

If you are thinking about joining the choir jump straight to the [Raised Voices FAQs](#) section.

Raised Voices Code of Practice

This document contains information about Raised Voices and our Code of Practice, and should be read in conjunction with our [Constitution](#). It is intended to make our day-to-day-working transparent. It is open to continual review and occasional revision.

As amended during 2018 and accepted in Business Meeting on 22nd November 2018.
Including minor amendment from May 2019.f.a

Click on the Section names in Table 1 to jump to that section.

If you thinking about joining the choir, read the Raised Voices FAQ section.

Table 1

Sections	Who should read the section	Page
Raised Voices FAQs	People who might be interested in joining the choir AND Members	2
HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF REHEARSALS	New people during their taster sessions; Members	4
ON-GOING ROLES IN RAISED VOICES	Members	5
AD HOC ROLES: CO-ORDINATING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHOIR	Members	9
HOW WE ARRIVE AT DECISIONS	Members	12

Raised Voices FAQs

Interested in joining Raised Voices?

Read these FAQs, and feel free to come along to one of our choir rehearsals!

What is Raised Voices?

Raised Voices is a London-based political choir of women and men which was founded in 1986. We usually have around 25 members. We sing a continually developing repertoire of left, anti-racist, feminist, LGBT, environmental, anti-war, internationalist, and other political songs, including songs from other cultures and languages. We sing for many causes and for our own enjoyment.

Members of Raised Voices are involved in a range of different projects, groups, and campaigns. To share our knowledge and develop ideas for ways of making the choir politically relevant and creative, we sometimes have political discussions on particular themes, facilitated by members of the choir.

The choir is run as a co-operative, with shared responsibility and collective decision-making. We encourage shadowing and job-sharing to help members gain confidence to take on roles, but there is no pressure on any of us to do more than we feel comfortable with. In particular, we don't expect new members to take on a role in their first year, unless they strongly wish to.

We employ a musical leader to help us learn new songs and rehearse.

When and where do you meet?

- We meet on Thursdays, 7.30 to 9.30 pm, for our choir rehearsals.
- We meet at the Doreen Bazell Hall, Chenies Place, NW1 1UG.
- At the rehearsals we prepare for events, learn new songs, and enjoy singing old ones together. We also have a short decision-making 'business meeting' every week.

How much does it cost?

We invite anyone interested in joining the choir to come along to four free rehearsals, as taster sessions. This gives you a chance to decide whether you like the choir and its repertoire. After that, we all pay a subscription to cover costs (see [What is the subscription used for?](#)). The current full subscription is £28 every month; it is reviewed occasionally to decide if any change is required. However, each new member can discuss their individual circumstances with the treasurer. A lower rate may be negotiated, because it is a principle that nobody is prevented by low income from being part of Raised Voices. Payment by Standing Order is preferable; we have a form you can send to your bank or use the account details for online banking regular transfers. However, payment by cheque or cash is also acceptable if setting up a Standing Order is not possible.

New members are given a folder containing the words of all the songs in our repertoire, and we ask for an optional contribution towards the cost of that.

Do I need to be able to sing well?

Raised Voices welcomes singers of all abilities and levels of experience; we are encouraging to the less confident although we also have many members with much musical skill and experience. Most of our material is straightforward and includes songs with different parts, call and response songs, and rounds. We teach each part separately and give everyone the opportunity to practise their part against other parts. If you are not an experienced singer we will help you choose the right part to sing. Also, there is the possibility of a buddy/mentor in the four taster weeks. As well as learning songs by ear, we often use written music (also called scores or musical notation), which is something we will help you with if you have not used this before. Most people find that reading musical notation is much easier than they

thought; we also provide lyric sheets to those who prefer them. You will find it helpful to practise at home in order to become confident with songs learned in rehearsals. For this purpose, our musical leader creates audio rehearsal tracks for our most challenging songs; these can be found in the members section of our website.

In very rare circumstances, when a person is having difficulty holding a part after the four taster sessions, we may suggest that they take individual singing lessons to help them with their pitching before continuing with Raised Voices.

We like to continually improve the quality of our singing and repertoire. We have a paid musical leader to help us learn new songs quickly and sing them well, and to increase our skills of voice development, reading music, song writing, conducting and harmony. Once or twice a year we book accommodation at a suitable location outside London and go away together as a choir for a weekend workshop.

Where do you perform?

