

## FAKENHAM CHORAL SOCIETY (FCS) RULES AND REGULATIONS

### Membership admission and termination rules

1. FCS is committed to the principle and practice of equality and oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination and admits new Members in accordance with its Equality and Diversity Policy.
2. The lower age limit for Members is 16 years; there is no upper limit. Young people aged 16- to 19-year-old may become Members of FCS provided that all procedures included in the Safeguarding policy (particularly those in section 3) are adhered to.
3. Vulnerable adults may be admitted to FCS if all procedures included in the Safeguarding policy (particularly those in section 4) are adhered to.
4. The Committee and Musical Director will set size limits for each section of the choir as required; a waiting list will be introduced should there be insufficient space within a section.
5. Prospective new Members may have two free trial sessions and then undergo a voice check by the Musical Director (to make sure that they can sing in tune and to allocate them to the appropriate section). Upon successful completion, subs become *immediately* payable; Membership starts on receipt of subs and on completion of FCS Membership form.
6. Prospective new Members will be charged a £5 per score deposit, until such time as they become full Members. Score deposits will be deducted from the Membership fee due.
7. The Membership form will be reissued from time to time to update FCS records. Continued Membership will depend on completing this form.
8. Any Member who commits any of the following:
  - contravenes FCS rules and regulations
  - behaves in a way that is contrary to the guidance or the spirit of FCS policies
  - behaves inappropriately or in a way that might bring FCS into disrepute
  - harasses or bullies other Members, Volunteers, or staff
  - slanders or libels FCS
 will have their Membership terminated. Termination will be in accordance with section 4 of the Constitution. However, a Member will be given the opportunity to appeal to the Committee, should they believe they have good reasons why their Membership should not be terminated. If the offence falls within the remit of one of FCS's policies, the due process set out within this policy should be followed.
9. If the person committing the offence is a Member of the Committee, the remaining Committee Members (who are all Trustees of FCS) shall be bound by section 4 of the Constitution.
10. All final decisions concerning Membership and termination will be made by the Committee. If there are equal votes for and against, the Chairman (or the Vice-Chairman if the person accused is the Chairman) will have the casting vote. The Committee reserves the right to give an offender a second chance with or without attached conditions. All outcomes will be communicated in writing and noted within FCS Minutes.

### Subscription and Gift Aid

1. Subscriptions are charged to pay the fees to the Musical Director and the Accompanist, for the hire of the hall, music hire, insurance, and other incidental costs. They also contribute to the (considerable) costs of performances and provide a buffer for times of difficulty. The Committee has to be certain how much money will be coming in *before* committing to all of these considerable costs.
2. Each year, the Committee will decide the amount of the annual subscription and will inform Members in the Summer Newsletter, verbally or via email.

