores.

Delays in returning scores to the Music Librarian when asked can result in high library fines. It is the responsibility of individual members to return all borrowed music immediately once it is finished with. Please note that individual members are liable for any charges incurred which result from scores not returned.

Photocopied Music:

It is strictly forbidden to use photocopied music for public performances unless permission has previously been given. The Laws of Copyright are very strict, and the Performing Rights Society can and does take choirs to court for using unauthorised photocopies. Fines of several thousand pounds have been levied in such cases.

Equal Opportunities:

The Choir's policy is to ensure that no choir member, member of staff, visitor or other person, with whom it may come into contact, receives less favourable treatment on the ground of sex, race, colour, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation.

Members have agreed to this policy.

Data Protection Act:

The Data Protection Act 2018 "sets new standards for protecting general data, in accordance with the GDPR, giving people more control over use of their data, and providing them with new rights to move or delete personal data."¹

In accordance with this act, the annual membership registration form contains the following **Privacy statement** which is signed on joining/renewing membership.

"The (*personal*) details above are retained on the Sussex Voiceworks database. This is stored on a computer hard drive and backed up on a dedicated memory store.

¹ Data Protection Act 2018 Factsheet – Overview

The details are only made available to elected choir committee officials, for the purposes of recording the membership of the choir, fee payments and distribution of music scores.

In addition, the details are made available to elected choir committee officials for the purposes of communication. You will only receive communications about Sussex Voiceworks choir activities and news, including the annual mailing and AGM notices; rehearsal and concert details; bad weather arrangements.

By signing the registration form below, you agree to the retention and use of your personal details as described in this statement.

If you cease to be a member of the choir, you will be asked to confirm whether you wish your details to be retained for future communications. If not confirmed, they will be deleted permanently from the database.”

Emergency Evacuation procedure:

Please ensure you read the specific details at each rehearsal venue, familiarise yourself with the use of appropriate emergency equipment, the nearest means of escape, and remain vigilant at all times.

- When an alarm is sounded/raised, all members, where able, must leave the building by the nearest emergency exit and proceed to a designated assembly point.
- Emergency exits are identified with signs.
- Lifts must not be used
- Any person with limited mobility, or otherwise impaired, should be assisted via the nearest and safest exit.
- Re-entry to the building is prohibited until the ALL CLEAR has been given by an authorised member of the Committee.

Mission Statement:

Our objectives, as registered with the Charity Commissioners, are to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in and the appreciation of the art and science of music in all its aspects by the presentation of public concerts and recitals.

Comments/Suggestions:

All comments, suggestions, proposals, criticisms and complaints are taken seriously, and should be communicated via a committee member.

Charity Registration:

Sussex Voiceworks is a Registered Charity Number 1058273

Disclaimer:

The information contained in this document is, to the best of our knowledge, correct at the time of going to press. However, no liability can be accepted for any errors or omissions which may occur within it.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

1.1 Sussex Voiceworks (known as “the Society” or “SV” in this document) is fully committed to safeguarding any children, young people and vulnerable adults who take part in any activities organised, namely rehearsals, concerts and the Choral Development Activities. A safe environment will be provided with the promotion of safe practice, and challenging of unsafe and poor practice.

The Society is committed to ensuring all members help to promote this good practice and all those elected to the committee will take the lead on ensuring this policy is upheld.

1.2 This policy is written in two steps to cover the safeguarding of children and young persons (any minor less than 18 years) followed by safeguarding of vulnerable adults and those who may have special needs. (those over 18 years).

1.3 This policy is also written to bear in mind the presence of the Health & Safety at Work Act and to acknowledge the formation of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and the introduction of the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS)

2. Purpose & Mission of SV

The purpose and mission of SV can be found in the Members Handbook and in hard copy from the Secretary.

3. Aims

3.1 To keep children safe by ensuring all members (including paid professionals) are aware of all possible risks and have the confidence to express concerns during rehearsals and concerts or any choral development activities.

3.2 To actively raise awareness with all members, of the safeguarding issues which relate any persons under the age of 18 or any vulnerable adults who take part in SV activities.

4. Who does this policy cover?

SV is not a childcare provider and so this policy is written to cover the individuals listed, in the event that any children, young people or vulnerable adults are in their presence:

- The Committee and Trustees
- Musical Director and Rehearsal pianist
- Any external musicians taking part in SV activities
- Any members of sub-committees such as schools liaison, community development and marketing

- All members of the Society who are taking part in events where children, young people or vulnerable adults are to be involved.

5. Police Checks

While SV does not require any members to undertake a DBS check there are those within the society who hold a DBS through their workplace or other organisations. The Musical Director carries DBS and at no time is any person left alone with any young people or vulnerable adults, or assumed to be in loco parentis.

6. Children and Young Persons

6.1 Definition

In the case of SV extra care must be taken to ensure a safe and secure environment is provided for all children and young people (defined as being under the age of 18). This includes prevention of any physical harm as well as any other form of abuse. Those providing the activity should also be aware that the child may be receiving abuse from another source and know what course of action to take.

6.2 Concerns

Any person who is concerned that there is a possibility, however vague, that a child is at risk, **has a duty of care** to bring their concerns to the attention of a committee member who can then discuss a course of action with the relevant individual.

6.3 Bullying

SV will always take steps to ensure that no bullying of any form occurs. It is important to respond to bullying because it hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying and everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Those who are behaving as bullies need to learn different ways of behaving.

The most obvious cause of bullying is name-calling due to an individual's appearance, unusual feature or impairment.