We welcome invitations to perform at political and cultural events and benefits. We often join demonstrations as a group, distributing a song sheet and encouraging others to sing along with us. We occasionally go busking on the street for an agreed cause. We sometimes join up with similar political choirs for demonstrations and other events, e.g. through the [Campaign Choirs Network](#). We usually attend and sing at the annual national [Street Choirs Festival](#).

How is the choir organised?

We have a short decision-making 'business meeting' every week. In addition, there are a number of tasks and roles that keep the choir going and everyone is encouraged to share in these, though there is no pressure on any of us to do more than we feel comfortable with. In particular, we don't expect new members to take on a role in their first year, unless they strongly wish to. More information on how the choir is organised, and role descriptions, are available in the other sections listed in [Table 1](#).

We distribute a list of members' names and addresses and communicate by means of an e-mail list. If you are not on e-mail we try to keep you informed of important discussions and information by phone or post.

What is the subscription used for?

We are dependent on members' subscriptions to cover the costs of running the choir. The main costs are hire of a rehearsal space and payment to a musical leader. Other costs include photocopying music and sometimes advertising to recruit new members. We have an ability to pay policy. The idea is that anyone who has a reasonable income, and whose other commitments are such that they feel they can afford it, should pay this full rate. However, a member who is dependent on benefits or a low pension, or for other reasons really cannot manage to pay the full rate of subscription, may request a reduced rate. The choir's funds, when sufficient, may also be used to subsidise members who can't afford the full cost of accommodation and travel costs involved in going away for weekend workshops or music festivals such as the annual Street Choirs Festival. Again, we have a principle of including everyone whatever their means.

How can I find out more?

- Email address: info@raised-voices.org.uk
- Website: www.raised-voices.org.uk
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RaisedVoices>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Raised-Voices-125719544188804/>
- See some photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/raised-voices>
- See us in action: <http://www.youtube.com/raisedvoiceschoir>

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF REHEARSALS

Rehearsal time is short in relation to what we would like to achieve, so we need to use the time efficiently. These notes suggest how we can do this and, in the process, make rehearsals more rewarding and more fun.

1. **Arrive on time:** Rehearsals start at 7.30 pm, so do your best to arrive by 7.25 pm and respond quickly when the co-ordinator calls for a start. Stop talking, and move quickly to your place for whatever part you sing in a given song.
2. **Attend regularly:** Ideally choir members should attend all or most rehearsals so as not to fall behind with learning new songs. If you will be away, please send your apologies to the Raised Voices email group, and make an effort to catch up; you can ask for help. It is especially important for us to know when choir members are likely to be away in order to be able to assess the feasibility of the choir singing at particular events.
3. **Bring your music, pencil, and diary:** Sheet music is distributed by the librarian when we learn a new song. Please keep these and bring what you need (see the calendar on our website for which songs will be rehearsed). It helps to be able to write notes on the sheet music, as you are taught the finer details of the song; these notes are best in pencil so copies can be returned and re-used. Also, we need to book performance events in advance, so bring your diary too.
4. **Support the Rehearsal/Event Coordinator:** Co-ordinators are delegated by the choir to ensure it works smoothly and effectively (see the [AD HOC ROLES: CO-ORDINATING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHOIR](#)). We can help them in rehearsals by listening carefully and responding quickly. At demonstrations, and even more at performances, it's especially important to be responsive to the co-ordinator's instructions.
5. **Be a good learner:** New songs are taught and old ones practised with the help of a paid musical leader, although individual choir members also sometimes teach or revise songs. Please listen attentively to the leader for each song. You may need to ask questions if you are unsure about something in a song but please always think carefully before taking the time of the group in rehearsal. Though we work by consensus on major issues, often it's better to accept the interpretation of the person teaching or leading the song, who has done preparatory work on it. Being led well is just as important as leading well.
6. **Support potential and new members:** It is helpful if new members are made to feel welcome by the members of the 'part' they join – sopranos, altos, tenors, basses. Listen constructively to their singing, help them to hear their own voices and to listen to others' singing. Find out what their needs are in learning pieces. Don't assume they can read music. During the four taster sessions we can pair the potential member with a 'buddy' if they want one, and it is best if the buddy is in their part.
7. **Prepare the songs:** When learning songs, practise them between rehearsals and try to learn the words by heart. This helps rehearsals and also avoids a panic at the last minute before a gig.
8. **Respond to the conductor:** Once a song is learned, it's still open to interpretation. Conducting is an important part of performance. Be very receptive to the conductor, who needs you to watch them and take notice. She or he will indicate variations in speed, volume and emphasis, and the balance between parts. Even when you are still not confident enough to dispense with sheet music or words, keep watching the conductor out of the corner of your eye.