3. At its discretion, the Committee may increase the annual subscription for Members who choose to pay in two or more instalments, or reduce the annual subscription as an incentive to pay in full in September. This will be communicated to Members in the Summer Newsletter.
4. By joining the choir, Members agree to paying their subscription for the *whole year* – regardless of the number of terms in which they sing. In exceptional circumstances the Committee may use its discretion and consider waiving this commitment. Members must apply for this waiver by writing to/emailing the Membership Secretary or the Treasurer. This does not apply to new Members joining in Spring or Summer terms.
5. Subscriptions are normally payable annually and are due by the second rehearsal each September (or earlier).
6. Should a Member prefer to pay biannually, the first payment is due by the second rehearsal each September (or earlier), the second is due on (or before) the second rehearsal in January.
7. In very exceptional cases, a Member might contact the Membership Secretary and Treasurer as above. Should they be permitted to pay in three instalments, the first two must be as above, the third on or before 4<sup>th</sup> April at the latest.
8. Any additional help due to financial hardship must be requested in writing to the Treasurer and Membership Secretary, providing evidence for the request. Any decision will be at the discretion of the Treasurer and Membership Secretary, whose decision is final.
9. Non-payment of subs by the third rehearsal after the due date, will result in the Member being suspended after that rehearsal until they have paid. The Committee will use its discretion where illness or other problems prevent a Member from attending the first few rehearsals of term – or, indeed for any protracted periods.
10. Suspension of Membership entails:
  - not attending rehearsals (in person or remotely)
  - foregoing the right to attend the AGM
  - not being able to sing in concerts
  - not attending FCS social events
11. Existing Members who do not attend any of the first five rehearsals of the following Autumn term, and do not provide a valid reason, will be considered a 'leaver' and be removed from group communications. Payment of the annual subscription without attendance at rehearsals will not guarantee their place is kept open for them. To ensure a balanced choir and opportunities for those on a waiting list, the non-returning Member will be subject to the rules for New Members if they wish to re-join.
12. New Members starting in the second or third term of the year will only be expected to pay for two or one terms respectively, for that year. The fees will be a strict division of two thirds or one third respectively of the full annual fee.
13. Should a Member fail to pay their subscription for the second and/or third term by the start of the Autumn term of the following FCS year, they cannot re-join without paying the money outstanding from previous years. Historic non-payment will be taken into consideration on a case by case basis (e.g. financial hardship). Members have a right to appeal to the Committee in writing if they feel there are any extenuating circumstances.
14. Any discounts or refunds (including, in the event of unforeseen circumstances which may cause cancellation of rehearsals), will be at the discretion of the Committee.
15. As a charity, FCS can claim from HMRC, the basic rate of tax that Members have paid on their subs after the proportion used for tuition has been deducted. This increases the value of the subs (and any donations) by 25%.
16. Gift Aid is an important source of income for FCS and Members are encouraged to sign up if they are eligible. Where Members later become ineligible for Gift Aid, they must notify the Treasurer immediately.

#### What Members can *normally* expect (NB External factors may affect what is offered)

1. Tuition/practice at weekly rehearsals during the choir year – including split rehearsals
2. Free loan of music, subject to it being returned on time to the Librarian in previous terms
3. Opportunity to perform in up to three concerts<sup>1</sup> per year
4. Regular communications
5. Access to Members' area on FCS Website (as long as we have a website)
6. An annual garden party
7. Singing some great choral music.

#### What is expected of Members

##### General

1. On joining, read the rules and regulations and abide by them
2. Have a simple voice test with the MD
3. Support and abide by Committee decisions
4. Pay subscriptions on time
5. Help FCS in any way that Members can: joining the Committee; volunteering for various posts; volunteering for other jobs that need doing; contributing to fund-raising events; or in any other way. The choir is a large one and without paid administrators; it is run by volunteers from the Membership. The attitude 'I just want to sing and that's what I pay for' is not acceptable.
6. Do nothing that will bring FCS into disrepute

##### Rehearsals

7. Support rehearsal rules. Make new Members welcome, remembering no-one has a pre-determined seat
8. Arrive to rehearsals on time and be ready with music and a soft pencil when the rehearsals start
9. Practice between rehearsals
10. On arrival at a rehearsal, register your attendance. Members also need to confirm in good time their intention to attend a concert or not.
11. Pay attention to the MD (or deputy) – listen to him/her, watch and follow his/her instructions, and don't chatter during a rehearsal
12. Sit in the correct section (and seat if directed) at rehearsals and at concerts
13. Let the Secretary, Membership Secretary or appropriate sectional Voice Rep know as soon as possible if a Member is about to miss one or more rehearsals

##### Concerts

14. Sign up for the concert in advance as requested
15. Promote FCS concerts and sell tickets for concerts
16. Read, listen to and comply with the instructions given on the Concert Information Sheet. These instructions apply to ALL Members.
17. Sit where requested in accordance with concert seating plan
18. Be prepared to change seats<sup>2</sup> on the day if requested by a Committee Member

<sup>1</sup> There might be additional opportunities to perform e.g. carol-singing in Fakenham

<sup>2</sup> Every opportunity will be made to making the seating correct in rehearsals but on the concert day this may change due to staging limitations and other concerns.

