

Reading Male Voice Choir Member Handbook

Charity No 294105



0.0 Introduction

0.1 This handbook contains information which will let you know how the Choir works and how decisions are made as well as what is expected of you as a Member.

0.2 We pride ourselves on being a friendly, social organisation, but to function effectively we have to have some structure to what we do. Hopefully this handbook will help you to understand how we work and answer the questions you may have. If there are any issues you want clarifying feel free to ask any member of the Choir who will be only too pleased to help.

0.3 We have designed this Handbook to assist new Members to the Choir as well as reminding long-standing Members of the inner workings of the Choir as a Charity.

0.4 In addition to this Handbook there is a Formal Constitution, a Trustee Handbook, a Section Leader Handbook and an Officer Handbook. These documents are all on our website and copies are available to any Member of the Choir.

Contents:

1.0	Rehearsals
2.0	Concerts
3.0	Music and Uniform
4.0	Policies
5.0	Member Responsibilities
6.0	Section Leaders
7.0	Musical Director and Deputy Musical Director
8.0	Officers
9.0	Supporters' Group
10.0	General Meetings
11.0	President
12.0	Trustees/Committee
13.0	Long Service Recognition

1.0 Rehearsals

1.1 Rehearsals are held on Friday evenings between 19.30 and 22.00. Rehearsals are an important part of our activities and this is where our music is learned, practiced and improved. Rehearsals when a concert is approaching are vital and except in exceptional circumstances attendance at at least two of the three rehearsals preceding a concert is required for a Member to sing at that concert.

1.2 Members are expected to be diligent at these rehearsals and keep interruptions to a minimum. It is important that Members allow other Sections/Members to be coached without disturbance.

1.3 Rehearsals begin after the summer break on the first Friday in September and stop early in the following July for a summer recess. There are also short breaks at Christmas and Easter.

2.0 Concerts

2.1 The Choir perform in concerts, primarily to raise money for charities. There is a programme of concerts throughout the season, approximately one each month.

2.2 Most concerts are held in the Reading area. However we travel to other locations when necessary, usually by coach for which a part-payment is made, the remainder being met by Choir funds. These trips may occasionally also necessitate overnight stay depending on the distance travelled, in which case Choir members will be expected to meet the cost of their accommodation.

2.3 In some years the Choir undertakes an overseas tour. Participation in these tours is not compulsory but those that attend get a great deal from them, both musically and socially. Choir members will be expected to meet the costs of their travel and accommodation on tours.

2.4 Payment is offered for reasonable expenses for those Members who are required to travel to concert venues to look at arrangements for the choir when the concert would require the choir to travel by coach or air.

2.4 Many partners accompany Choir Members when we travel which we welcome as this adds to the social and community feeling of the events.

2.5 The choir has a process for considering requests for us to sing at informal events, this can be found on our website.

3.0 Music and Uniform

3.0.1 An integral part of the Choir is that Members rehearse with sheet music and perform in uniform. To ensure that this system is effective each Member is issued with music as appropriate and the essential uniform items; the costs of these are covered from the Choir budgets. These remain the property of the Choir and are returned when no longer needed, when a piece of music leaves the Choir repertoire, or when a Member leaves.

3.0.2 Members are responsible for keeping the property of the Choir safe and are liable for the full cost of replacement should loss or irreparable damage occur.

3.1 Music

3.1.1 The music selection is made by the Musical Director in conjunction with the Deputy Musical Director. The Musical Director consults in general terms with the Committee and Choir before the selections are made.

3.1.2 Members are dissuaded from taking music to concerts, particularly when touring.

- Music remains the property of the choir and is issued to Members while it is needed
- Music should be returned to the Librarian when it is recalled
- Members are responsible for its safe keeping
- Music is issued to Members as individuals (copies are marked with personal numbers), Members should not swap or give their copy to another Member
- The Librarian needs to be informed if Members need a copy of a piece or if they have misplaced anything
- In the event of loss the music will be replaced by the Librarian and Members are liable for the full replacement cost of the items. The replacement cost of a full set of music is approximately £40.00 (2015 Figure)

3.2 Uniform

3.2.1 The intention of Choir uniform is to give a sense of belonging and for the Choir to appear as a united entity. It indicates equality and common purpose. The standards below are designed to make it easy for Choir members to understand what is expected of them.

- The Choir issues certain uniform items: Jacket, Trousers, Tie, Sweatshirt and Short-Sleeved Shirt. Other uniform items (see table below) are provided by the Member at their own expense
- Uniform items issued to Members remain the property of the Choir
- Uniform items must be returned to the Wardrobe Master when a Member leaves the Choir
- Members are responsible for keeping their uniform in good order
- In the event of loss the item of uniform will be replaced by the Wardrobe Master and Members are liable for the full replacement cost of the item. The replacement cost of a Choir jacket is approximately £250.00 (2015 figure)

