



HANDBOOK

OF

SAFFRON WALDEN CHORAL SOCIETY (SWCS)
(registered charity no. 1180134)

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1. INTRODUCTION

HANDBOOK

This Handbook is designed to be used by members of Saffron Walden Choral Society ('the Society'), alongside the Constitution and the Policies and Procedures Manual, as a practical reference for the way the Society is run.

The Charity Trustees appointed under the Constitution of the Society are referred to in this document as 'the Committee'.

The Committee will review and update this information on a regular basis. Should there be any conflict between the details in the Handbook and the Constitution, the wording of the Constitution will take precedence. The Handbook and the Constitution are available on the SWCS website; a printed copy is available on request to the Secretary.

ETHOS AND AIMS OF SWCS

The Society is a charity and its objects shall be to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects. It shall do this by the presentation of public concerts and recitals, and by such other ways as the Society through its Trustees shall determine from time to time.

There is a clear commitment to the development of singers of all ages. The aims also include the ambition to present and perform to the highest potential of our members and invited singers, and to seek to achieve and maintain a reputation for a consistently high quality of musical attainment.

2. CONTACTS

- **GENERAL ENQUIRIES** Secretary: secretary@swchoral.org.uk
- **MEMBERSHIP** Membership Secretary: membership@swchoral.org.uk
- **FINANCIAL ENQUIRIES** Treasurer: treasurer@swchoral.org.uk
- **SPOKESPERSON** President:
or Chair: president@swchoral.org.uk
chair@swchoral.org.uk
- **SUPPORTER ENQUIRIES** Fundraising Manager: fundraising@swchoral.org.uk
- **NEWS AND MEDIA** Publicity Manager: publicitymanager@swchoral.org.uk

3. CHOIR MEMBERSHIP

a. ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS

(i) Eligibility

Membership of the Society is open to anyone interested in furthering its purposes, and who, by applying for membership, has indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members and Code of Conduct set out in sub-clause (f) of this clause.

(ii) Admission Procedure

Potential members should contact the Membership Secretary in the first instance at membership@swchoral.org.uk. If there are vacancies, an invitation is normally extended to three or four rehearsals before a short, singer-friendly voice test with the Musical Director.

The Committee:

- May require applications for membership to be made in any reasonable way they decide
- May refuse an application for membership if they believe that it is in the best interests of the Society for them to do so
- Shall, if they decide to refuse an application for membership, give the applicant their reasons for doing so, within 21 days of the decision being taken, and give the applicant the opportunity to appeal against the refusal
- Shall give fair consideration to any such appeal, and shall inform the applicant of their decision, but any decision to confirm refusal of the application for membership shall be final.

c. MEMBERSHIP FEES

The Society may require members to pay reasonable membership fees to the Society. Before the end of each season, the Committee will notify members at an EGM of the proposed fees for the next season. Sufficient notice of the EGM will be sent to all members, so they have an opportunity to attend regardless of whether they are singing in that term. At the EGM the committee will share the new fee structure, and members will have an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

d. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Society cannot be transferred to anyone else.

e. DUTY OF MEMBERS

- (i) It is the duty of each member of the Society to exercise his or her powers as a member of the Society in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the Society.
- (ii) The reputation of the Society is important in attracting audiences, new choir members and as a standard for the members and the Committee to live up to. It can take years to build a reputation such as the Society's, as a successful and prominent choir, and potentially just seconds to lose it all. Hence, we ask members and volunteers, at all

times, to remember, act and take personal responsibility for protecting and projecting that reputation.