ON-GOING ROLES IN RAISED VOICES

The only paid role is that of musical leader. The other roles are filled by choir members. It's part of the tradition of the choir that active roles in it are widely distributed among members. At each AGM we ask for volunteers and nominations for the various on-going roles listed in this section. If there's a surplus of names for given positions, job-sharing is a possibility (for example, assistant roles). So is shadowing, to help new people learn roles. Note: we don't expect new members to take on a role in their first year, unless they strongly wish to. If necessary, an election is held. In addition, individuals are encouraged to contribute to the work load on a casual basis, and so take some of the weight off the 'elected officers'. The following notes explain what the roles involve.

The Musical Leader

The role of the musical leader (a paid post) is to:

1. lead rehearsals;
2. prepare new songs for teaching them – liaising with those who have written words or music if they are choir members;
3. prepare other materials and activities before rehearsals as necessary;
4. devise and lead warm-ups;
5. generally help develop the choir's musical ability, performance skills and voice skills;
6. during a newcomer's four taster sessions, in consultation with their part leader, assess their singing ability and make any necessary recommendations;
7. decide which part new choir members should sing and, when necessary for the balance of the choir for performances, to decide which parts other choir members should sing;
8. support and encourage less able singers;
9. train and support members of the choir to lead and teach songs;
10. occasionally adapt song arrangements for the choir;
11. be prepared (on a paid basis) to accompany the choir and lead songs at formal performances, which may be expected to take place on average once a month, sometimes out of London;
12. preferably to participate as a full member of the choir at these formal events; we also hope she or he would be willing to sing with the choir (on a paid basis) at less formal events, such as demonstrations and busking;
13. attend (on a paid basis) for one day at our occasional weekend workshops once or twice a year;
14. attend the choir's short business meetings during each rehearsal;
15. attend (on a pro rata paid basis) part of steering group meetings (by arrangement, as required) and repertoire group meetings (by arrangement once or twice a year).

Steering group

The steering group is usually comprised of at least three members who meet every four to six weeks, outside choir time. The general function is to:

1. maintain a central record of the choir's Constitution and all significant documents, including this Code of Practice and decisions made at business meetings, in particular the minutes of AGMs;
2. ensure as far as possible that decisions are implemented;
3. schedule business meetings and the AGM;
4. when necessary make decisions on behalf of the choir, based on choir policy, and refer decisions to the choir when appropriate;

5. oversee the week-to-week functioning, as well as the overall direction, of the choir in accordance with policies established by the choir;
6. the steering group is also the 'managing group' for our paid musical leader. They ask the leader to meet with them when there is something they need to discuss with him or her, including any problems raised by other members of the choir, and also invite the leader to bring any problems they are having to the group.
7. a specific and important activity of the steering group is working together to prepare a rehearsal schedule ahead of time, in relation to any performances we may have planned, and enter song titles on the website calendar at least a week in advance. One member of the steering group, who knows the repertoire well, liaises with the librarian and with the musical leader over which songs we should suggest to the choir for specific events and which songs we should rehearse each week. The way in which this liaison is organised may vary over time, depending on the teaching and organising style of the current musical leader.
8. one of the steering group takes on the responsibility of organising a list of volunteer coordinators, each committing her or himself to a rehearsal or a performance date in advance. The names of rehearsal/event coordinator go on the website calendar.
9. the life and purpose of the choir is singing in public spaces, on demonstrations, busking, or at rehearsals, in concerts etc., and all choir members are encouraged to seek and develop opportunities. The steering group has oversight of our forward programme. It also ensures that a choir member will maintain a record of our gigs on the website, and prompt evaluation of our year's activity at the AGM.

Treasurer

The role of the treasurer is to keep an overview of the income and outgoings of the choir and ensure that these are in balance. If a shortfall appears likely, to warn the choir so that we can take any necessary steps, e.g. recruitment of new members. In addition, she or he is to:

1. enable choir members to pay their subscriptions by standing order;
2. discuss an appropriate subscription rate with any new member, when advised by the membership secretary;
3. keep proper accounts of income and expenditure on the basis of a financial year from January 1 to December 31;
4. be responsible for the Raised Voices bank account;
5. make routine payments, including maintaining rehearsal hall bookings;
6. seek authority for exceptional payments;
7. present a statement of accounts and report to the Annual General Meeting.

