

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus Appendix: Chorus Rules

These Rules, amended in January 2025, form an Appendix to the constitution of the Chorus

- 1 Members are expected to abide by the Rules as set out in this appendix.
- 2 Any clause in this appendix may be amended by the Trustees in accordance with Clause 26 of the [constitution](#).
- 3 Where any part of this appendix contradicts the governing part of the [constitution](#) the main document shall take precedence.

4 MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 All members of the Chorus are expected to take voice tests according to the current audition policy set out by the Music Director (see Section 7 of this Appendix), and to demonstrate and maintain musical and general competency appropriate to the interests and purposes of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (see [constitution](#) clause 9 (1) (b) (iii)), such as to enable the Chorus to maintain a high level of musical excellence.
- 4.2 Members are expected to take part in all concerts, or other performances, recordings etc notified as part of the season.
- 4.3 Members are expected to attend all rehearsals, where possible. Those with some absence, eg, due to illness, work or family commitments, may still be able to sing in the relevant concert, at the discretion of the Music Director. However, this is rarely applied where attendance falls below 75%.
- 4.4 Notwithstanding the requirements of Rule 4.3 of these Rules all members must attend the conductor's piano rehearsal and final or orchestral rehearsal for each concert or other performance, recording etc.
- 4.5 Members must register their attendance at each rehearsal and concert, performance, recording etc in a manner approved by the Trustees. Members should inform the Membership Officer if they leave rehearsals early. There is no need to send apologies for rehearsal absence; failure to register will be taken as an apology.
- 4.6 Any member who is unable to attend any piano rehearsal, final or orchestral rehearsal or concert, or other performance, recording, etc must notify their Voice Rep and the Membership Officer in writing as soon as possible.
- 4.7 The Trustees have delegated to the Music Director the right to exclude any member from taking part in a concert, other performance, recording etc, if one or more of the attendance requirements detailed in Rules 4.3 - 4.6 or the subscription requirement of Rule 4.12 of these Rules have not been satisfactorily met. The Music Director will consider appeals against such an exclusion where the member's attendance record falls short of the requirements given above. All such appeals must be submitted via the Membership Officer.
- 4.8 The Music Director has also delegated a Limited Authority to the Membership Officer to consider such appeals in strictly limited cases. Members may appeal to the Music Director against the Membership Officer's decision.

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- 4.9 The Music Director may also temporarily exclude a member from taking part in a concert, performance, recording etc because of voice quality issues until such time as those issues have been addressed to the Music Director's satisfaction.
- 4.10 In all cases the Music Director's decision as to whether members may take part in a concert, performance or recording etc is final.
- 4.11 If any member is unable to maintain attendance at rehearsals over an extended period, but wishes to retain membership of the Chorus, a request for Leave of Absence must be notified to the Membership Officer. Leave of Absence may be granted for a fixed period or indefinitely as dictated by the member's situation. At the present time, at the discretion of the Trustees, no membership subscription is payable if Leave of Absence extends over more than 12 months.
- 4.12 Members who have not attended for a period of more than twelve months without apology or request for Leave of Absence will have their membership terminated automatically. If such members wish to return to membership of the Chorus, they must do so as new applicants for membership.
- 4.13 Members must notify the Membership Officer of any change of name, address, email address, telephone number or next-of-kin (emergency contact number). The Membership Officer's contact details are published on the Chorus' website.
- 4.14 Members should avoid using mobiles during rehearsals and must never use their mobile while on stage at a concert. If a member needs their mobile for a home or work emergency during a rehearsal, they should leave the rehearsal room to take the call or message. Members experiencing or expecting emergencies during concerts should not go on stage but should monitor or respond to the situation from an off-stage location.
- 4.15 Members will be given details of voice coaching and concert procedures, including the concert dress code, on joining the Chorus. Their membership of the Chorus includes their agreement to abide by these and any other voice- or concert-related arrangements determined by the MD and/or Trustees, and to participate fully in rehearsals.
- 4.16 The annual subscription is payable as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting but within three months, ie by 31 December, at the latest. Members who have not paid or made firm arrangements for payment with the Finance Officer will not be eligible to sing in the Christmas carol concert. See [constitution](#) clause 9 (4) (a) (iii) Termination of Membership. Members can pay the whole amount in cash or by cheque or bank transfer or pay regular instalments via direct debit or standing order. Concessions are readily granted by the Finance Officer in order that no one is excluded from membership for financial reasons.

