

Reading Male Voice Choir

Trustee Handbook

Charity No 294105



1.0 Trustee Role

1.1 As a charity the Choir is run by its Committee which is made up of up to eight Trustees. These people have independent control over, and legal responsibility for, the Choir's management and administration.

1.2 Trustees have legal responsibilities and there are certain prerequisites over eligibility:

- You must be at least 18 years old
- You must not
 - have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception (such as fraud)
 - be bankrupt or have entered into a formal arrangement (e.g. an individual voluntary arrangement) with a creditor
 - have been removed as a company director or charity trustee because of wrongdoing

1.3 Using information from the Charity Commission site, Trustees must:

- Ensure the Choir is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit, and no other purpose
- Comply with The Choir's Constitution and the law
- Act in the Choir's best interests
- Manage the Choir's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure the Choir is accountable

1.4 To do this, Trustees must

- Ensure you understand the Choir's purposes as set out in its Constitution
- Plan what the Choir will do, and what you want it to achieve
- Be able to explain how all of the Choir's activities are intended to further or support its purposes
- Understand how the Choir benefits the public by carrying out its purposes
- Make sure that the Choir complies with its Constitution
- Comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to the Choir
- Do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the Choir to carry out its purposes
- With your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term
- Avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your Choir conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body
- Not receive any benefit from the Choir unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the Choir's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner
- Make sure the Choir's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- Avoid exposing the Choir's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk
- Not over-commit the Choir

- Take special care of the Choir's interests when investing or borrowing
- Comply with any restrictions on spending funds
- Must use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- Should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all Committee meetings
- Be able to demonstrate that the Choir is complying with the law, well run and effective
- Ensure appropriate accountability to Members of the Choir
- Ensure accountability within the Choir, particularly where the Trustees delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions

1.5 More information is available for Trustees at this website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do#s3>

2.0 Financial Responsibility

2.1 Trustees can be held liable to the Choir for any financial loss they cause or help to cause.

2.2 The law generally protects Trustees who have acted honestly and reasonably from personal liability to the Choir. The Charity Commission and the courts:

- can relieve trustees from liability if they have acted honestly and reasonably and have not benefited from their actions
- rarely enforce liability on an unpaid trustee who has made an honest mistake
- expect higher standards from trustees who act in a professional capacity or are paid for being trustees

3.0 Committee meetings

3.1 The Trustees form the Choir's Committee. Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting and have the following designations:

- Chairman
- Deputy Chairman
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Four Section Leaders, one for each voice type, First Tenor, Second Tenor, Baritone and Bass

3.2 The Committee meet at least every three months. The minutes of these meetings are published on our website and are available to all Members on request.

3.3 There are a number of Choir Officers who are elected at the Annual General Meeting to provide specialist support to the Committee and the Choir. These Officers can attend Committee meetings when there is an item being discussed to which they wish to contribute but they cannot vote as they are not Trustees.

3.4 The Musical Director is invited to attend Committee meetings but like Officers cannot vote.

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