Membership secretary

The role of the Membership Secretary is to:

1. maintain an up-to-date list of names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of all choir members, and other relevant contact addresses;
2. ensure a system is in place whereby newcomers are welcomed, their contact details taken, and the admission procedure is explained; if they don't have web access, arrange that a print copy of the choir FAQs is given to them;
3. where possible and if the newcomer wishes, arrange for an existing member (in the same part) to act as buddy/mentor to newcomers during their four taster rehearsals;

4. ask newcomers if they need help to find and integrate into their 'part'; if so, to consult with the musical leader and other choir members;
5. keep a weekly register of attenders, and apologies;
6. in a newcomer's fourth taster rehearsal, ask them whether they wish to join the choir. Then, usually formally invite the newcomer to become a member. In rare cases, discuss with the music leader what recommendations to make to the newcomer;
7. advise the treasurer when a new member is due to pay subs;
8. if someone is absent for three or four weeks without explanation, think about e-mailing to see if they are OK and what is going on for them.

The Librarian

The role of the choir's librarian is to:

1. keep a full set of song lyrics and music;
2. find out from the steering group what music will be needed at next rehearsal;
3. make photocopies as necessary and bring them to rehearsal.

The Repertoire Group

Our Repertoire Group includes the musical leader and other members of the choir who are interested. Anyone can convene a meeting of the repertoire group when they think it is needed and anyone can come to a meeting whether or not they wish to put forward a song. The role of the repertoire group is:

1. to maintain a complete repertoire of Raised Voices songs;
2. add new ones to the list as they are adopted;
3. keep track of those that are falling out of use;
4. gather possible new songs for the choir;
5. make a preliminary assessment of them;
6. present them to the choir from time to time with recommendations;
7. enable the choir to make choices of new songs to learn;
8. ditto of old songs to revive;
9. try to see that songs are recorded as we learn them;
10. keep lyrics, notation and music
11. one member of the repertoire group needs to update, prepare and print "Raised Voices song books" for new members as they join.

Recruitment person

It is helpful if one person keeps a record of:

1. previous recruitment efforts, the contact details of publications in which we have advertised (and their relative effectiveness);
2. copies of the leaflets we have used;
3. the locations we have placed them, to attract the attention of potential new members.

Social Media Co-ordinator/s

Currently we have a Facebook Coordinator and a Twitter Coordinator. Choir members can contact them as appropriate with material to be uploaded/disseminated. Their main role is to:

1. post on Facebook or Tweet about
 - a. the issue(s) which the choir will rehearse songs for in the coming session;
 - b. any event the choir has decided to attend;
 - c. any interruptions to our schedule such as summer holidays or an end-of-year party;
2. liaise with each other as is useful;
3. for Facebook, liaise with Facebook posts to and from the Campaign Choirs Network as is useful.
4. for Twitter, retweet messages as is useful.

WebEditor/WebMaster

This role currently requires: good knowledge of html (5), CSS, ftp, and basic graphic design understanding; in addition, preferably to keep up with developments in relevant technology. In the near future, to be able to manage the transfer of the webpage to a more open format (e.g. WordPress) which would enable the webmaster to focus more on technical aspects and choir members could update news etc directly.

Currently, the Raised Voices webeditor/webmaster can be contacted as appropriate with material to be uploaded/disseminated, and her/his role is to:

1. update the News and Events section with upcoming/past events based on information and images sent to him/her by the Events coordinators;
2. update the front page four times a year with summer/winter break start/end dates;
3. update other parts of the webpage periodically based on decisions by the choir;
4. add songs to the Music page if notation, lyrics, and human voice part recordings are available in sufficiently high quality;
5. occasionally add learning recordings to the Members section (currently this may be done by the Musical Leader directly);
6. occasionally build custom pages/links for large events, e.g. when we coordinate Big Choirs for London based protests;
7. liaise with hosting provider in case of technical issues/downtime;
8. liaise with Treasurer for hosting payment.

Note: Our current webmaster is also owner of the Raised Voices flyer designs, though this is not part of the role.

AD HOC ROLES: CO-ORDINATING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHOIR

The role of coordinator is rotated, shared among as many members as are willing to take it on. The idea of having a coordinator for activities is:

- That there should be someone who thinks ahead;
- To help the choir to work and behave well as a group
- To ensure that things run smoothly and time is not wasted;
- To make rehearsals, meetings and events enjoyable as well as effective;
- And to take the pressure off people who play other roles in the choir.