- (iii) Members are expected to make reasonable efforts to attend all rehearsals for any concert. Attendance at the concert day rehearsal is compulsory. Exceptional allowance may be made for concert singers who miss more than three Monday rehearsals in any term, but this will be at the discretion of the Musical Director

f. CODE OF CONDUCT

The members should conduct themselves in a manner that is a positive reflection on the Society, this includes but is not limited to:

- (i) The attendance at rehearsals/concerts on time and with due regard to the creation of an environment conducive to choral singing. This includes respecting other choral members by not engaging in conversation that may distract from or cause delay during the rehearsal/concerts.
- (ii) Each voice group has a Voice Representative Coordinator; the member should use this representative for queries and to advise if the member is unable to attend a rehearsal or particular concert. The contact details for each voice representative and their email address may be found on the Society's website.
- (iii) Members are expected to attend all Monday and concert day rehearsals, and to notify their voice rep if they may need to miss more than three rehearsals.
- (iv) The Committee will agree with the Musical Director on the method and manner of assessing the member's musical competency. This may include auditions for both potential and existing members.
- (v) The Society has a dress code for concerts and activities when representing the Society. The member is expected to adhere to the specified standard of dress as notified to them for each concert and/or activity.
- (vi) The Society believes that a child, young person/adult, or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind and has a Safeguarding Policy, which is published and detailed in this Handbook. Failure to comply or give due regard to the policy is a reason for the termination of membership and any other legislative response as defined.
- (vii) From time to time the member will be requested to assist in the setting-up, provision and tidying up of refreshments during a specific rehearsal. This rota and its management is maintained by the Refreshments Coordinator, in liaison with the Voice Representative Coordinators.
- (viii) Non-adherence to the above elements of the stated Code of Conduct could result in the member being requested to explain their conduct to the Committee.

g. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- (i) Membership of the Society comes to an end if:
 - The member dies
 - The member sends a notice of resignation to the Committee

- Any sum of money owed by the member to the Society is not paid in full within six months of its falling due
 - The Committee decide that it is in the best interests of the Society that the member in question should be removed from membership and pass a resolution to that effect. The decision may be based on the recommendation of the Musical Director
- (ii) Before the Committee take any decision to remove someone from membership of the Society they must:
- Inform the member of the reasons why it is proposed to remove him or her from membership
 - Give the member at least 21 clear days' notice in which to make representations to the Committee as to why he or she should not be removed from membership
 - At a duly constituted meeting of the Committee, consider whether the member should be removed from membership
 - Consider at that meeting any representations which the member makes as to why the member should not be removed
 - Allow the member, or the member's representative, to make those representations in person at that meeting, if the member so chooses.

h. INFORMAL OR ASSOCIATE (NON-VOTING) MEMBERSHIP

- (i) The Committee may create associate or other classes of non-voting membership and may determine the rights and obligations of any such members (including payment of membership fees), and the conditions for admission to, and termination of membership of any such class of members.
- (ii) Other references in this handbook to "members" and "membership" do not apply to non-voting members, and non-voting members do not qualify as members for any purpose under the Charities Acts, General Regulations or Dissolution Regulations.

4. CHOIR REHEARSALS

a. VENUE

Saffron Walden County High School Hall. It is the responsibility of all members to remove cafeteria tables and set out the chairs, and then to ensure the room is returned to the condition as found. Any problems should be reported to the Booking Secretary.

b. TIMING

Generally 7.30 – 9.45 pm every Monday and one or two Thursdays a month, and 2 – 5pm one Sunday a term. Adjustments to time, frequency and or venue are made by the Musical Director.

c. REFRESHMENTS

There will be a break about half way through rehearsals for refreshments, served by a rota of choir members in each voice part, maintained by the Voice Reps. There is a charge for refreshments to help maintain the choir resources. The procedure for managing refreshments is found in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

5. COMMUNICATION

Excellent communication is key to the effective running of the Society – this section sets out some general principles to promote good two-way communication:

a. BETWEEN COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS

- (i) The Committee will ensure that members are informed promptly of all information relevant to arrangements for rehearsals, concerts and other events. This will be primarily by emails, the website and by notices given out at rehearsals.
- (ii) Members have a responsibility to provide an up-to-date email address to the Membership Secretary for this purpose and to ensure that they are aware of the content of these communications, responding promptly as requested.
- (iii) Minutes of Committee meetings will be made available to all members by displaying them on the choir notice board or by such other means as determined by the Committee.
- (iv) Voice representatives – each section of the choir has its own voice rep who is the first port of call for practical matters, such as notifying absence and signing up for concerts. The voice reps are normally available at rehearsals and can also be contacted by email:

Soprano@swchoral.org.uk

Alto@swchoral.org.uk

Tenor@swchoral.org.uk

Bass@swchoral.org.uk

- (v) Members may speak to any Committee member on matters of concern, either at rehearsals or by email or telephone. Current Committee contact details are available on the noticeboard or on request from the Secretary.
- (vi) A suggestion box will be available at each rehearsal by the choir notice board; the Secretary will be responsible for ensuring that any suggestions are brought to the attention of the Committee.
- (viii) If a member has a complaint or concern that they feel is not being appropriately addressed by the Committee, they may contact the President for advice.

b. BETWEEN THE SOCIETY AND ITS COLLABORATING PARTNERS

The Committee will be responsible for official communications between the Society and third parties involved in the organisation of its concerts and other events. The Committee may, at its discretion, delegate aspects of this to other specified members but only Charity Trustees appointed under the terms of the Society's Constitution may commit SWCS contractually.

c. BETWEEN THE SOCIETY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- (i) All members have a responsibility for promoting the Society's concerts and events to the wider public. Personal recommendations or invitations are the most influential way of spreading the word amongst friends, family and colleagues.

- (ii) The Committee is responsible for ensuring that the marketing materials are of high quality, issued at appropriate times, and made widely available. They may include the use of the SWCS website, social media, mailing lists, print media and other public relations exercises.
- (iii) The Publicity Officer has the primary responsibility for implementing the publicity strategy on behalf of the Committee.
- (iv) In the event of an issue affecting the reputation of the Society, the Chair will assume primary responsibility on behalf of the Committee.

6. COMMITTEE

a. RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPOSITION

- (i) The management of the Society shall reside with the Committee, including all the arrangements for the concerts and other events and the control of finances.
- (ii) The Committee shall consist of a Chair, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, and not less than four or more than nine other members, which shall make up the Board of Trustees. The Musical Director may attend the Committee meetings by invitation in an advisory capacity.
- (iii) Committee members shall be elected to one of the following roles. (Role descriptions are set out in the **Policies and Procedures Manual**.)
 - Chair
 - Honorary Secretary
 - Honorary Treasurer
 - Honorary Concert Manager
 - Honorary Business Strategy Manager
 - Honorary Publicity Manager
 - Honorary Event Planning Manager
 - Honorary Fundraising Manager
 - Minutes Secretary
 - Ordinary Committee Member
- (iv) The Committee shall have the power to co-opt any member of the Society to fill a vacancy on the Committee or to perform a specific function. Any such co-option shall automatically lapse at the next Annual General Meeting.

b. MEETINGS

- (i) The Committee shall meet not less than four times during each financial year and all members shall be present at all General Meetings of the Society, unless prior notification has been given to the Honorary Secretary.
- (ii) If the appointed Chair is not present, the members at any meeting may appoint one of their number to be Chair. Such person shall advise the Chair or other Committee Member without delay of the proceedings of the meeting.
- (iii) All meetings shall be minuted. Minutes shall be distributed by the Minutes Secretary to all Committee members and approved at the next meeting. Minutes shall be signed by the Chair and maintained by the Secretary. A copy of the approved minutes will be made available to members, unless designated by the Committee as confidential.

c. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee members are Trustees of the Society.

(i) Election

Committee positions are associated with specific roles which are open to all members for nomination and subsequent election at the AGM. The nominee must get two supporting signatures confirming their suitability for the Committee role and as a Charity Trustee.

(ii) Term of Office

- The serving term will be three years, renewable for a second term at the AGM. After two terms, at least one year must elapse before a member may serve on the Committee again.
- Committee members elected to the Committee at a General Meeting will retire in rotation according to the Constitution. The intention should be for only one of the Chair, Treasurer or Secretary to retire in any one year.
- Any vacancy on the Committee may be filled by any Member at the invitation of the Committee. A person so appointed shall retire at the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.

