

RULES OF THE MIDLANDS HOSPITALS' CHOIR



1. The choir's Rules and any amendments will be circulated to all members. The choir's Rules will be published on its website and will be circulated to all new members by the Secretary.
2. The Choir (charity) and its members shall be non-political and non-sectarian.
3. Singers and helpers must adhere to all legislation relating to discrimination. In particular, they must not discriminate on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, age, religion/belief or disability.

Election of Trustees and Associates

4. Choir Officers and Committee members (trustees) will be appointed to hold office for 4 years. The trustees will ensure that continuity is maintained by staggering the terms of office thereby avoiding a situation where all the trustees finish their appointments at the same time. Trustees may resign their posts by giving as much notice as possible and preferably 6 months' notice to the Secretary.
5. Retiring trustees may offer themselves for re-election, subject to the agreement of the committee.
6. The trustees who are either new or standing for re-election shall be elected by a majority of the choir members, by a ballot if necessary, at the Annual General Meeting which shall be held in the autumn term on a date sanctioned by the trustees, or at a properly called Special General Meeting.
7. Members of the choir may offer themselves to serve on the committee by giving notice to the Secretary, in writing, at least 2 weeks prior to the AGM.
8. Trustees are precluded from holding office with another choir.
9. Trustees will hold a minimum of 4 meetings a year.
10. Associates will be appointed by the trustees with specific responsibilities for development of choir activities. Associates will be required to attend some but not all meetings.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

11. Members will receive four weeks' notice of an AGM.
12. Members wishing to propose items for the agenda should do so by giving the Secretary 2 weeks' notice in writing.
13. All registered members will have voting rights at General Meetings.
14. The Artistic Director, Conductor, Accompanist and any other members of the choir who receive a fee for whatever purpose, cannot be voting members.

Registered Members

15. A singer will become a member of the choir upon full payment of the season's subscription.
16. The rate of subscription will be determined by the trustees.
17. Singers in full-time education will be entitled to a reduced rate of subscription for each season.
18. Members are asked to make every effort to welcome new singers and act as 'buddies' to them, making sure that they have a friendly face to sit with and someone who will offer support and guidance.
19. Life members may be elected at the discretion of the trustees in recognition of outstanding service, but will not have voting rights. Life members will be entitled to a free ticket for concerts.
20. Trustees have the right to exclude a member who behaves inappropriately or who does not abide by these Rules.
21. Every effort will be made to provide suitable seating for singers who have mobility difficulties. However, some of the venues used do have limitations, for example: steps, no lifts, no barriers and if a singer chooses not to sit in the allocated seat, the trustees will not accept responsibility for their safety.

Finance

22. A bank account will be held in the name of Midlands Hospitals Choir.
23. There will be at least three authorised cheque signatories: Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. All cheques must be signed by two of the signatories.
24. The choir's financial year will end on the last day of August.
25. Subject to the retention of a working balance, funds in the bank account shall be remitted to the charity of the choir members' choice. The charity to be supported will be determined at the AGM. The amount to be remitted will be agreed by the trustees.
26. The financial position of the choir will be reviewed regularly by the trustees.
27. The Accounts shall be audited annually by independent examination.
28. All tax-paying members will be asked to complete a Gift Aid form. An annual return will be made to HMRC in order to claim Gift Aid.

Miscellaneous

29. Publicity
In order to ensure the success and financial viability of concerts, singers are asked to publicise and sell as many tickets as possible. To assist with this, flyers will be made available both by email and at rehearsals. Tickets will be available at rehearsals, and everyone is encouraged to buy Town Hall tickets through the choir rather than via the box office, saving the choir a substantial commission fee.
30. Music
A black music folder should be used at concerts. Folders will be made available for purchase at rehearsals.
Singers should acquire a personal copy of the carol book specified, for example, *Carols for Choirs 5*, copies of which may be purchased through the choir, or obtained elsewhere. Any additional music will be provided.
31. Attendance:
Singers are expected to attend at least 50% of all rehearsals. The trustees reserve the right to exclude a member from participation in a concert should their attendance at rehearsals be deemed to be unacceptable.

Singers are required to attend rehearsals on concert days (afternoon rehearsals prior to evening concerts and morning rehearsals prior to matinees). Exceptions must be agreed with the Secretary.
32. Concert Dress:
Hospital uniforms at Christmas only (not mandatory). Seasonal head-gear at the Christmas concert is a 'must' for wearing during the jolly finale.
A red carnation (not provided) to be worn on the left (artificial ones will be available for purchase at rehearsals).

Ladies - Black long-sleeved blouses and full-length black skirts or tailored trousers, black shoes/tights. (If the temperature demands, we may opt for short sleeved tops in the spring/summer). A small black handbag may be carried.
Gentlemen - Dinner or black suit, white shirt, black bow tie, black socks/shoes.

The trustees reserve the right to exclude a member from participation in a concert should their concert attire be deemed to be unacceptable.
33. Data Protection
Personal details will be maintained by the Secretary on the choir's database in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Details will be removed upon request or after 5 years of non-attendance.
34. Records
The Secretary will maintain computer and hard copy records of all documents required by the Charities Commission and by the choir's constitution.

Singers should ensure that they mark their attendance on the registers provided, both at rehearsals and concerts.