

# **CONSTITUTION OF RAISED VOICES CHOIR**

## **1. NAME**

1.1 The choir shall be known as Raised Voices.

## **2. AIMS**

2.1 To promote the development of a society free from all forms of oppression and to support causes working towards that aim.

2.2 To participate in demonstrations, protests, etc. to get people singing relevant songs in a powerful way.

2.3 To perform at rallies, benefits, alternative cabarets and other relevant events.

2.4 To have fun and develop the musical abilities of members of the choir.

2.5 To run the choir in a non-oppressive, responsible and collective manner.

## **3. MEMBERSHIP**

3.1 Membership shall be open to anyone who supports the aims of the choir and who enjoys singing and is able to sing tunefully. The choir will actively encourage membership from, and make itself accessible to, people from black and ethnic minority communities, those with disabilities, and people of all ages, any sexual orientation and in any financial circumstances.

3.2 A "member" is anyone who attends regularly and pays subscriptions, or has requested and received exemption from subscription. The choir reserves the right to exclude from membership, after mediation and on the advice of the Steering Group, anyone who does not fulfil these requirements, who does not subscribe to the aims of the choir, or whose behaviour is persistently and seriously disruptive.

3.3 Provision should be made for new members to be admitted at least three times a year.

## **4. SUBSCRIPTIONS**

4.1 The level of the full subscription is to be set or revised at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting. Members are to be encouraged to pay the full rate, but may negotiate a lower or nil rate in case of low income.

4.2 The Treasurer and/or Assistant Treasurer shall be responsible for collecting subscriptions.

4.3 Any subscriptions or monies raised by or on behalf of the choir will only be used in furtherance of the aims of the choir.

## **5. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

5.1 The Annual General Meeting shall normally be held in February.

5.2 Not less than 14 days notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be given in writing\* to all members.

5.3 At the Annual General Meeting the choir shall:

- Elect the Officers;
- Elect the Steering Group;
- Receive reports from the present Officers;
- Review the choir's Code of Practice.

5.4 A quorum for the Annual General or Special General Meeting shall be a number greater than half the total membership.

5.5 Decisions will normally be by majority vote of the membership. On significant matters members must be notified in advance that a vote is to be taken. Those unable to attend must be enabled to cast a vote by e-mail or other means.

## **6. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

6.1 A Special General Meeting can be called by no less than five members of the choir. They must notify all members of the choir in writing of the date, time and place of the meeting and the issues to be discussed at least 14 days before the meeting.

## **7. CONDUCTING CHOIR BUSINESS**

7.1 Approximately 15 minutes of each rehearsal time will normally be devoted to 'business meetings' for discussion of choir activities.

7.2 When deemed necessary an extended session, or a whole rehearsal period, may be devoted to such discussions of choir business.

7.3 Business meetings shall be open to all members to speak and vote.

7.4 Minutes shall be kept of decisions taken at business meetings, distributed to members and held on record by the Steering Group.

7.5 Decisions taken at business meetings shall be binding on all members of the choir, except where an opt-out is agreed.

7.6 As well as holding elections to officer posts, the choir may at any time allot tasks to volunteers or a group of volunteers (known as a "sub-group") to be undertaken on a regular or *ad hoc* basis.

7.7 All meetings of the Steering Group or sub-groups may be attended by any member of the choir at any time.

7.8 Any individual or sub-group acting on behalf of the choir must report regularly on their activities to the business meeting.

7.9 All members of the choir will be informed of the date, time and place of extended business sessions (as clause 7.2 above) at least one week in advance.

## **8. OFFICERS**

8.1 The choir shall have at a minimum the following elected posts:

- Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- Librarian
- Repertoire Group Convenor
- A five-member Steering Group

8.2 Membership of the Steering Group shall not preclude an individual from standing for any of the other elected posts.

8.3 Chairing, minute-taking, secretarial work and coordination of rehearsals will be undertaken by members of the choir on a voluntary basis.

8.4 Responsibilities in the choir shall be as fully as possible shared among members.

## **9. CODE OF PRACTICE**

9.1 A Raised Voices Code of Practice shall set out, among other matters:

- The choir's expectations of its members;
- The roles and responsibilities of the Steering Group, Officers, Musical Leader, and co-ordinators;
- The process of adopting new songs into the repertoire;
- Information about subscriptions;

- The choir's currently agreed decision-process for occasions other than Annual or Special General Meetings.

9.2 Changes to the Code of Practice may be proposed by members, discussed and adopted on decision of the choir at any business meeting.

9.3 The Constitution and current Code of Practice shall be held on record by the Steering Group.

9.4 Copies of the Constitution and Code of Practice shall be given to new choir members.

## **10. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

10.1 Any proposal to alter this constitution must be sent in writing to all members of the choir not less than 14 days before the meeting at which it is to be discussed.

10.2 The Constitution may only be altered at a General Meeting.

10.3 Any alteration shall require the approval of at least two-thirds of the membership.

## **11. DISSOLUTION OF THE CHOIR**

11.1 Dissolution of the choir can only take place at a Special General Meeting.

11.2 The choir may be dissolved by two-thirds of those members present.

11.3 The assets, financial or otherwise, remaining when the choir has satisfied its liabilities, shall be applied as the meeting shall decide in furtherance of the aims of the choir.

### **Footnote:**

\* The phrase 'in writing' here and elsewhere in this document shall be understood as meaning written text transmitted on paper or electronically.

**16 March 2017**