19. Help with concert jobs where possible, by providing refreshments, supervising refreshments, helping with setting up and taking down the staging, or with clearing up the venue before leaving
20. Wear the concert dress as instructed<sup>3</sup>. Failure to wear correct concert dress could result in exclusion from performing in the concert
21. Follow concert discipline. Members will receive instructions well before a concert. It is expected that they will adhere to this implicitly
22. Remove own chair from staging and dispose of it as instructed
23. Return borrowed scores as instructed

#### What is expected of Committee Members

1. Fulfil the duties set out in Annexe 1. concerning preparation for any upcoming concerts and duties on the day or subsequently
2. To comply with the governance requirements as set out in the Constitution
3. To attend Committee meetings, take an active role in discussions and be proactive in offering help to fulfil actions
4. To ensure FCS policies are regularly reviewed and updated where appropriate
5. To ensure FCS remains compliant with regard to Health and Safety, Insurance and submissions to regulatory bodies (e.g. Charity Commission, HMRC and PRS)
6. Committee Members with specific roles and responsibilities should ensure their actions support the smooth running of the Choir and its activities, and bringing any issues or concerns to Committee meetings for discussion
7. To lead by example, supporting all Members, the music team and volunteers, and to be a positive advocate of FCS

#### A Code of Conduct – how Members should behave towards one another

1. Members must at all times treat each other with respect, kindness, and patience, adhering to FCS Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding and Privacy policies
2. Members should encourage each other, be helpful, work together towards a common goal and be inclusive, friendly and professional
3. Allegations made against Member(s) will be taken seriously and fully investigated. Where upheld, a Member may be asked to leave the choir (see **Membership admission and termination rules 8 and 9**) and in serious cases, referred externally to the appropriate authority

#### Loan of FCS property

1. FCS does not loan out its keyboards, pedals, leads, speakers or other electrical equipment
2. FCS does loan music held in its own library to other music groups on written request and in agreement to its terms of hire

#### Rules about borrowing music for practice

1. FCS is committed to ensuring all Members have access to loan scores as part of the annual subscription. The Librarian, in consultation with the Musical Director, will arrange score hire

<sup>3</sup> For women, concert dress is usually black trousers or a long black skirt and a black long-sleeved top. For men it is usually black trousers, white shirt, dinner jacket and black bow tie. All shoes, socks and tights should be black. Occasionally Members will be required to wear coloured tops or shirts. Women may be asked to wear 'pearl' necklaces or bling. Men may be asked to wear a different coloured bow tie or no tie. There may be other requirements.

from a lending library or other source and provide notice of the edition being used to Members wishing to purchase their own copy

2. Scores should be treated with care. Markings should be made using a soft pencil and limited to those which will be of most use to the user
3. The Librarian will stipulate when hire scores must be returned by. Scores should be cleaned of all pencil markings
4. Scores which are received back damaged or lost will incur a replacement charge, payable by the Member

#### **How the Society's property, the rehearsal space, and concert venues are to be used**

1. All property, whether owned by FCS, its Members or music team, or used as part of rehearsals, concerts or other events should be treated with respect. Damage or loss will need to be paid for
2. FCS has a H&S policy and compiles risk assessments for rehearsals and other events which should be complied with by everyone.
3. Anyone identifying a potential hazard has a duty of care to report this to a Committee member. Common sense goes along way.

#### **The charitable aims and objectives of the society**

To advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by any means the trustees see fit, including through the presentation of public concerts and recitals.

#### **Expanding on Finance**

FCS has a separate Finance Policy. An overview is included in the FCS Policies section of this document.

#### **Rules around the Trustee election process**

1. All elected members of the Committee are Charity Trustees of FCS<sup>4</sup>
2. Committee Members / Trustees must be active members of FCS
3. A Trustee can be disqualified or removed for a number of reasons (see Constitution 8. Disqualification and removal of trustees)
4. Trustees will be asked to complete an annual Conflict of Interests Declaration and are asked at the commencement of each Committee Meeting whether they need to declare an interest
5. Trusteeship is aligned to the term of office for each Committee Member
6. Committee Members are elected at the Annual General Meeting and can serve for a maximum term of three years. One third of the Committee shall retire each year and be eligible for immediate re-election. This can occur before a three-year term expires to prevent the Committee Member terms expiring at the same time
7. If a Committee vacancy occurs mid-term or a post was not been filled at the AGM, a choir Member can be co-opted by agreement of the serving Committee, but must then stand for election at the next AGM
8. Members are given at least 21 days' notice of an AGM. Nominations for election to the Committee can be made from the notice day up to the day of the AGM. Nominations must be

