

Southampton Choral Society

Members Handbook 2015

Welcome to Southampton Choral Society

We are pleased you have joined us and hope you enjoy singing with us for many years.

This handbook is to introduce you to Southampton Choral Society and also to welcome you into the family of our choir. We pride ourselves on our friendly atmosphere and this booklet is intended to give you details of our various activities.

1 People you should know

You should have already met your Section Representative and the Membership Secretary. Please ensure that the Membership Secretary has your correct address, phone number and e-mail address. The Section Representative is your first point of contact and any queries or comments should be directed to them. In the following sections of this handbook, you will find a number of other positions mentioned; a full list of these will be published each year following the Annual General Meeting.

2 Auditions

As you have received this handbook, you have already passed the entrance audition; re-auditions are normally held every three years.

3 Subscriptions

These are payable upon joining and are due thereafter at the first rehearsal in September each year. If you join in the spring or summer, you will pay a reduced subscription. Subscriptions should be paid to your Section Representative.

4 Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held every Monday at St James Methodist Church, St James Road, Southampton, SO15 5HE. Please arrive in good time as rehearsals start promptly at 7:15 pm. We rehearse until 9:30 with a short break in the middle.

There is normally no rehearsal on Bank holidays except for one of the two May Bank Holidays. We have a summer break from mid-July to early September and a shorter break over Christmas period. There may be some extra rehearsals prior to a concert if the Musical Director thinks it is necessary and these will be announced at rehearsals.

When you join your Section Representative will suggest a suitable seat for rehearsals. For concerts the seating plans change according to the works being performed and it is important you sit in the seat allocated to you.

5 Music Hire

Music can be hired or purchased from the Librarian who distributes the forms for this purpose well in advance so that it is available at the first rehearsal for that concert. Please complete a form and return it to the Librarian by the required date with full payment as directed. Please take extra care of hired music and rub out all unnecessary markings before returning it as the Society is penalised if copies are returned late or with marks. Members who do not return their hired music on time may be refused further loans. If you already have a score a Nil Return does help the Librarian.

6 Attendance

At all rehearsals you will find a register to mark your presence. Please tick against your name under the appropriate date. If you have been absent, please endorse with H for holiday, D for Duty (family or work related) and S for sickness. Please try to let your Section Representative know in advance if you are unable to attend a rehearsal.

Members are expected to attend at least 80% of all rehearsals for a concert and especially the final Monday rehearsal before a concert. If you are unable to do so you may only sing in concert with the permission of the Musical Director.

7 Choir Activities

We usually give four concerts each year. In addition to our scheduled performances we also participate in local Arts and Music festivals, sing at City events such as Remembrance Day and organise Scratch Concerts and Workshops. All are expected to help with concert publicity and ticket sales.

We also have a Celebration Choir which sings at Weddings and other functions to raise funds for the Society. You are most welcome to join with this group even if you cannot guarantee your attendance at every event. At Christmas time we are often asked by Societies and Organisations to provide choral music at Dinners or Celebrations.

We also hold social events like quiz-evenings, walks, music sales, green-rooms and dinners, both to raise funds but also to enable members to relax and get to know each other better. Join in and bring your partner or friends as well.

8 Before a Concert

8.1 Participation

It is expected that all members will sing in every concert, but if for some particular reason this is not possible you should inform both your Section Representative and also the Musical Director.

8.2 Music Folders

We use black music folders at concerts. These bear the Society's name in gold. A folder will be loaned to you for the duration of your membership and you should collect this from the Membership Secretary.

8.3 Concert Dress

Ladies Uniform blouse in Choir colour to be purchased from Uniform Co-ordinator, black ankle-length evening skirt, black tights and black shoes.

Gentlemen Dinner Jacket, white shirt, bow tie and cummerbund in Choir colour to be purchased from Uniform Co-ordinator, and black shoes.

On concert days, the co-ordinator will also give you a brooch to be worn on your blouse, these should be returned at the end of the performance. Handbags and bottles of water are not permitted on stage, the only exception being if a bag is required for essential medicines. Such bags should be discreet, black and small. Secure changing rooms are available at concert venues and these are locked during the performance.

9 Final Rehearsal

All members are expected to attend the final rehearsal on the afternoon of the concert. The start time for this will be notified to you at the previous Monday rehearsal.

10 Concert

Please arrive at the concert venue in good time. If you are carrying a mobile phone it must be switched off.