The idea of having a list of members willing to play the coordinator role, and rotating this task among them is:

- So that the maximum number of people are involved and the overall load of work and responsibility in the choir is spread widely;
- So that new members, if they want to, can 'understudy' and be encouraged by someone more experienced;
- So that no one person has disproportionate authority or control.

The idea of having a role description is:

- So that the job is done as well as it can be;
- And that it is de-mystified, so that more people can feel confident to do it.

... BUT: remember that lots of the tasks listed below can be delegated. It isn't necessary for the Coordinator to DO them all. Just to make sure somebody does. Also, coordinators can 'job-share'. You can team up with someone else if you want to...

Co-ordinating Rehearsals

Some aspects of this role need to be carried out, or ensured that they will be carried out, in advance.

1. find out what songs we're practising (from the steering group's entries on the website calendar);
2. if necessary*, liaise with musical leader in advance or before the beginning of the rehearsal with regard to order of songs and timing for each song and the business meeting *first-time coordinators, check with the Steering Group whether it is currently necessary (see their role, point 7);
3. ensure that chairs, tables, keyboard etc will be set out before 7.30 pm;
4. be there before 7:30 pm;
5. make sure the rehearsal starts on time at 7.30 pm, and organise warm-up if necessary;
6. welcome new members and ask everyone to introduce themselves;
7. chair the business meeting, following relevant points in the next list;
8. ensure smooth running of the rehearsal and the business meeting, including time-keeping;
9. ensure a 9.25 pm finish and that everything will be packed away in good time to avoid holding up the caretakers.

Co-ordinating Longer Business Meetings/Discussion Meetings/AGM

In advance:

1. get an agenda from the steering group, or draw one up;
2. in the case of important items, check with the person who's going to lead the discussion on these that they'll be there.

On the night:

3. get there at 7:30 pm or before; arrange chairs;
4. get the meeting started on time;
5. ensure there's a minute taker;
6. ask who has sent apologies;
7. refer to the minutes of the previous meeting;
8. take any 'matters arising' that will not be dealt with on the main agenda;
9. clarify the agenda, and order the items;
10. in the case of big items, foresee how long will be given to each;
11. take the items in the order agreed;
12. ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak and that nobody goes on too long or dominates the discussion;
13. help agreements to be made and minuted;
14. make sure everyone who has agreed to take action is fully aware of their commitment;
15. bring the meeting to a close (if possible in time to have a song or two).

Co-ordinating Outside Events – performances, demonstrations, busking

In advance:

1. liaise with the organisers of the event, and transmit their wishes and expectations to the choir;
2. agree a list of songs in advance:
 - if other choirs are joining us, this should be at least a month in advance;
3. agree a meeting time and place in advance, allowing sufficient time for rehearsal;
4. check who from Raised Voices will be there on the day, and check there will be enough singers for all parts;
5. clarify who are to be the song-leaders for each song;
6. work with the steering group and musical leader to ensure the songs are all rehearsed adequately;
7. at least a week in advance:
 - complete and circulate an event sheet (template [here](#)): this includes details such as:
 - meeting time and place;
 - dress code for the event;
 - for demonstrations: the route of any march;
 - organise and make copies of a song sheet, or a list of songs in the order they will be sung;
8. make sure someone will bring an instrument to give a note;
 - and that all the starting notes are agreed and known;
9. make sure someone will take the Raised Voices banner, if needed;

10. inform the Raised Voices Webmaster and the Social Media Co-ordinator of the event, with as much notice as possible, so that it can be publicised;

In addition, depending on the type of event:

Performances

11. prepare people to announce the songs and know who composed them etc.;
12. prepare everyone for the order of entry and exit onstage;

Busking

13. make sure we have collection boxes, posters etc. for the cause we are collecting for.

On the day, in liaison with the musical leader(s):

1. be at the venue early and make contact with the organisers;
 - ditto with other choirs if we are singing with them;
2. find a place for and organise a warm-up and a rehearsal if other choirs are joining us;
3. find the appropriate/best place to position the choir;
4. take and distribute the list of songs or the song sheets;
5. take/distribute Raised Voices flyers if appropriate;
6. organise people to stand in parts, clustered;
7. make urgent decisions when necessary (e.g. if there is trouble, or it would be best to stop singing or sing somewhere else);
8. ask for help if you need it. Other choir members do not need to give unsolicited advice;

In addition, depending on the type of event:

Performances

9. remind everyone of the order of entry and exit onstage;
10. move everyone into place, quietly, orderly and on time (ditto when ending);

Demonstrations

11. discuss at the start whether and when we will join the march and sing while marching;
12. ensure that songs are called out by number or that the numbers are displayed on a pole;
13. on demonstrations, keep people together when walking along;

Busking

14. take and deploy bucket, placards and leafleting if appropriate;
15. ensure that songs are called out by number or that the numbers are displayed on a pole.