(iii) Induction Procedure

- All nominees for Committee posts will be given copies of the Job Description (see Policies and Procedures Manual), Constitution and Handbook, at least two weeks before they are elected to their post (or when they are nominated, if later).
- The Chair should ensure that all nominees understand the responsibilities of being a Charity Trustee and Committee Member, prior to their election.
- Each role has the responsibility to ensure that the incoming Committee Member understands the role and how it is implemented. Preferably, retiring members will be available for advice during the transition.

(iv) Responsibilities

All Committee Members are Charity Trustees and are therefore equally responsible for the proper management of the Society in accordance with its charitable objects and charity law.

d. DECISIONS

- (i) No decision shall be taken at a meeting unless a quorum is present at the time when the decision is taken. The quorum is formed by a majority of the Committee Members. A Committee Member shall not be counted in the quorum present when any decision is made about a matter upon which he or she is not entitled to vote.
- (ii) Questions arising at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of those present and eligible to vote.
- (iii) In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.
- (iv) The majority decision of the Committee is therefore legally binding on ALL Committee members, even if they voted against the decision or were not present at the meeting at which the decision was taken.

e. COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

Committee members should pay careful attention to the charity's governance arrangements, and to how these arrangements are communicated to their members, to ensure that the rights of each different type of member and their role within the charity are clear.

f. SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-committees shall be established with a clear working brief from the Committee, detailing

the aims, timescales and deliverables from the group. Terms of reference for sub-committees are documented in the Committee meeting minutes. Sub-committees meet as and when required and follow the same rules as the Committee. Sub-committees may include non-committee members.

7. CONTRACTED STAFF

a. MUSICAL DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR

- (i) The Committee is responsible for appointing a Musical Director of suitable calibre to conduct the choir and to advise the Committee on all musical matters. (See job description in **Policies and Procedures Manual**.)
- (ii) The Committee will take due account of the views of the members in making this appointment, normally by inviting short-listed candidates to conduct at a rehearsal and then listening to membership feedback.
- (iii) The Musical Director will be offered an annual self-employed contract for services, taking account of guidance from Making Music. Nothing in the contract will create an employment relationship between the Musical Director and the Society.
- (iv) The Committee will nominate two members, usually the Chair and the Treasurer, to conduct an annual review with the Musical Director which will include, but not be limited to determining whether the contract will be renewed and, if so, any revision of its terms.

b. ACCOMPANIST

- (i) The Committee is responsible for appointing an Accompanist of suitable calibre to play at rehearsals and assist the Musical Director. (See job description in **Policies and Procedures Manual**.)
- (ii) The Committee will take due account of the views of its members in making this appointment, normally by inviting short-listed candidates to play at a rehearsal and then listening to membership feedback.
- (iii) The Accompanist will be offered an annual self-employed contract for services, taking account of guidance from Making Music. Nothing in the contract will create an employment relationship between the Accompanist and The Society.
- (iv) The Committee will nominate two members, usually the Chair and the Treasurer, to conduct an annual review with the Accompanist, which will include, but not be limited to, determining whether the contract will be renewed and, if so, any revision of its terms.

8. FINANCE

The Society takes every reasonable care in the exercising of the necessary prudent management, controls and planning of all funds, grants and debts of the Society or any agreed partner. Five principle processes are outlined below:

- Budget planning and management
- Authority controls
- Audit of accounts, formal presentation and acceptance by the Committee.
- Grants procurement policy
- Winding up or dissolution of the Society

In addition, various external bodies such as the Society's bankers and the Charities Commission require the Society to be compliant with their rules and regulations.

