



Introduction

HMVC has a written constitution that is authoritative in respect of conduct of the choir's affairs. This supplementary guidance document is published by the current choir committee for the benefit of both prospective members and current members. It is intended to give a helpful indication of the values that are important to the choir, and the behaviours expected of those participating in choir activities. Some points have explanatory notes in *italic text*.

The choir shall be:

1. Welcoming

- a) Each new member of the choir will be supported by a nominated existing member of their section. Support will include helping to ensure that the new singer is able to make use of the choir website, learning tracks, and other choir resources.
- b) A singer joining the choir will hold **provisional** membership. Full membership will not be granted by the committee until advised by the Musical Director (MD) that the singer meets the standard required for concert performance. In the case of experienced and able singers this may occur shortly after joining, whereas it may take beginners many months to attain concert readiness. Some singers may not achieve full membership.
- c) Provisional members will be encouraged and supported in their progress toward full membership. They should both seek and expect periodic feedback on their progress from the MD, their Section Leader and from other members.
- d) At the MD's discretion a provisional member may be permitted to perform with the aid of music copies, but full concert readiness is assessed when singing from memory.
- e) A prospective joiner will not be required to pay subscriptions for the first three rehearsal sessions. Subsequently subscriptions are due at the prevailing standard rate for both provisional and full members.

2. Prepared

- a) Members are expected to prepare for and take part in nearly all choir performances with the exception of 'optional' tours and trips.
- b) Preparation includes homework (music study and exercises) between rehearsals as well as attending rehearsals, particularly the two immediately prior to the performance.
- c) Members are encouraged to attend rehearsals even when they are unable to sing in the next concert, but just prior to the concert the MD may ask such members not to sing so as to enable assessment of the strength and balance of the concert choir.
- d) Each member must be willing to demonstrate preparedness and competence before singing in each performance. This may be done during a 'one to one' session with a Section Leader or the MD, or when the choir is rehearsing in quartets, i.e. one person singing each part of a TTBB piece.

A singer who does not know his part, or is otherwise unable to sing it well enough, will detract from the sound of the choir, not least by distracting other singers.



3. Supportive

- a) It is the duty of every member to offer support and assistance to other members whenever possible. Mutual encouragement and support builds confidence and trust, and promotes learning. It is particularly important that new and less confident singers shall be effectively supported and encouraged.
- b) Each member must be prepared to give feedback to others on their singing, not only when invited by the other person to do so, and is also expected to welcome and value feedback on his own singing.

It is unreasonable to expect a singer to appraise accurately his own efforts, or to expect the MD to be the sole source of feedback. Regular, routine feedback to each member from other members is an essential feature of choir culture.

- c) At all times but particularly when giving or receiving feedback members shall maintain a respectful and considerate demeanour.

The choir strives to foster a trusting, open and inclusive environment in which all individuals are always treated with respect.

4. Involved

- a) Over and above his own preparation for singing, every member is expected to contribute time and effort in support of choir work such as administration, events and projects.

Sharing tasks amongst members helps to prevent non-singing activities from becoming excessively burdensome to an individual.

5. Positive

- a) Every member has a duty of stewardship in respect of the choir, preserving its existence for future generations of singers by maintaining its health, vitality and good reputation. Without continual regeneration the choir will decline and eventually disband.

The future of HMVC is in the hands of its members.

- b) Singing must be enjoyable! The choir's ethos and values as outlined above should underpin an open and non-defensive culture of mutual assistance. We must help each other to sound as good as we possibly can.

*Our singing must be enjoyable – by us **and** by our audiences.*