

Guidelines on how to form an Old Choristers' Association

Version One



Scoca

Introduction

When forming or re-forming an Association it is recommended that a group of potential members get together to debate and agree the rules of their new Association.

These guidelines / recommendations are not absolute but it is strongly recommended that all the following subject areas should be discussed and "drafted into" or "formally excluded" from a set of rules. Some of these subject areas are more obvious than others but are given as a prompt / check list for consideration.

When agreed these could be incorporated into a handbook or constitution which could be formally adopted at a Special Meeting or Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Association.

1 **NAME:** "your cathedral name" Old Choristers' or Former Choristers' Association or other similar such name with the objective of making it clear from the name what the association stands for and whom it represents.

2 **OBJECTIVES:** These may include

- a. To make financial contributions, wherever possible, to the perpetuation of the choral tradition in your Cathedral as an aid to worship
- b. to keep members of the Association
 - i. alive to the memories of their connection with the Cathedral Choir,
 - ii. in social touch with one another and with members of kindred / other cathedral associations or churches with a similar choral tradition
- c. To support members in their future education – which may include the forming of an associated charity for this specific purpose (for tax benefits).

To further these objectives the following activities may be arranged:-

- a. hold re-unions to which all categories of members, together with their friends and relatives should be invited to attend, from time to time, when those present could have the opportunity to attend a sung service in your Cathedral
- b. Make financial contributions to the Cathedral for the support of the choral worship
- c. Give financial and other support for the benefit of members' education / those members who have other specific needs.

3 **AFFILIATIONS:**

The Association should have the power to affiliate to other organisations having similar objects – e.g. the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations.

4 MEMBERSHIP:

Many Associations now have a number of categories of membership to make your Association as inclusive as possible. The three main categories normally are:

- **MEMBERS:** These are all former members as children of the Cathedral Choir. These may include subcategories – e.g. Full members, Young Members, Retired Members for the purpose of differentiation of membership fees.

- **ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:** Associate Membership could be open to the lay clerks and previous lay clerks of the Cathedral, parents of former Choristers and to members of other Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations. These members need not have any voting rights at Annual General Meetings but one Associate Member could be eligible to serve as a member of the Committee on which he or she may be eligible to vote, following election to the committee at an Annual General Meeting.

- **HONORARY MEMBERS:** Friends and well-wishers of the Cathedral Choir may be awarded Honorary Membership by the Committee either, for the duration of their tenure of a particular Office or position of responsibility in relation to the Cathedral or the Cathedral Choir, or for life. They do not normally have voting rights at General Meetings but shall be eligible to serve on the Committee when they could have.

5 SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Members and Associate Members (but not Honorary Officers or Honorary Members) should be asked to pay an annual subscription to provide financial stability to the association and enable the objectives to be fulfilled by the committee on behalf of the members. The amount should be fixed annually by the Committee, to take effect from the beginning of the following Financial Year.

Some do offer "a Life membership" but it is suggested that this practice can cause financial challenges when followed by periods of high inflation.

6 PATRON:

To give continuity and credence to the Association, a senior member of the Cathedral or Diocese could be invited to be the Patron, e.g. the Bishop,

7 HONORARY OFFICERS:

The following are typical examples who could be invited to be Honorary Officers while they are in office:-

- a. The Dean of the Cathedral to be the Association's President.
- b. The Headmaster of the School which provides many choristers, the Cathedral Precentor and the Cathedral Organist and Choir Master could be

invited to be Vice Presidents of the Association

- c. Subject to the approval of the Members in a General Meeting, the honour of Life Vice President may be accorded to any person who has given outstanding service to the Association over an extended period

8 MANAGEMENT:

Subject to the limitations set out in the Constitution or handbook, the policy and general management of the Association should be directed by a management committee, which should meet not less than once a year. A Chairman, Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer should be elected at the Annual General Meeting and could retire automatically after one year or more but could be eligible to be appointed again.

9 THE COMMITTEE:

The Committee should consist of the following:

- a. The Honorary Officers of the Association as defined in Paragraphs 7 and 8 and a specified number of additional members who should be Members, Honorary Members or Associate Members of the Association as defined in Paragraph 4 and who should be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
- b. In addition, the Committee may co-opt further members who should be Members or Honorary Members of the Association as defined in Clause 4. Co-opted members shall retire automatically at the Annual General Meeting following their co-option

It is recommended that rules should be clear on the re-election of committee members. These should be set to ensure the continuity of the Association and that it meets its future objectives. Some associations allow committee members to be elected for a period of two years to ensure continuity from year to year.

10 SUB COMMITTEES:

The Committee may appoint sub-committees, as it deems necessary and shall prescribe their function provided that all acts and proceedings of any such subcommittee should be reported to the Committee as soon as possible and provided further that no such subcommittee shall expend funds of the Association otherwise than in accordance with a budget agreed by the Committee.

