

Stowmarket Chorale Handbook 2019-20

Information for Members

The Chorale:

Founded in 1901 as Stowmarket Choral Society, Stowmarket Chorale is a mixed, non-auditioned choir of approximately 65 singers, with a professional music director and accompanist. It is a member of Making Music and the Ipswich Arts Association. Its objectives are to educate the public in the art and science of music and to support other charitable purposes.

Rehearsals:

The Society rehearses on Wednesdays during term times, at Combs Ford Community Primary School, Glemsford Road, Stowmarket, IP14 2PN. Rehearsals start promptly at 7.30pm and finish at 9.30pm with a short break for refreshments and notices.

Rehearsal time is limited, so members are asked to arrive on time and to avoid unnecessary chatter during the rehearsal. Questions about the music should be addressed to the Music Director, not to other singers. Members will need to bring a soft pencil (grade 2B) and rubber to all rehearsals in order to mark the Conductor's instructions into their scores.

Voice Representatives:

Each voice section of the choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor/Bass), has a Voice Representative. Voice Reps will communicate information between the Committee/MD and their section. They also see that new members are made welcome, and ensure that the section runs smoothly.

Members should give notice of planned absences from rehearsals to their Voice Rep.

Commitment

The success of the choir depends upon every member's commitment to attending rehearsals, and to working on the words and music between rehearsals. There are many tools on the internet - Cyberbass, JohnFletcherMusic, Choraline etc - available to help with this.

Members are expected to perform in all three of the Chorale's planned concerts per year, and if possible to give a term's notice (to their Voice Rep) of any concerts they might miss.

Although it is recognised that attendance at all rehearsals may not be possible, it is expected that members will attend at least 70% of

the rehearsals for concerts at which they plan to perform. Any singers finding themselves unable to meet this target should speak to their Voice Rep to explore whether to withdraw from the concert or to find ways to “catch up”, both on note learning and on the conductor’s instructions which they will have missed.

Members must attend the last two weekly rehearsals, plus the rehearsal on concert day. The MD has discretion to waive this.

To assist with the conductor’s preparation for concerts, members who do not intend to perform in a concert should not attend the last weekly rehearsal.

Dress code for concerts

Men: No tie. Open necked long sleeved black shirt, black trousers, black socks and smart black shoes.

Women: full-length plain black dress/skirt/trousers, plain long-sleeved black top, black hosiery and black shoes. No brooches or big jewellery. No handbags on stage.

Women will be loaned aquamarine silk chiffon scarves, to be worn with a single fold, halfway down the chest. They must be kept safe, washed and ironed carefully, and returned when membership ceases.

All members will need a plain black choral folder for use in concerts. These can be bought from SC via the Librarians.

Stage instructions

Members should be ready to line up and walk onto the stage twenty minutes before the published starting time for the concert. When walking on and off stage, folders must be carried

in the down-stage hand. Do not talk on stage or wave at audience members. Do not turn pages when soloists are singing. Never applaud while standing. Other stage instructions may be issued during the week preceding the concert.

Ticket Sales

Ticket sales are a vital source of income for the Chorale. It is hoped that every member will sell as many tickets as possible, but at least one ticket each per concert. It is also expected that all members display flyers everywhere possible.

Fund Raising and Social Events

Fund raising is essential to the social and financial health of the Chorale. Ticket prices often cannot be set at a level high enough to cover the cost of concerts. Income from weekly rehearsal refreshments, sales tables, and the raffle makes an important contribution to funds. Events organised by the Committee throughout the year include garden parties, quizzes and dinners. Members are urged to support these activities. Any suggestions for additional ways of raising funds for the choir will be welcome.

Library scores

Most scores are provided on loan, free of charge. Members are responsible for returning scores on time and in the same condition as when received, with all their pencil markings rubbed out. Scores lost, or returned marked, damaged or late, will be charged for, and the public library’s additional penalty for replacement will be passed on to the member concerned. Members planning not to perform in a concert must return their cleaned scores before the concert.

Subscription

The subscription is set by the Committee. It is £160 for the 2019-20 season, due from the first rehearsal of the Autumn term. It is an annual charge, but members may opt to pay in two instalments (September and February) by standing order.

Prospective members may attend two rehearsals before being expected to commit and pay a subscription. If joining part way through a season, new members may be granted a pro rata reduction on their subscription. Any member with doubts about affording the subscription should speak to the Treasurer in confidence.

Gift Aid is an important part of the Chorale's income and members who pay tax are urged to fill in a simple form to enable it to be claimed.

Children and young people

The subscription is waived for members under 25 years of age. If children under 16 are involved in any of the Chorale's activities, they must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Unaccompanied 16-18 year olds are expected to provide parental consent.

Friends scheme

There is a Friends scheme, enabling family members, former members and other well wishers to give their support to the Chorale and feel part of its success. In exchange for a modest subscription, they receive a number of benefits.

Annual General Meeting

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held in early October each year in accordance with the Constitution, which can be found on the website. The AGM is held to receive reports from the Music Director, Chair and Treasurer, and elections are held for all four officer posts and seven committee member posts for the forthcoming season.

Website and Facebook

The website is located at www.stowmarketchorale.org.uk and contains details of the Chorale's activities and other useful information. The Chorale is also on Facebook @stowmarketchorale.