5 MUSIC

- 5.1 The Librarian will make a charge to cover the expenses of hiring music scores, postage, storage etc.
- 5.2 Members are expected to return hired music scores in good condition to the Librarian within two weeks of the relevant concert. Markings should be made in soft pencil only and removed before return.

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- 5.3 The Librarian will make a charge for music scores that are not returned, or which are damaged, sufficient to cover the resulting additional costs.

6 APPOINTMENT OF MUSIC DIRECTOR, ACCOMPANIST and VOCAL COACH

- 6.1 If there is a notified vacancy in the post of Music Director, Accompanist or Vocal Coach, the Trustees will decide how to proceed within 4 weeks. This may include advertising for suitable applicants, or some alternative method of acquiring suitable expertise, whether temporarily or permanently.
- 6.2 All appointments will follow procedures set out in the SPC Recruitment and Selection Policy.
- 6.3 The Accompanist and Vocal Coach will be appointed by the Trustees, taking note of the advice of the Music Director.
- 6.4 The Music Director, Accompanist and Vocal Coach may attend and speak at all Trustees' meetings and general meetings but shall not be entitled to vote on any issue.

7 AUDITIONS AND MUSICAL PARTICIPATION

- 7.1 All choir members are required to re-audition at least once every three years.
- 7.2 Initial auditions are conducted by the Music Director, the Accompanist and the Vocal Coach. Members or prospective members may invite someone else to sit in the audition.
- 7.3 Information about the outcome of the audition or re-audition will be given verbally at the end of the audition or by email or telephone within 48 hours; in addition, for initial auditions, it will be followed up in writing.
- 7.4 A successful audition or re-audition will normally mean that the next audition will be in three years; however, the Music Director may decide on a shorter period, and the period may be adjusted to fit in with the yearly cycle of auditioning each section.
- 7.5 Members who are unsuccessful in their re-audition will normally still be allowed to sing in the next concert.
- 7.6 The Music Director may ask a member not to participate in a particular concert even after a successful re-audition.
- 7.7 The Music Director may require a member to attend vocal coaching or music-reading classes, as a condition of remaining in the chorus.

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Additional information about auditions from the Music Director

Entrance auditions

- Auditions take place in front of the Music Director, Accompanist, and Vocal Coach. If it would make you more comfortable you may have a friend to “sit in” on your audition. You will be asked to sing a piece of your own choice – this can be anything you like, up to about 3 minutes long. ~~It can should~~ be accompanied ~~or unaccompanied~~— our accompanist can play the piano for you ~~if necessary~~. After that our Vocal Coach will take you through some exercises to give us an idea of how your voice is now, and its potential for the future. This will include singing a few scales to determine the range of your voice. You can sing these to any vowel sound that you like.
- There is no sight-reading test, though we do expect you to have some music-reading ability. We’ll talk to you about that in context of your previous musical experiences, including any choirs or ensembles you may have participated in, and we’ll also give you some simple aural tests to see how you pick things up by ear.
- You’ll be told the outcome of your audition immediately. If you do not pass the audition (and most people do) I will do my best to explain the reasons and make suggestions about what could be improved. If you pass the audition but are less musically experienced or aren’t used to working on the style of music we often sing, we will ask to hear you again after you’ve sung with us for a year or so, when we’ll talk to you about pieces we’ve worked on and ask you to sing some extracts from them. There are also music reading classes available. We may also recommend that you have sessions with our Vocal Coach.

Re-auditions

- Re-auditions usually consist of scales to establish if your vocal range has changed, and you will be asked to sing from something we are currently rehearsing or have recently performed. If you didn’t take part in the previous concert, we won’t ask you to sing a piece you haven’t rehearsed.
- The real purpose of the re-auditions is to check that your voice is still in good condition and to help me choose a semi-chorus if necessary. If any vocal problems are becoming apparent, I’ll explain them as best I can, and probably reduce your time between re-tests to one year. If the problems are serious enough, you may be asked not to sing in the next concert and/or go for a session with our Voice Coach so she can advise me on the best course of action, and whether a further audition is necessary.
- I’m often asked at what age people should stop singing. There is no general rule that can be applied: some voices are worn out by the early forties; a few last into the eighties.

Darius Battiwalla, June 2021