

# The Village Singers (Breckland)

## Constitution

*Revision 5 ~ June 2022*

### **1. Name**

The choir shall be known as The Village Singers (Breckland).  
For the purposes of this document, hereafter referred to as 'the VS'.

### **2. Choir Management**

The choir shall be managed in accordance with this Constitution and a seasonal supplement to be published by the Committee for each rehearsal season.

The choir shall be managed by the following officers who together shall constitute the Committee:

- 2.1 Musical Director (MD) who shall have responsibility for the overall direction and musical standards of the VS and management of rehearsal schedules.
- 2.2 Producer who shall decide what shall be performed, when, by whom, and how.
- 2.3 Chair who shall be responsible for promoting and representing the VS within the community, for leading and managing Committee and General meetings, and for discharging all other functions for which a need arises from time to time where not assigned elsewhere.
- 2.4 Secretary who shall keep a record of all meetings, decisions and register of attendance.
- 2.5 Treasurer who shall maintain and keep records of the finances and assets of the VS.
- 2.6 Technician who shall arrange for the staging of performances and the maintenance of assets.
- 2.7 Social secretary who shall arrange a range of social events for VS members.
- 2.8 Publicist who shall, in consultation with the producer, be responsible for co-ordinating all publicity.
- 2.9 A representative from each of Soprano's, Alto's and Men's sections.

Any one committee member may perform more than one of the roles above and two or more members may share a role.

The Committee shall elect a Vice Chair from among the Committee members. The Vice Chair will assume the full role of the Chair when the Chair is not available.

Five members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. In the event of a hung vote at a general meeting or meeting of the Committee, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

Any officer may appoint another member as proxy for the purposes of attending and voting, at no more than one Committee meeting per calendar year.

The Committee may co-opt members and may invite such co-optees to become members of the Committee with full voting rights. The Committee shall appoint a non-member as President at their discretion; such office shall be honorary in nature and the President shall not be an officer.

The Committee shall fix any honorarium for the MD and Producer (to be reviewed annually before the AGM by a sub-committee of Chair, Vice chair, Treasurer and one other committee member). The other officers shall be unpaid. All officers shall be entitled to reimbursement of all expenses incurred on behalf of the VS. Approval of all expenditure, other than for the purchase of music, greater than £100 shall be obtained from the Committee in advance.

The Committee shall manage the affairs of the VS mindful of the aims and objectives, and shall seek to ensure that all members observe the Constitution. The Committee shall receive the accounts and decide on fund-raising actions and policy and disbursements of funds in hand. The Committee shall seek to ensure that activities are carried out and decisions made in the best interests of the VS membership as a whole.

The Committee shall meet as called upon to do so by the Secretary, at approximately two-monthly intervals. Any two officers may requisition an Emergency Committee Meeting, immediately prior to or subsequent to, any scheduled rehearsal by giving at least 24 hours' notice.

### **3. Founders**

The founders, Neville and Tina Moon of 'Cranley House', Chequers Lane, Great Ellingham NR17 1HS shall serve as MD and Producer and will be lifetime members of the Village Singers for as long as they wish and free from payment of membership fees.

### **4. Aims and objectives**

The VS was established to provide a secular rural choir which is accessible and rewarding both to the experienced and novice singer. The VS aims:

- 4.1 To provide opportunity and entertainment for the local community;
- 4.2 To learn and perform choral music to an impressive amateur standard;
- 4.3 To perform publicly for the purposes of entertainment or for financial gain;
- 4.4 To support and/or raise money for charitable organisations from time to time;
- 4.5 To perform at private and community events and functions when feasible;
- 4.6 To have fun.

## **5. Admission to membership**

Membership is open to all adult (18+) voices living or working in Breckland or the surrounding area that, in the opinion of the MD, are able or likely to become able to meet the criteria as set out in the seasonal supplement. The Committee shall admit prospective members from a waiting list having regard to the limitations as stated in the seasonal supplement to a maximum of 34 members.

## **6. Membership fees**

A membership fee is payable at the beginning of each month in which there are rehearsals, regardless of attendance. When less than a full month's rehearsals are planned, the Committee may decide to reduce or waive the membership fee payable. The level of membership fee shall be fixed at the AGM following receipt of the Treasurer's Report.

## **7. Suspension and termination of membership**

Any member may cease membership for one season i.e. a period of rehearsals and the subsequent concert performance. In this event the member shall be required to formally apply to regain admission.

In all other absence situations the Committee will have discretion.

Where membership fees are more than two months in arrears, the Committee may decide to expel a member.

Any member, who, in the opinion of the Committee has failed to abide by the Constitution or ceased to meet the criteria established by the Committee, and as set out in the seasonal supplement, may be required to leave – provided at least 75% of Committee members present support this decision.

## **8. Rehearsal**

The VS shall rehearse weekly on a Tuesday Evening at a venue to be decided by the Committee. A rehearsal schedule, to be decided by the MD as suitable to bring the choir to performance readiness, will be published in the seasonal supplement at the beginning of each rehearsal season.