<sup>4</sup> Trustees are the people who lead the charity and decide how it is run. Being a trustee means making decisions that will impact on people's lives. Depending on what the charity does, you will be making a difference to your local community or to society as a whole. Trustees use their skills and experience to support their charities, helping them achieve their aims. Trustees also often learn new skills during their time on the board.

in writing supported by two Members, and initialled by the nominee. If there are more nominees than posts, an election will take place

#### **How the Committee with communicate with the Members**

1. Communications to Members must be compliant with the FCS Data Privacy Policy
2. Access to Member data is determined by role (see Data Privacy Policy)
3. Members are not automatically entitled to the contact information of other Members. Members should either make a direct approach to the other Member or via ask the Committee who will request permission to share information before doing so
4. The FCS communication preference is via Email, but letters to those without email access
5. Members should make the Membership Secretary or Secretary aware of any change in contact information so FCS records can be kept up to date
6. Regular information updates will include relevant information for rehearsals, concerts or items of interest
7. An Annual Newsletter is issued, usually in August, including details of the upcoming season including the annual subscription, rehearsal and concert dates along with the concert repertoire. Other reports and items of interest may also be included
8. In the event of bad weather, or other reason to cancel a rehearsal or concert, an email will be sent to Members. This will be followed up by a phone call from a Committee member.
9. AGM minutes are published within the Members' section of the FCS website. Access to other minutes can be arranged by contacting the Secretary. Where there is a need for confidentiality, some content may be redacted

#### **Mechanisms for Members communicating with the Committee and MD**

1. Members can contact the Committee or MD with questions, requests or concerns
2. Contact details can be found at the end of group emails. Members should contact the most relevant person
3. The preferred method of contact is via email. Some Committee members can also be contacted by phone
4. FCS has a team of section representatives. Members can raise concerns via reps if that is their preference. These will then be relayed to the Committee
5. From time to time, FCS may also issue an email questionnaire to garner information to aid decision making

#### **Sponsorship, Grants and Fundraising**

1. The cost of FCS activities, such as Concerts and Come & Sing events, cannot be covered by subscriptions alone. To ensure FCS finances remain sound, there is a need to raise funds through sponsorship approaches, fundraising and grant applications
2. Direct approaches to businesses and supporters to invite sponsorship of a particular item (e.g. a soloist, printing etc.). Members are encouraged to make approaches to businesses they use regularly, or to pass their contact details on to the Committee
3. Where there is an identifiable need which fits the criteria of a grant making organisation, an application will be submitted
4. Due thanks to sponsors and grant makers is given in FCS publicity, including press releases, posters and concert programmes
5. Fundraising activity also takes place for FCS funds via sales of donated goods at rehearsal and raffles. At the annual Come & Sing event, funds are also raised for a nominated charity
6. Where appropriate, donations can be Gift Aided to increase the benefit to FCS



## Website

### 1. Web address and purpose

- \* The address of the Society's website is [www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org](http://www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org).
- \* Provide full details of the Society and its activities for both existing members and those interested in joining
- \* Publicise future concerts and other events
- \* Provide a link to TicketSource, the Society's online booking partner
- \* Record details of past concerts and other events
- \* Provide a repository of key administrative documents, in a secure area of the site
- \* Provide members with details of practice resources, usually via weblinks
- \* Support the recruitment of sponsors and Friends of the Society

### 2. Members area – access, location and content

A protected area of the site provides resources of particular value to members. Access is from the main menu via a password which is made available only to members.

Contents of the protected area include:

- \* a remote link for those unable to attend rehearsals (if applicable)
- \* copies of the Society's policies, procedures and minutes
- \* lists of general and current aids to practice
- \* a membership form
- \* printable copies of publicity materials
- \* copies of current and past newsletters.

## Friends of FCS

The Friends Association was established at the start of the 2007/08 Season to provide additional funds for the choir and an opportunity for friends, family and concert goers who wish to support the Choral Society's activities in this way.

