

## APPENDIX TO COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

### HAILSHAM CHORAL SOCIETY POLICIES

Our Constitution sets out the general objectives of the choir and the rules governing the Executive Committee, meetings and Annual General Meetings, and concerning the membership of the choir.

Our Committee handbook gives more detailed guidance on the running of the choir, the organising of concerts and the various job descriptions. It sets out best practice and aims to stay up to date with new laws and regulations as required by the Charity Commission.

This appendix is in response to new rules set by the Charity Commission (2025), which asks for detailed policies in a number of areas. We are grateful to Christine Baelz, Simon Marsden and Sue Simpson for their help with this.

#### POLICIES:

1. [Charity Financial Controls](#)
2. [Internal Risk Assessment](#)
3. [Social Media Policy](#)
4. [Equality, diversity and inclusion policy](#)
  - a. Aims
  - b. Responsibilities
  - c. General practice
  - d. Inclusion and respect
  - e. Removing barriers
  - f. Complaints
5. [Serious incident reporting](#)
6. [Safeguarding](#)

#### 1. CHARITY FINANCIAL CONTROLS

The Constitution says:

*“1. The funds of the charity, including all donations, contributions and bequests shall be paid into an account operated by the Executive Committee in the name of the Charity at such bank as the Executive Committee shall from time to time decide. All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by at least two members of the Executive Committee.*

*2. The funds belonging to the charity shall be applied only in furthering the objects. “*

Financial controls are to be applied as follows:

1. Only nominated members of the Executive Committee of the Charity (Trustees) shall have access to the bank accounts, and thus to make and authorise payments.
2. We use an online bank account (at present with Lloyds Bank), which requires two signatories to make and authorise payments. There should be at least three Trustees as signatories at any one time, and no more than four, in case of absences. At present the Treasurer, Chair and two others are signatories.
3. The Charity will keep a Financial reserve fund in a separate savings account, holding a suitable amount to cover the costs of one concert.
4. Reasonable expenses incurred by trustees on behalf of the choir will be reimbursed in a timely manner on production of receipts. Examples of reasonable expenditure are: purchase of refreshments for concert intervals, tributes, home printing costs for choir use, postage for choir business such as returning hired scores. Any expenses over £100 should be agreed in advance by the Treasurer and/or the Chair.

[Back to top](#)

## **2. INTERNAL RISK ASSESSMENT**

There are four areas of risk applicable to Hailsham Choral Society:

- a. Financial
- b. Governance
- c. Operational
- d. Reputational

### **A. Financial risks**

A careful budget needs to be set well in advance of each concert, bearing in mind funds available and future financial commitments, whether regular or incidental. Potential costs of MD's fees, orchestra/accompanist, soloists, venue hire and staging should be taken into consideration. Ticket price should be set accordingly. An overview of past concerts' profits or losses should be kept and used as a guide when planning future concerts. The Treasurer is responsible for providing up to date accounts for Committee meetings and advising on budgets.

### **B. Governance**

The trustees are responsible collectively for the smooth running of Hailsham Choral Society, guided by the Committee Handbook and the Policies Appendix. All trustees need to have access to the handbook and documents online, or at least be aware of their contents. Trustees with specific responsibilities (Chair, Treasurer, Secretary) need to review and update the

handbook from time to time, or at least once every two years and share significant changes with the Committee.

C. Operational

According to the Constitution there should be at least 8 and no more than 10 trustees on the Committee. If, in a case of incapacity, fewer Committee members are available to serve on the Committee, and the AGM is not taking place within three months, extra member(s) will need to be co-opted in the meantime, until an election can take place at the AGM. This is especially important for the role of Treasurer and those who are co-signatories for the account. There should be at least three signatories at any one time, and no more than four.

D. Reputational

All trustees are responsible for the good reputation of Hailsham Choral Society, be it when dealing with the membership, the general public, online via social media, or when working with other choirs or organisations. If a situation arises in which the reputation of Hailsham Choral Society could be harmed, whether through financial or behavioural misconduct, this should be reported to the Chair, who will inform the Committee and decide on the best way to mitigate this risk.

[Back to top](#)

### **3. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Hailsham Choral Society will follow the Charity Commission's [guidance on the use of Social media](#).

Facebook is used to publicise the choir, our concerts, share reviews and other stories of general interest. This is currently managed by Aruna Green. The Chair keeps an eye on posts. Only information relating to choir events or of general musical interest should be posted on our Facebook page. Anything inappropriate should be reported to the Executive Committee. Offensive or inappropriate comments will be removed.

[Back to top](#)

### **4. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

Membership and activities are open and welcoming to everybody entitled to become a member, according to the Constitution, which states: 'Membership of the Charity shall be open to any person over the age of 18 years interested in furthering the objects and who has paid the annual subscription and who has provided such evidence of musical ability as the Musical Director shall require'. We will not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin),
- religion or belief,
- sex
- sexual orientation

We are also committed to promoting equality of opportunity regardless of class and socio-economic background.