6.4 Procedure for the First Person Informed in a Case of Disclosure

If a child or young person discloses evidence of abuse or bullying the following steps should be taken:

- Simply listen, do not interrogate or cross-question the person who is giving the information, do not ask leading questions or make suggestions;
- Explain that you will have to pass on this information;
- Make notes immediately as a reminder of times, dates and names and what has been said by self and informant;
- Do not make any promises or confirmation of confidentiality

7. Vulnerable Adults

7.1 Definition

The Police Act 1997 describes “Vulnerable adults” as those with any or all of the following:

- A learning or physical disability;
- A physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including addiction to alcohol or drugs;
- A reduction in mental capacity

7.2 Providing Assistance

SV is always willing to support any person who may require extra assistance with any activity while bearing in mind that needs vary from person to person.

The person providing assistance should always be sure that the individual requires help and is happy to receive it. It is appropriate to offer the assistance rather than acting on an assumption. Always let the individual be in charge and therefore in control i.e. no force should be used.

7.3 Bullying

Please see Section 6.3 of this policy

8. Handling of photographic materials

SV produce a number of documents throughout the season (namely posters, concert flyers and season brochures) which contain photographic images, some of which may include children, young people and vulnerable adults.

If the image is specifically of a child or young person then approval should be sought if not from the parent or guardian then from the individual to say they are happy for the image to be displayed. In certain cases it may be best to seek approval before any photos are taken.

November 2009

SUSSEX VOICEWORKS

CONSTITUTION AS AGREED AT A COMMITTEE MEETING DATED 10TH. APRIL 1996 AND APPROVED AT A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 9TH. 1996.

1. The name of the Society shall be the Sussex Voiceworks Choir, hereinafter referred to as the Choir.
2. The object of the Choir shall be to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of music in all its aspects by the presentation of public concerts and recitals; and for the general purposes of such charitable bodies

or for such purposes as shall be exclusively charitable, as the Trustees may from time to time decide.

3. Membership of the Choir shall be open to all those who pay the annual subscription at the appropriate rate or rates as shall be determined by the Committee, all subscriptions being payable in advance, and (in the case of performing members), who shall provide such evidence of musical ability as the Committee may require.
4. The management of the Choir shall be in the hands of an Executive Committee consisting of a Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, and a minimum of four and a maximum of seventeen other members. The Committee members shall be elected out of the Choir members at the Annual General Meeting; they shall hold office for one year and be eligible for re-election.
5. All arrangements for Concerts and other events and control of finance shall be in the hands of the Executive Committee.
6. In furtherance of objects, but not otherwise, the Executive Committee may exercise the following powers:
 - i. power to raise funds and to invite contributions provided that in raising funds the Executive Committee shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;
 - ii. power to buy, take on lease or in exchange, any property necessary for the achievement of the objects and to maintain and equip it for use;
 - iii. power, subject to any consents required by law, to borrow money and to charge all or part of the property of the Choir with repayments of the money so borrowed;
 - iv. power to employ such staff (who shall not be members of the Executive Committee) as are necessary for the pursuit of the objects and to make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of pensions and superannuation for staff and their dependents;
 - v. power to cooperate with other Charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in the furtherance of the objects

or of similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them;

- vi. power to establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions for all or any of the objects;
 - vii. power to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Executive Committee may think fit;
 - viii. power to do all such lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.
7. No individual shall be excluded from membership of the Choir or debarred from any official capacity on the Executive Committee on the grounds of sex, race, colour, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation.
8. The Musical Director and Accompanist, both of whom shall be eligible to be ex-officio members of the Executive Committee, shall be paid such reasonable honoraria as shall be agreed from time to time by the Executive Committee. When such matters are discussed the Musical Director and Accompanist, if present, shall not attend that part of the meeting.
- 9.
- i. The financial year shall end on July 31st.
 - ii. A banking account shall be opened in the name of the Choir and cheques shall be signed by the Treasurer and any one other signatory so authorised by the Executive Committee.
 - iii. Payments made by bank transfer shall be recorded by the Treasurer and approved once per calendar month by one other member, so authorised by the Executive Committee,
 - iv. The Choir shall receive donations, grants in aid and financial guarantees. Tickets for all or any of its concerts and other events shall be offered for sale to the public.
 - v. The income and property of the Choir whencesoever derived shall be applied solely towards promoting the objects of the Choir as set forth above, and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred either directly or indirectly to any member or

members of the Choir except in payment of legitimate expenses incurred on behalf of the Choir.

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In the event of the Choir being wound up, any assets remaining upon dissolution after the payment of proper debts and liabilities shall be transferred to a charitable institution or institutions having similar objects to those of the Choir.

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Within 26 weeks of the end of each financial year the members shall be summoned to an Annual General Meeting of which at least twenty one days notice in writing shall be given.

An Extraordinary General Meeting of which at least twenty one days notice in writing must be given to members may be called for by the Executive Committee or upon written request to the secretary, signed by at least twenty fully paid-up members of the Choir.

The financial accounts shall be independently examined and submitted to the members at the Annual General Meeting.

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The Constitution may be amended by a two thirds majority of the members present at any Annual or Special General Meeting provided that at least twenty one days notice of the proposed amendment has been sent to all members and provided that nothing herein contained shall authorise any amendments which shall have the effect of the Choir ceasing to be a Charity.

Amendments: AGM on November 1st. 1999

AGM on 28 January 2019

This Handbook was revised and approved by the Committee on 3 January 2019.