1. The Association is open to anyone 18 years and over who wishes to become a Friend and pays an annual subscription. The majority of Friends are connected by family or friendship to choir members; however, members of the public with no immediate connection to a choir member are most welcome.
2. The Association's details are published in every concert programme and the Membership Secretary's contact details are also made available.
3. Subscriptions are reviewed annually and are renewed every September for those wishing to do so. New members who join during the Season pay on a pro rata basis. Subscriptions are reviewed annually, which can lead to a small increase if necessary. Friends are able to make a Gift Aid Declaration if they wish to. The Subscriptions are paid into a separate Bank Account overseen by the Treasurer.  
Retiring Choir members are offered a discount for their first year of membership.
4. Benefits of being a Friend of FCS. The Friends are contacted before each concert and given details of the upcoming performance. Friends are eligible for reserved seating. Friends receive a free programme. The Friends' names are listed in the programme, unless otherwise advised. Friends are invited to a welcoming pre-concert drinks reception. Friends are invited to the FCS Summer Garden Party.
5. Benefits to FCS. The Friends Association provides additional financial support and encouragement for the Choral Society. It enables choir members to engage their friends or

relatives their singing activities. It affords members of the public an opportunity to become more involved with the choir's performances. The Committee has an additional source of funds which can be used in a flexible way to cover a variety of needs e.g. equipment, soloists, orchestral fees etc.

## FCS Policies

1. FCS have agreed to a range of policies to confirm its commitment to protect members and promote its readiness to explore new music
2. Each policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it is still fit for purpose and to refresh awareness of what each means in relation to how these may impact or influence FCS activities

### Equality & Diversity:

- The aim of the FCS Equalities and Diversity Policy is to promote good practice through
- Ensuring equal opportunities in: the election of the Committee; the selection of new Members, any staff or volunteers; and in all transactions and communications with advertisers, sponsors, instrumentalists, soloists, printers, venue staff, and audiences
  - Making our concerts accessible to all
  - Taking into account equalities issues when planning FCS events
  - Promoting awareness of equalities issues in our choice of choral works
  - Exploring repertoire from female composers or from other cultures
  - Discouraging discriminatory practice or behaviour among the Committee, Members, Friends, staff and volunteers.

### Safeguarding:

The aim of this policy is to protect any vulnerable people during rehearsals, concerts, meetings and any other FCS activities.

### Privacy Policy:

The aim of this policy is to

- protect the rights of our Members, Friends and others
- comply with data protection law and to follow good practice
- protect all data subjects from the risks of a data breach

### Health & Safety:

The aim of this policy is to prevent accidents and cases of ill-health by managing the risks at rehearsals, events and activities FCS organises

### Financial Policy:

Fakenham Choral Society is committed to ensuring that robust financial policies and procedures are in place to safeguard the assets of the Society. The Society's committee/trustees are jointly responsible for managing a group's resources responsibly. The aim of the policy is to:

- ensure the trustees have proper financial controls of the organisation and that financial transactions are in accordance with the aims and objectives stated in the constitution
- provide a clear framework for trustees and volunteers to work within when dealing with money.
- ensure the organisation meets its legal obligations in relation to accounting and financial reporting to the Charity Commission and HMRC.
- ensure the organisation meets the contractual obligations and requirements of funders.

## Publicity

1. The FCS charitable aim includes the presentation of public concerts and recitals. To ensure event details reach the widest possible audience, publicity is required in the run-up to concerts

and other public events, press and magazine content is written by the Committee and distributed direct to newspapers and periodicals, and also to choir members for submission to their local parish magazines. Posters, flyers and banners are also created for display and distribution in the local area

2. Other items of interest, not related to events, are also shared with the press to raise the choir's profile
3. FCS has social media profiles on Facebook, Instagram and X (Twitter). Information is posted independently by the administrators without reference to the Committee
4. Raising awareness of the Choir can increase interest and attendance at concerts as well as opening opportunities for sponsorship and grants

#### **Rules about how, how often and by whom the 'Rules & Regulations' document will be reviewed and updated**

1. This FCS Rules and Regulations document sets out to expand upon the confines of the Constitution
2. The Rules and Regulations document acts as a point of reference when issues or questions arise
3. The Rules and Regulations form a living document which can be added to and adapted as new and emerging situations occur
4. The Rules and Regulations should be reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Any changes should be documented in the table in Annexe 2, providing the date of change and the rationale