#### **a. Aims**

We aim to:

- Provide and promote equality of opportunity and equitable treatment for everyone.
- Make our activities accessible and inclusive by removing barriers to entry.
- Encourage, celebrate and value diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure every member feels respected and able to give their best.
- Eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

#### **b. Responsibilities**

- The Chair is the EDI lead and responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality, diversity and inclusion issues, and to ensure the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is kept up to date.

#### **c. General practice**

Hailsham Choral Society will treat everyone equally regardless of their age (within the membership criteria as set out in the Constitution), disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, class and socio-economic background.

Hailsham Choral Society will promote equality of access within the membership criteria, to membership and musical activities and opportunities.

We will ensure no one receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the introduction.

We acknowledge our responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to our activity to enable access under the Equality Act 2010

We will select candidates for volunteering or paid opportunities based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

Hailsham Choral Society's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination, where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination, where a requirement or a condition is applied that has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.

- Associative discrimination, where direct discrimination against someone occurs because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination, where direct discrimination against someone occurs because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.
- Harassment, where unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic occurs that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.
- Third party harassment, which recognises potential liability for the harassment of someone connected to the group by external contacts.
- Victimisation, when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint, or it is thought that they have done so.

#### **d. Inclusion and respect**

- Hailsham Choral Society will:
  - treat everyone 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.
- All members, staff, freelancers, volunteers, supporters and those representing Hailsham Choral Society are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure activities are welcoming and inclusive for all who are eligible.
- Inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment and have no place in Hailsham Choral Society.

Hailsham Choral Society will support our members, volunteers, staff, freelancers and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from other group members, volunteers, colleagues, freelancers, other organisations or customers.

#### **e. Removing barriers**

Hailsham Choral Society is committed to making sure its activities are accessible and inclusive.

We recognise that there may be a range of barriers that could stop individuals accessing our activities or feeling included in them. These barriers may not always be obvious or visible and could be:

- Physical
- Practical
- Cultural

We will work to identify any such barriers and take reasonable measures to remove them.

#### **f. Dealing with Complaints**

- If any member, volunteer, staff, freelancer or supporter feels they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they should raise it with the EDI lead. If the complaint is regarding this person, it should be raised with another committee member.
- The committee will take complaints of discrimination and harassment seriously. Serious complaints will be recorded, including how the matter was resolved.
- 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 Hailsham Choral Society, the committee must work to ensure that such discrimination, harassment or victimisation is not repeated in future, and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.
  - If a complaint is found against Hailsham Choral Society, the committee should work to resolve the complaint in a manner which is acceptable to the person who was subject to discrimination.
  - If a complaint against Hailsham Choral Society is not upheld, the committee might wish to address issues which might have led to the complaint in the first place, e.g. lack of communication, to prevent similar situations in future.

#### **Policy review**

The policy will be reviewed every two years by the Executive Committee. Members of Hailsham Choral Society will be informed of any changes to the policy and be invited to comment.

[Back to top](#)

### **5. SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORTING**

#### **What is a serious incident?**

A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- harm to Hailsham Choral Society's members, volunteers and employees
- loss of the charity's money or assets
- damage to the charity's property
- harm to Hailsham Choral Society's work or reputation

## Who should report to the Charity Commission?

The responsibility for reporting serious incidents rests with the charity's trustees. All trustees bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring their charity makes a report, and does so in a timely manner.

If you decide not to make a report about something serious that has happened in your charity and the Commission later becomes involved, you will need to be able to explain why you decided not to report it at the time.

Further guidance is available [online](#).

[Back to top](#)

## 6. SAFEGUARDING

**Commitment to safeguarding:** Hailsham Choral Society believes that a child, young person or adult at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children, young people and adults at risk we come into contact with and to protecting them from harm.

This policy recognises vulnerable people as:

- Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18.
- Adults aged over 18 at risk including those 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.

**How Hailsham Choral Society might work with vulnerable people:** membership is open to those over 18 years of age. We have a number of elderly members, whose physical and/or mental capacity may be deteriorating as they get older. 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 group who attend rehearsals and concerts
- Relatives and friends of members who attend concerts in a volunteering capacity
- Audience members at public concerts

**Named safeguarding person:** The Membership Secretary has responsibility for safeguarding issues. All queries and concerns relating to safeguarding should be referred to Sue Simpson in the first instance.

### **Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse**

- If any member, staff or volunteer in Hailsham Choral Society witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to the named safeguarding officer, Sue Simpson.
- If the named person is not available, or is involved in or connected to, the abuse, it should be reported to the group chair, Milly Clark.
- If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the named safeguarding officer or an individual they trust.
- The issue should be dealt with as appropriate (see under 4 f), reported to the Executive Committee and recorded.

[Back to top](#)

Milly Clark  
1 September 2025