11 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS:

This is a typical extract for the rules to run an Annual General Meeting

Once in each year, during the six month period following the year end, the Committee shall convene an Annual General Meeting which the Patron, Members, Associate Members, Honorary Members, and all Honorary Officers, all as defined

herein, together with members of other Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations, shall be entitled to attend, for the purpose of:-

- (a) receiving the Honorary Secretary's Annual Report,*
- (b) receiving the Annual Audited Statement of Accounts,*
- (c) receiving the Annual Report of the Trustees of the Association's Charity and their Annual Statement of Accounts,*
- (d) electing the Chairman of the Committee, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer,*
- (e) electing Members to serve on the Committee where vacancies exist,*
- (f) appointing an Honorary Auditor,*
- (g) electing the Trustees of the affiliated Charity,*
- (h) making recommendations to the Committee and, wherever necessary, voting on proposals to amend this Constitution in accordance with Paragraph 16.*
- (i) making recommendations to the Trustees of the Charity (Such recommendations are not to be binding on the Trustees.)*
- (j) considering any other business.*

The Meeting shall be convened by Notice, as defined in paragraph 13, inviting Nominations from Members, as defined in Paragraph 4, for the various vacancies. This shall not prevent Nominations being made orally at the Annual General Meeting itself.

12 SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS:

The Honorary Secretary or any other Honorary Officer, as defined in Paragraph 7, should, within twenty-one days of receiving a written request to do so, signed by not less than ten Members having the power to vote and giving reasons for the request, call a Special General Meeting.

The Meeting should be convened by Notice as defined in Paragraph 13.

13 CONVENING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS AND SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS:

It is suggested that the following clause should be followed: Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings (hereinafter called "General Meetings") shall be convened by sending, wherever practically possible, at least 14 days before the date of the proposed meeting, a Notice of Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting, by post, to all persons eligible to attend as defined in Clause 11, (other than the members of other Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations) and, for Annual General Meetings only, by sending a Notice to the Editor of the magazine of The Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations for publication in that magazine.

The Notices shall contain full details of the motions to be put to the Meeting.

14 RULES AND PROCEDURES AT MEETINGS:

The following is a typical extract from a handbook for creating the procedures of the meeting:-

- a. **CHAIRMAN AT GENERAL MEETINGS.** *The President shall normally preside at General Meetings.*
- b. **VOTING.** *Subject to the provisions of Paragraph 16 and 17, all motions arising at any Meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of all those present and entitled to vote thereat. No Member shall exercise more than one vote, but in the case of an equality of votes, the Officer presiding shall have a second or casting vote.*
- c. **QUORUM.** *One-half of the members of the Committee or Sub-Committee shall form a quorum but Life Vice Presidents shall not be counted for this purpose. "Twenty Members" shall form a quorum at General Meetings.*
- d. **MINUTES.** *Minutes of all General Meetings, Committee Meetings and Sub-Committee Meetings shall be taken and the appropriate secretary shall enter therein a record of all proceedings and resolutions.*
- e. *At every Meeting, the Minutes of the previous meeting of that committee or General Meeting, shall be approved by the Meeting and signed by the Officer presiding, after amendment if necessary.*
- f. *The signed copies of all Minutes shall remain in the custody of the Honorary Secretary for the time being who should place them in the custody of the Cathedral Librarian when no longer required for reference by the Association.*

15 FINANCE:

All monies held by the Association should be applied to further the objects of the Association, as defined in Clause 2, and for no other purpose.

The Honorary Treasurer should keep proper accounts of the finances of the Association and should present a Financial Report to all meetings of the Committee.

Any bank or other account should be in the name of the Association and withdrawals would normally be made on the signature of any two of the following Honorary Officers- the Chairman, the Honorary Secretary, the Honorary Treasurer however, transfers between accounts of the Association within the same bank or other financial institution could be made on the signature of the Honorary Treasurer alone.

The accounts should be audited at least once a year by the Honorary Examiner who should be appointed at the Annual General Meeting and who should not be a member of the Committee.

An Examined Statement of Accounts for the last Financial Year should be submitted by the Honorary Treasurer to the Annual General Meeting. The financial

year of the Association has to be determined.

16 ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION:

No alteration to the Constitution should be made except at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting called for this purpose. Alterations should receive the assent of **two-thirds** of those present and entitled to vote.

17 DISOLUTION:

The Association may be dissolved by a Resolution presented at a Special General Meeting called for this purpose. The Resolution should have the assent of two-thirds of those present and entitled to vote. Such a Resolution should give instruction for the disposal of any assets remaining after satisfying any outstanding debts and liabilities. This may be to the affiliated Charity of the Association. If effect cannot be given to this provision, the assets shall be given to **The Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations** or to some similar charitable purpose.