3.2.2 Choir uniforms should be cared for, and worn, according to the following:

Jacket	As issued by the Choir, to be maintained by sponging and brushing and only dry-cleaned to remove stains or odour. Lapel or other badges are not worn – the only exceptions are a Remembrance Poppy which can be worn in the left hand lapel at the appropriate time of year; and the RMVC long service badge. Outside jacket pockets are to be kept empty, preferably at all times, but certainly during performances. If necessary small flat items (e.g. mobile phone - (switched off)) may be carried in the inside pocket. Jackets should only be worn for performances or when the Choir are making a public appearance. They should not be worn when travelling to engagements when jackets should be carried in a Suit Cover (provided). If the jacket is worn on the way home from a concert it should be hung to allow creases to fall out.
Trousers	As issued by the Choir, to be dry-cleaned every 2-3 years. They may be worn with or without a belt; if a belt is worn it should be black. If braces are worn they should be covered by the jacket at all times.
Short-Sleeved Shirt	As issued by the choir, to be washed and ironed. This shirt should be worn when weather is hot and it has been announced that they are to be worn. When they are worn you must wear a black belt and no braces. Sometimes they are worn with ties, sometimes without as decided by the Musical Director.
Shirt	This is provided by each chorister. This must be a <u>plain white long sleeved</u> shirt. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No stripes or patterns of any sort – including “woven in” stripes or patterns. • Collars must be plain and not buttoned-down. Collars to be of medium length – i.e. no wing-collars or collars which are excessively long or short. • No tie clips: • If cuff-links are worn, they should be small and discreet.
Tie	Choir tie as issued by the Choir – To be clean and fresh at all times.
Socks	Plain black socks.
Shoes	Plain black shoes. These should not have any contrasting colours e.g. laces or soles.

3.2.3 If you require further clarification, please speak to the Wardrobe Master, or your Section Leader.

4.0 Policies

4.1 The Choir takes its responsibilities for the health and safety of its Members and others who are affected by its activities very seriously. The Choir’s Health and Safety Policy, Good Practice Documents and Risk Assessments are constantly reviewed and can be viewed on our website and are available to Members and others on request. We also have policies on Safeguarding and Equality, these too are on our website and Members are expected to abide by these at all times. In addition we have policies for informal event singing requests and loaning RMVC equipment.

5.0 Member Responsibilities

5.1 Members are expected to treat each other with respect and tolerance.

5.2 As we sing all our repertoire by heart Members are expected to make every effort to learn the music and words.

5.3 Members must recognise that they represent the Choir, particularly when in uniform, and should behave in an exemplary way that would bring credit to the Choir.

5.4 Members are expected to abide by the rules governing the Choir.

5.5 Members are expected to pay their subscriptions and other payments due in a timely manner.

6.0 Section Leaders

6.1 Each of the four voice types, First Tenor, Second Tenor, Baritone and Bass, is arranged in a section. Each section has a Section Leader who is a Trustee and they are elected at the Annual General Meeting.

6.2 It is expected that in the best interests of the Choir and for the personal development of as many individuals as possible, Section Leaders will hold that office for a maximum of four years.

6.3 Section Leaders have administrative roles for their section and are also responsible for advising their section Members on musical issues and Choir matters generally. They also have a pastoral care role for their section and highlight issues to the Committee members when they arise.

6.4 The full roles and responsibilities of the Section Leaders are set out in a separate handbook which is available on the website and to all Members on request.

7.0 Musical Director and Deputy Musical Director

7.1 The Musical Director is the Choir's principal officer on all artistic and musical matters. The Deputy Musical Director assists the Musical Director on artistic and musical matters and deputises in their absence. The Musical Director or, in their absence, the Deputy Musical Director, is invited to Committee meetings where they may speak, but they cannot vote as they are not Committee members or Trustees of the Choir.

7.2 The Musical Director and Deputy Musical Director are appointed by the Annual General Meeting and are each paid an Honorarium which is set annually by the Annual General Meeting.

7.3 Concert travel expenses will be offered to the Musical Director and Deputy Musical Director when they use personal transport and the concert is one that requires the use of a coach for members. The payment to cover the cost of fuel for the distance the coach has driven.

8.0 Officers

8.1 To assist the Committee and the Choir generally we have a range of Officer posts with specific roles. These posts are filled annually by election by the Annual General Meeting. The list of Officers changes depending on the needs of the Choir.

8.2 Officers can attend Committee meetings, especially when an item is being discussed which concerns their responsibilities, although they cannot vote. Currently the Officer positions are:

- Concert Secretary
- Stage Manager
- Staging Rota Coordinator
- Van Driver Coordinator
- Fund Raising Officer
- Health and Safety Officer
- Librarian
- Minutes Secretary
- Publicity Officers
- Social Secretary
- Wardrobe Master
- Webmaster
- Assistant Secretary

9.0 Supporters' Group

9.1 The Choir has many friends and Members' partners who support our activities. On the first Friday of each month, during Choir rehearsals, the Supporters' Group meet together, often with a guest speaker. The Choir recognises the value of our Supporters and encourages their activities.

10.0 General Meetings

10.1 These are meetings of the whole Membership of the Choir and are the primary decision making body of the Choir. There is an Annual General Meeting in July each year and the facility for Extraordinary General Meetings during the year should the need arise.

11.0 President

11.1 The Choir may appoint an Honorary President. If a President is appointed their role is to chair General Meetings of the whole Choir membership and to represent the Choir when such appearance would be appropriate in enhancing the status and image of the Choir.

11.2 A President is appointed by the Annual General Meeting.

12.0 Trustees/Committee

12.1 The Choir is a Registered Charity and as such has a panel of Trustees who make up the decision-making Committee of the Choir. There are specific rules on the responsibilities of Trustees of charities and these can be seen in the Trustee’s Handbook which can be found on our website.

12.2 The Trustees are elected each year by the Annual General Meeting. They meet as the Committee of the Choir at least every three months. The minutes of these meetings are published on our website and are available to all Members on request.

12.3 The Trustees are:

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

12.4 It is expected that in the best interests of the Choir and for the personal development of as many individuals as possible, the Chairman will hold that office for a maximum of three consecutive years.

13.0 Long Service Recognition

13.1 The Choir recognises the loyalty and long service of Members.

10 Years	Engraved Glass Half Pint Tankard
20 Years	Bronze Choir Lapel Badge
30 Years	Silver Choir Lapel Badge
40 Years	Gold Choir Lapel Badge
50 Years	Gold Choir Lapel Badge with Gemstone Drop

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