Music folders should be carried, with the name showing, in the hand that is towards the audience as you walk on stage. Folders are opened and closed when indicated by the Conductor. When you get on stage, remain standing facing the audience until the entire choir is assembled, at the given signal, the choir then sits. The choir stands when the Conductor comes on stage and then remains standing unless otherwise directed.

At the interval, the whole choir will leave the stage in the reverse order to their entry. During the interval members are encouraged to meet the audience as this promotes the friendly spirit of the choir. A bell will be rung to call you to return back-stage.

11 Applause

Members should not applaud at the start of either half of the concert. We do not join in with audience applause at the end of the concert but wait until the Conductor with soloists leaves the stage and then applaud when they return.

Choir applause should stop immediately if there is any indication from the rostrum that the choir is being singled out for special appreciation.

12 Constitution

1 This Society shall be called the Southampton Choral Society and have as its objective the promotion of choral music of the highest standard and the encouragement of young musicians.

- 2 The administration of the Society shall be controlled by an elected Committee, which shall include a Chair, General Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Librarian, Concert Manager, Publicity Officer, and one member representing each vocal section (Soprano, Contralto, Tenor and Bass). This committee shall have the power to co-opt on to the Committee any member of the society. The representative to Making Music is an honorary member of the committee.
Officers shall hold their office for one year but are eligible for re-election.
- 3 There shall be Annual General Meeting, at which the Committee for the following year shall be elected.
- 4 Upon receipt of a written application signed by at least ten per cent of the members, and specifying the nature of the business to be discussed, the General Secretary shall convene a Special General Meeting giving all members twenty-one days' notice of such meeting. This notice shall be deemed to have been validly given if it is by a verbal announcement at a rehearsal at least twenty-one days prior to the meeting.
- 5 The Constitution of the Society may only be amended by a two-thirds majority of those members present at an Annual or Special General Meeting.
- 6 The General Secretary shall cause to be recorded in a minute book, all minutes of Committee and General Meetings.
- 7 Members who infringe the Constitution of the Society and other regulations passed by the committee from time to time may have their membership terminated by the Committee without refund of any subscription.
- 8 The Committee shall have the power to appoint a Musical Director. The Musical Director shall be an ex-officio non-voting member of the Committee. Any proposal to dismiss the Musical Director must be approved at a General Meeting of members.
- 9 All prospective members shall be interviewed and auditioned by the Musical Director.
- 10 All members will be re-auditioned normally every three years. Membership of the Society is conditional on reaching the required standard.
- 11 The choice of musical programme shall be at the suggestion of the Musical Director, subject to approval by the Committee.
- 12 The Musical Director in consultation with the Committee shall have power to exclude from a concert, any member who has not attended a sufficient number of rehearsals for that concert.
- 13 The financial year shall commence on 1st August and end on 31st July.
- 14 Annual subscriptions shall be agreed by the Annual General Meeting and are due and payable from 1st August. Payment of the Annual subscription shall constitute membership of the Society.
- 15 No person shall involve the Society in any expense without the authority of either the Honorary Treasurer or Chair.
- 16 The Honorary Treasurer shall keep a Current bank account in the name of Southampton Choral Society and deposit therein money received on behalf of the Society. The treasurer shall transfer monies between the Deposit account and the Current account to keep a Current account balance of no more than £2,500 (or other sum as may be determined from time to time by the Committee) unless monies are required to clear outstanding cheques. The Treasurer shall submit to the Annual General Meeting of the Society a statement of the accounts for the year examined by an independent accountant. All invoices or supporting documentation already approved by the originator of the expenditure shall be authorised by any two signatories of the account (normally Directors of the Society and the Honorary Treasurer). Cheques and bank payments may be authorised by one of the signatories. Payments into the Society account for subscriptions, score hire or score purchases, etc. may be made electronically.
- 17 Members shall pay for all music, whether purchased or for hire, prior to issue, by cash or cheque.
- 18 The Society may receive donations, grants in aid or financial guarantees.
- 19 The income and property of the Society shall be applied to the promotion of the objective of the Society. No portion shall be paid by way of dividend, bonus or by payment of a professional fee to any member unless agreed by a General Meeting of the Society.
- 20 On the winding up of the Society, any remaining assets shall be handed over to a charitable society or association having similar aims and objectives, and whose rules preclude the distribution of income and assets among its members.