#### **Where this document, and any changes made, can be found and / or will be disseminated**

1. Once the initial Rules and Regulations document has been completed, the Committee will formally propose its adoption, decide when it will come into force and how it will be disseminated to Members. In addition, the Committee should also decide when updates to the document need to be raised with the Membership. The minutes must include all elements of the decision making process.
2. In accordance with the Committee's decision the Membership will be made aware of the document and the reasons behind it before it is shared
3. A copy of the most current document should be made available in hard copy at rehearsals and hosted in the Members area of the website
4. New Members should be made aware of the document via the Members' Fact Sheet

## **Annexe 1.**

#### **Committee Member duties in relation to concerts.**

1. Complete a concert preparation sheet
2. Consider and put into action any advertising for the event
3. With MD, book soloists, instrumentalists, and fixer (if needed)
4. Book venue
5. Design and print poster, flyers, and banners and organise distribution
6. Decide programme price for Members and audience
7. Obtain information for the programme from all concerned, design and print programmes (for sale at concert)

8. Decide ticket price
9. Design and print tickets
10. Set up on-line ticket selling system
11. Offer complimentary tickets to sponsors/president/Mayor of Fakenham etc
12. Take ticket orders by phone and prepare tickets for leaving at ticket desk
13. Organise concert rehearsal
14. Organise any accommodation for soloists/instrumentalists (if required)
15. Organise refreshments for soloists/instrumentalists for concert day
16. Treasurer to collect floats from bank and prepare
17. Treasurer to prepare concert fees to be paid electronically if possible. Performer and musician bank details to be obtained before the day with an aim for fees to be paid within 72 hours of the concert. Electronic payments require two people to authorise
18. Friends' Secretary – organise Friends for concert duties
19. Allocate programmes for Friends
20. Organise Stewards to help at the concert. Provide a briefing on expected duties
21. Organise volunteers for clearing up venue after use
22. Organise staging delivery, setting up, taking down, and removal (See Staging Guidelines) – organise volunteers
23. Bank any cash and cheques collected prior to concert; this should be done regularly
24. Organise purchase of wine and soft drinks for concerts and any other refreshments
25. Organise collection of glasses for concert refreshments.

#### **Concert rehearsal/day of concert**

26. Prior to rehearsal, refreshment organiser to lay out tables, collect/prepare food (and store it appropriately) and have it ready for soloists'/instrumentalists' tea
27. Bring programmes to rehearsal and sell programmes to choir, providing a box for the money
28. Supervise seating
29. Provide refreshments for soloists/instrumentalists
30. Lay out concert refreshments and glasses
31. Distribute gift aid envelopes if required

#### **At Concert**

32. Steward activities to be overseen by coordinator and nominated lead steward
33. Treasurer to provide floats for ticket sales, programmes, and refreshments an hour before the start of the concert
34. Card reader and tables/phones to be set up
35. Sell or check tickets
36. Sell programmes
37. Supervise lining up before concert
38. Sell refreshments
39. Friends and volunteers usher audience to their seats
40. Assist choir Members to their seats if needed
41. Put out extra seats if required and if space available

#### **At the end of the Concert and afterwards**

42. Put out collection buckets if required, and supervise these where appropriate
43. Put out boxes for collection of scores
44. Collect and pack up choir chairs
45. Treasurer to collect all proceeds and floats, store safely, count, and bank a.s.a.p.
46. Treasurer to pay any outstanding invoices

47. Treasurer to write a Concert Report
48. Treasurer to calculate audience numbers and make PRS payment in December
49. Box glasses and give them to those who will wash and store them
50. Ensure audience is safely off the premises
51. Clear up/tidy venue removing all rubbish. Check venue and lock doors (if required)
52. Staging Manager supervise taking down of staging, check it, and have it collected

**ACCEPTANCE OF THESE RULES & REGULATIONS BY THE COMMITTEE**  
 (reviewed ADD DATE)

Signed:



Dated:

13/1/25-

Print Name:

Position:

CHAIR.

Next review date: ADD DATE – annual review or more frequently if needed

## Annexe 2.

### Change Log

Change	Reason / Rationale	Date Change Agreed
Initial document agreed	-	