Full details of these processes and controls will be maintained in two copies, one held by the Treasurer and the other by the Society's Secretary.

a. BUDGET PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

- (i) The responsibility for the creation, control and approval of the Society's Budget Planning & Control process rests with the Committee; they will delegate the planning and creation of each year's budget to the Treasurer.
- (ii) A meeting of the Committee will each year confirm the scope, remit and timelines for the Budget preparation. The Committee will subsequently receive the created Budget for each year's proposed expenditure and projected income, for their approval.
- (iii) The financial year of the Society ends on the 31st July each year; the Committee may amend this date, having gained approval from the membership.

b. AUTHORITY CONTROLS

(i) Responsibility

The Committee is responsible for the correct authorisation of expenditure, by approving the authorised persons and their financial limits.

(ii) Policy Statement

The Committee will agree the individual value limit for each type of expenditure or commitment by contract. These limits will then be delegated by the Committee to named roles. Currently those roles are the Treasurer and the Chair; these limits should be reviewed on an annual basis and their continued confirmation or amendments duly noted in the minutes of a Committee meeting. There are no circumstances under which a deviation from these authority limits can take place without the authority of the Committee.

- Expenditure not included in the annual budget must be authorised by the Committee.
- Contract agreements for artists or venue facilities may be signed by the Treasurer or the Chair. All other contracts are jointly signed by the Chair and the Treasurer unless otherwise specifically authorised by the Committee.
- All payments via cheque or online bank transaction require dual authorisation and must be supported by an invoice or other supporting documents.

- No bank accounts or finance facilities can be opened without express authority of the Committee.

(iii) Authority For Approving Financial Commitments

- The authorisation for approving payments is subject to this expenditure being budgeted as part of the overall year's budget approved by the Committee.
- The process and procedure for purchasing and invoicing approval lies with the Treasurer.

(iv) Process For Approving Payments

- The Committee has authorised that the Treasurer, Chair and up to two other Committee members can make payments. All BACS, Account Transfers and cheque payment items will be signed/authorised by two of these designated signatories. Changes to bank mandates must be authorised and minuted at a Committee meeting.
- Wherever possible, suppliers of goods, facilities and services will normally be paid by BACS direct into their bank account, or by cheque.
- The authorising signatories will review the payments being proposed and check details to supporting invoices and other documentation as necessary.

(v) Authority For Approving Expenses

Authorised expenses will only be reimbursed in accordance with controls established by the Treasurer, these controls having been approved and delegated to the Treasurer by the Committee.

(vi) Responsibilities For Regular Review

The Treasurer has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this Policy. Revisions, amendments or alterations to the Policy can only be implemented following consideration and approval by the Committee. This approval must be minuted.

c. AUDIT OF THE ACCOUNTS AND SUBMISSION TO MEMBERS

- (i) The Committee is responsible for having the financial accounts audited or examined to the extent required by legislation or, if there is no such requirement, scrutinized by a person who is independent of the Committee.
- (ii) Should any qualification of the accounts be raised by the scrutinizer, which cannot be resolved by the Committee, then this qualification of the matter and its resolution must be agreed at a meeting with the membership of the Society.
- (iii) At an Annual General Meeting, a submission will be made of the last year's financial accounts and any future years' budgets. A written report, authored by the Committee, should accompany such accounts, explaining the material financial status of the society's cash monies, including reserves, together with all significant future planned expenditure.

d. GRANT PROCUREMENT POLICY

- (i) The approval of grant applications to be submitted for funding is given by the Committee.
- (ii) The preparation and submission of papers to obtain a grant or material donation should be overseen by the Committee or an authorised sub-group set up for the purpose.
- (iii) Any grant submissions proposed, that are to be made with the Society as one of a number of submitters or beneficiaries, should be approved by the Committee prior to commencement of any formal documentation for submission.

e. VOLUNTARY WINDING UP OR DISSOLUTION

- (i) As provided by the Dissolution Regulations of the Charities Commission, the Society may be dissolved by a resolution of its members.
- (ii) The procedures to be followed are set out in Clause 29 of the Society's Constitution.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

a. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

The Society is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all those involved in the musical activities it organises. This includes but is not limited to:

- Members
- Performers
- Staff (including freelance)
- Volunteers
- Members of the public
- Rehearsals
- Concerts
- Fundraising events

When using facilities such as those of Saffron Hall and Saffron Walden High School, the Society relies upon these venues to provide a safe and secure environment for all ages, covering both our members and audiences.