## **9. Attendance**

Members are expected to attend rehearsals as specified in the seasonal supplement published at the beginning of each rehearsal season. Attendance at additional performances and any rehearsals specific to those performances is encouraged but not required. A member who is unable to attend a rehearsal and or performance must inform the Secretary at the earliest opportunity, preferably by making an entry in the absence register. In case of indisposition, members should attend rehearsals where possible to obtain annotation and direction. Should a member be too unwell to attend a rehearsal or performance for any reason, the Secretary should be informed as soon as possible. Members must arrange for someone to collect all relevant markings (and any additional music) for any rehearsal that they miss.

## **10. Finance**

10.1 Any money acquired by the choir, including membership fees, donations, contributions and bequests shall be paid into an account operated by the Management Committee in the name of the choir. All funds must be applied to the aims and objectives of the choir and for no other purpose.

10.2 A Bank account shall be opened in the name of the choir. Any deeds, cheques etc. relating to the choir's bank account shall be signed by at least two (2) of the authorised signatories.

10.3 Any income/expenditure shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer who will be accountable to ensure funds are utilised effectively and the choir stays within budget. Official accounts shall be maintained and will be examined annually by an independent examiner who is not a member of the choir. An annual financial report shall be presented at the AGM. The choir's financial year shall run from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31st March.

## **11. Term of office**

All officers (except the Founders) shall stand for re-election at the AGM. The election of the Vice Chair shall take place at the first Committee meeting after the AGM. Officers may serve for an unlimited period.

## **12. Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The AGM shall be held not earlier than the first Tuesday of June and not later than the last Tuesday of July each year, at a venue within the Breckland region of Norfolk, on a date chosen by the Committee and notified at least four weeks in advance to the members. The business of the AGM shall be:

12.1 To receive apologies for absence;

12.2 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting;

12.3 To receive the report from the Musical Director and the Producer;

12.4 To receive the report from the choir Chair;

12.5 To receive the Membership Report from the Secretary;

12.6 To elect a new Chairperson (or to re-elect) who shall immediately take over conduct of the rest of the meeting;

12.7 To elect or re-elect all other officers;

12.8 To receive the statement of accounts from the Treasurer and to nominate an independent examiner;

12.9 To decide the amount of membership subscription;

12.10 To debate any matter proposed and twice seconded, in writing, to the Secretary at least fourteen days prior to the meeting;

12.11 For the Committee to answer any questions raised by the membership.

The founders plus any members not in arrears for the month in which a general meeting is held shall be entitled to vote.

### **13. Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM)**

An EGM may be called by any three members provided the motion to be debated and the request has been made in writing to the Secretary, proposed and twice seconded, giving at least three weeks' notice. The Secretary will normally arrange an EGM immediately prior to, or subsequent to, a scheduled rehearsal.

### **14. Performances**

Any profits arising, or fees receivable, in respect of performances (or rehearsals) by the VS, shall be for the benefit of the VS as a whole; members assign both the management and the benefit of all performance and recording rights for sound and vision in all media arising in any way from their involvement with the VS to the Committee absolutely. At performances all members should engage in a 'sense of occasion' and conduct themselves appropriately.

### **15. Health and safety, personal effects, etc.**

All members have a duty of care under health and safety legislation for themselves and others affected by their actions/inactions. Members will always be notified of H&S issues at a performance venue. The choir cannot take responsibility for any loss or injury, however caused. If a member has a health and safety issue with a venue then they must speak with the H&S representative, the Producer or the Chairperson. The VS and the members benefit from Employer's and Public Liability, Accidental Damage, Loss and Personal Accident Insurance under the National Association of Choirs scheme; any circumstances arising which may give rise to a claim should be reported to an officer at the earliest possible opportunity, in any event within 48 hours of the incident.

No liability is accepted for any loss or inconvenience howsoever arising in the event of the rescheduling or cancellation of any rehearsal, performance or other event.

### **16. Representing the VS**

To ensure accuracy and compliance with our responsibilities towards each member as an individual, and towards those other organisations and persons, including children, involved in our performances, members must obtain written approval from the MD before publishing or circulating any picture or recording taken at a rehearsal or performance of, or statement relating to, the VS – whether in written, broadcast or electronic form (this includes social network e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter).

No member shall take it upon themselves to make any official representation on behalf of, or purport to speak for, the VS. Any requests for comment, enquiries for membership or performance, should be directed to the MD or Chair.

#### **17. VS property and music**

VS property issued or loaned to members should be returned immediately after use. Any losses or damage must be made good. Members are responsible for the safekeeping and where required return of all music issued to them. Members should store their music so that they are able to readily retrieve any item on demand. Music must be returned to the VS when a member leaves.

#### **18. Amendments to constitution and dissolution**

At least two thirds (2/3) of all members entitled to vote (including the founders) must vote in favour to adopt any resolution which amends or replaces this Constitution, or which leads to a dissolution of the Village Singers.

In the event that the Committee consider that the aims and objectives of the VS can no longer be fulfilled, or that there remain insufficient officers to form a quorum, the Committee (or representatives thereof) shall call an EGM proposing that the members elect an alternative Committee in order to avoid dissolution. Should no alternative Committee be elected, the existing Committee whether a quorum or not, shall wind up the Village Singers and dispose of the assets to one or more not-for-profit organisations having broadly similar aims and objectives.