HOW WE ARRIVE AT DECISIONS

It is our aim to be as inclusive, transparent and responsible as possible in our self-management as a collective. Raised Voices' Constitution defines our decision-making procedure as regards Annual and Special General Meetings. However, it leaves to this Code of Practice the framing of a procedure for day-to-day decision-making.

Discussion about choir activities, often involving decisions, normally takes place during the approximately 15-minute period we devote during each weekly rehearsal to a business meeting. But for complex matters we sometimes allocate a longer period to discussion, dedicate a whole rehearsal to the matter, or schedule a separate meeting. In any decision-making we need to be mindful of the aims of our constitution, in particular "To promote the development of a society free from all forms of oppression and to support causes working towards that aim."

In all matters that call for a decision, our ideal is to reach a consensus, or at least a decision that all members can feel comfortable with, so it follows that discussion is at least as important as voting, and it's the role of the person facilitating the meeting to ensure that all views can be voiced and listened to.

Routine decision-making in the choir is conducted during our weekly business meeting. An example of a routine decision, which frequently occurs, concerns whether Raised Voices should sing at a particular event. We approach such a decision as follows:

A proposal is made and discussed, following which the co-ordinator calls for a vote 'in principle': do members feel it appropriate for the choir to participate? The vote is by show of hands. If there are no opposing votes, the decision of principle is adopted. (In this example, where an event involving choir participation is in question, the choir moves on to establish whether there will be enough choir members available on the date to make Raised Voices participation viable.)

However, if an 'in principle' vote shows a member or members to be opposed they may move that an issue is too significant to be dealt with as 'routine'. In this case the matter is opened to the wider membership, by means of e-mail and/or at subsequent meetings. Such 'significant' decisions are subject to a quorum - not less than 50% of choir members should cast a vote, among whom a simple majority of 'yes' over 'no' votes will carry the decision. We sometimes use a 'voting form' or an internet polling device to enable the recording of votes cast over a period of time.

For members not on e-mail who cannot attend a meeting to vote, we try to alert them to any vote by phone or post.

From time to time we busk to raise money for a cause. Our guidelines for deciding which organisations and movements we sing in support of are given in a separate document titled '[Who to sing for](#)' .

Deciding on songs to include in our repertoire can be complicated so we have a different, but still collective, process for this.

Proposing a song

Everybody in the choir is encouraged to propose songs. If you have a new song, then tell someone in the Repertoire Group. It doesn't have to be already arranged for a choir at this stage.

The Repertoire Group will need the words and the music of the song and these can be presented in a number of ways: written down; on a CD; as a YouTube link or sung by you. Anyone proposing a song is

strongly encouraged to attend the group currently discussing the repertoire. Each song is considered carefully to avoid taking unsuitable songs to the whole choir.

The kinds of criteria by which the Repertoire Group will consider a song are: Is it too difficult for the choir? Are the words easy to sing? Is it more suited for a soloist than a choir? Would it work *a capella*, i.e. without instrumental backing? The group then decides which songs to put forward as possible to the whole choir.

The choir decides

Proposed songs will be presented to the choir from time to time. Each song will be discussed and the choir will then take a vote as to whether it wants to take a given song into the repertoire. The decision will be based on a number of factors including: whether we all agree with the political ideas it expresses; whether we need a song on this particular issue; whether there will be opportunities to perform it; whether we think we're musically capable of it; and simply, whether we like it.

We will vote by show of hands but sometimes it may be necessary to separate out the question of politics. If there are substantial arguments made against a song on political grounds, even from a small minority of the choir, we would be unlikely to proceed with it. With other factors too, it's always better to go ahead only with songs that almost everybody feels enthusiastic about, otherwise we may learn it but not use it very much.

Ad Hoc Introduction of songs

From time to time we will need to consider new songs more urgently than this process allows e.g. for a demonstration on an issue where we have insufficient songs in the repertoire. In this case anyone who has a song to suggest should inform the steering group, who will inform the musical leader, allow time at the beginning of a rehearsal for the choir to try out the song and raise it the business meeting for discussion. Songs agreed in this way will not form part of the repertoire unless they later go through the repertoire group process.