This does not diminish member's responsibilities to be both careful and diligent; members are required to comply with both our own policies and procedures and also to immediately respond to instructions given by any representative of any venues we use.

Where it is deemed necessary, by either the Committee or their delegated representative the Concert Manager, a structured Risk Assessment will be carried out to satisfy Health & Safety concerns.

b. RESPONSIBILITIES

- (i) Overall responsibility for health and safety sits with the Committee.
- (ii) The Concert Manager has practical responsibility for health and safety at concerts, rehearsals and other activities promoted by the Society.

c. STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY

- (i) The Committee will seek to minimise accidents and cases of ill-health by actively managing the health and safety at events and activities it organises. If appropriate, some procedures may be delegated to the venue provider.
- (ii) The Committee will either provide or delegate responsibility to the venue provider for the provision of:
 - clear instructions and information to ensure that members, staff and volunteers are competent to carry out their activities in a healthy and safe manner.
 - emergency procedures – evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident at both concerts and rehearsals.
- (iii) The Committee will maintain safe and healthy working environments and ensure safe storage/use of hazardous substances.

d. FIRST AID

- (i) The Committee will ensure that an up-to-date list of certified First Aiders is available and the list is known to members.
- (ii) The Committee delegates to the Concert Manager the responsibility of being aware of Evacuation procedures and Assembly Points, First Aid procedures, kits and equipment at hired venues.
- (iii) All incidents that require support from the Society's First Aiders should be recorded in an Incident Book Log (See Policies and Procedures Manual). Subsequent to the incident each log, duly signed, should be lodged with the Society's Secretary or Concert Manager for safekeeping, and reviewed by the Committee.

e. SOUND SAFETY

The Society takes the responsibility of protecting the hearing of members, staff, volunteers and audience members seriously. The Committee will:

- (i) Ensure there are open lines of communication for individuals to raise concerns about hearing
- (ii) Take concerns seriously; the Committee, Concert Manager and the Musical Director will work with the individuals to find ways to minimise risk
- (iii) Take into account the protection of our audience's hearing when designing stage and audience layout for concerts.

f. REVIEW PROCESS

The Committee is responsible for ensuring that this policy is maintained and reviewed regularly, specifically when changes to the Health & Safety at Work Act are made or the Society is involved in a significant health & safety incident.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management is the process by which the Committee will identify potential risk events or threats to the Society that might arise as a result of our activities/actions, or those of others. The Committee will need to assess the impact of these events should they occur; the likelihood/frequency of them occurring, and the action needed to minimise, mitigate, or remove them and how to respond to them should they happen.

Risk Management is a fundamental component of any organisation that wishes to educate and entertain the public. This subject is particularly important for a charitable organisation where reputational risk, loss of funding and/or a failure to be able to entertain the public would all cause the Society to not meet its objectives.

a. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee is committed to ensuring the Society is able to meet its charitable and members' objectives. To this effect the Committee have nominated the Concert Manager for any performance related events, a Safeguarding Officer for Young Persons' protection and a Budget Planning Manager to focus on compliance with any financial budgets.

b. REGULAR REVIEW

- (i) Other aspects of managing risk will be kept under regular review by the Committee, and where new or revised procedures are identified, the Handbook will be updated.
- (ii) The Review will help us to identify which are the most significant risks in terms of severity and likelihood. It is not expected that in identifying the risks we will necessarily be able to remove them, but if we can consider them and take any necessary steps to minimise them, it will stand us in good stead if we have to deal with them in reality. For example, we have First Aiders available and Members are made aware of who they are.
- (iii) Should an incident ever occur for which our organisation is held responsible, we will be able to demonstrate the steps we have taken to do our best to prevent this happening, which will be an important consideration.
- (iv) The presence of risk is not a reason not to undertake an activity, but it is of course good practice to ensure that overall risk levels are managed and where appropriate reduced to acceptable levels.

11. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

a. COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING

The Society (SWCS) believes that a child, young person/adult, or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and vulnerable adults we come into contact with and to protecting them from harm.

b. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- (i) This policy applies to all members, staff (whether employees or freelance), volunteers and anyone working on behalf of the Society or taking part in its activities.
- (ii) The purpose of this policy is to provide members, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people.
- (iii) This policy recognises vulnerable people as:
 - Children up to the age of 16 and young people aged 16-18.
 - Adults aged over 18 defined as vulnerable by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; this might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity.
- (iv) This policy aims to:
 - Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are members of, receive services from, or volunteer for the Society.
 - Ensure members, staff and volunteers who are working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are carefully recruited and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals they are interacting with.
 - Ensure that safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a primary consideration when the Society undertakes any activity, event or project.

c. WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Membership is open to those over 16 years of age. We run regular rehearsals for members and put on concerts for the general public. As such, our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:

- Members of the groups who attend rehearsals and concerts
- Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts in a volunteering capacity
- Audience members at public concerts

d. NAMED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

- (i) The Safeguarding Officer has responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to The Safeguarding Officer in the first instance.
- (ii) Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of The Safeguarding Officer and in line with established procedures and ground rules (see below).

e. SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES DOCUMENTS

The following documents give further guidance on ways of working and procedures in line with the Policy, and are found in the **Policies and Procedures Manual**:

- Safeguarding Guidelines – the Society’s adult choir events and public performances
- Safeguarding Guidelines – Working with children and young people
- Safeguarding Officer – Job description

f. WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE SUSPECTS OR ALLEGES ABUSE

- (i) **If there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult then contact the Police on 999.** The location of the rehearsal venue and Saffron Hall is Saffron Walden County High School, Audley Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4UH

- (ii) Where there are **immediate concerns** about the safety or welfare of a child or young person, contact the **Children and Young people Essex Helpline**:

- **Office hours:** Telephone: **0345 603 7627 (Priority line)**

- **Out of hours:** Telephone: **0345 606 1212**
or email: Emergency.DutyTeamOutOfHours@essex.gov.uk

- **All other enquiries:** Telephone: 0345 603 7627 (Consultation line)

- **Vulnerable Adults** Essex Social Care Direct
Telephone: **0345 6037630**

- **NSPCC Helpline** 0808 800 5000

- (iii) Then contact the **SWCS Safeguarding Officer** who will advise of the next steps.

SWCS SAFEGUARDING OFFICER CONTACT DETAILS:
safeguarding@swchoral.org.uk

- (iv) Further details are set out in Safeguarding guidelines – Working with children and young people. (See **Policies and Procedures Manual**)

12. DATA PROTECTION POLICY OVERVIEW

Full details of the Policy are found in the Policies and Procedures Manual. The Society also has a Privacy Policy which is available on our website.

a. OVERVIEW

In order to operate, the Society needs to gather, store and use certain forms of information about individuals. These can include members, young people and their parents, employees, contractors, suppliers, volunteers, audiences and potential audiences, business contacts and other people the choir has a relationship with or regularly needs to contact.

This policy explains how this data should be collected, stored and used in order to meet the Society's data protection standards and comply with the law.

This policy is important, because it ensures that Saffron Walden Choral Society:

- Protects the rights of our members, volunteers and supporters
- Complies with data protection law and follows good practice
- Protect the choir from the risks of a data breach

b. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(i) This policy applies to *all* those handling personal data on behalf of the Society, e.g:

- Committee members
- Employees and volunteers
- Members
- Contractors/ Third party suppliers

(ii) It applies to all data that the Society holds relating to individuals, including:

- Names
- Email addresses
- Postal addresses
- Phone numbers
- Any other personal information held (e.g. financial)

(iii) **Everyone** who has access to personal data as part of Saffron Walden Choral Society has a responsibility to ensure that they adhere to this policy.

c. DATA CONTROLLER

The Committee will appoint one of its Trustees as its Data Controller. The Data Controller, together with the Committee, is responsible for what data is collected and how it will be used. Any questions relating to the collection or use of data should be directed to the Data Controller, who can be contacted by emailing dataprotection@swchoral.org.uk.

13. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Saffron Walden Choral Society is a music group that offers membership and provides musical activities for the community.

- We aim to ensure that membership and activities are open and welcoming to everybody entitled to become a member and will treat all members equally regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, class and socio-economic background.
- We aim to treat our volunteers, staff and supporters equally regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, class and socio-economic background.
- The Chair of Trustees is responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, and to ensure the Equality and Diversity Policy is kept up to date.

Equality of opportunity - Saffron Walden Choral Society aims to:

- promote equality for its members and potential members in access to membership and musical activities and opportunities within the membership criteria.
- ensure no member or potential member will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the introduction within the membership criteria.
- ensure no individual wishing to volunteer or work for (including on a freelance basis) Saffron Walden Choral Society will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the aims.

Inclusion and respect:

- Saffron Walden Choral Society values its members, staff, volunteers and supporters and will do all it can to:
 - treat them in a respectful manner and ensure they are made to feel equally welcome and included in all activities.
 - provide an environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.
- Accordingly all members, staff volunteers, supporters and those representing Saffron Walden Choral Society are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure activities are welcoming and inclusive for all.
- Inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment and have no place in Saffron Walden Choral Society.
- Saffron Walden Choral Society will support our members, volunteers, staff and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from other group members, volunteers, colleagues, other organisations or customers.

Accessibility: Saffron Walden Choral Society aims to use venues that are accessible to all for rehearsals, concerts and any other activities or events it undertakes.

Dealing with Complaints

- If any member, volunteer, staff or supporter feels they have been discriminated against or harassed they should raise it with the committee.
- The committee will take complaints of discrimination and harassment seriously.
- The committee will investigate the complaint, listening to all parties involved:
 - If the complaint is against a committee member, that member will not be part of conducting the investigation.
 - If the complaint is against an individual, that individual will have the opportunity to express their point of view in a safe environment and accompanied by a friend.
 - The person making the complaint will have the same opportunity.
- If a complaint is found against Saffron Walden Choral Society, the Committee must work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future, and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.

Employment practices – general

- Saffron Walden Choral Society aims to promote equality and inclusivity as an employer and shall ensure that no volunteer, employee, person engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelance) or job/volunteer applicant receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the characteristics set out in the aims of this policy
- Saffron Walden Choral Society selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Saffron Walden Choral Society regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of staff or volunteers in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

Request for DBS checks for current and potential members, staff and volunteers – with reference to ex-offenders

General:

- In assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Saffron Walden Choral Society complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.
- Saffron Walden Choral Society actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.

Request of DBS checks

- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned.
- For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

- Saffron Walden Choral Society can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Saffron Walden Choral Society are legally entitled to know about, and where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and, where appropriate, Police Act Regulations as amended).
- Saffron Walden Choral Society makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and makes a copy available on request.

Outcome of check and selection process

- Saffron Walden Choral Society undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- Saffron Walden Choral Society undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment, freelance work or volunteer position.
- In an interview or separate discussion Saffron Walden Choral Society will:
 - only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected
 - ensure an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position.
- Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Responsibilities

Saffron Walden Choral Society ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process are:

- aware of the Saffron Walden Choral Society equality and diversity policy.
- aware of when and what type of DBS check is appropriate.
- have read the DBS code of practice.
- have read Saffron Walden Choral Society Handbook on safeguarding and DBS checks.
- have read any other guidance deemed appropriate by the Saffron Walden Choral Society committee

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed by the committee and updated, as necessary, at least annually. Members of Saffron Walden Choral Society will be informed of any changes to the policy and be invited to comment.

14. REVIEW OF THE SWCS HANDBOOK AND POLICIES

The content of this Handbook, policies and other appendices will be reviewed by the Committee and updated, as necessary, at least annually.