

Steeton Male Voice Choir

Notes for new members of SMVC

Membership: New recruits

We are always looking for new recruits. Potential new members will undergo an induction period of at least 6 weeks but the timescale is flexible to meet the range of singing experience and musical backgrounds. Many new men who join have either never sung in a choir before or not for a long time. Every potential recruit will have a mentor allocated to support them in their initial learning and in getting used to how the choir works.

When a new man feels he is ready he will be asked to undertake an informal voice test with the MD and accompanist to check that he is going to be able to be a member of the choir and has a suitably good voice and is confident enough to take part in performances. Some need a further period of rehearsing and learning. It is very much on a case by case basis.

In the main the choir performs without using music copies therefore it is essential that time is spent rehearsing the parts and the words to songs before anyone is 'concert ready'. Again the timescale for this is flexible.

Once a new man is ready to perform we will then ask for membership fees to be paid. This is currently £80 but this is for a year therefore payment will be pro rata depending on when someone starts performing with SMVC.

We should be able to provide a uniform from our stock but new men will be asked to purchase a black shirt (£10) which is part of our alternative uniform. A scarlet tie will be provided to go with the black shirt. You would be expected to have your own white shirt, and black shoes. You will also be provided with a polo shirt with a SMVC logo which can be worn wherever the choir are gathering or as casual wear on our trips prior to changing into uniform.

Uniform is undergoing the introduction of varied looks to match the nature of different concerts and venues so you would be expected to have black trousers to go with our alternative 'looks'.

Attendance : in recent years we have reduced the number of concerts (approx. 12 per year) in an attempt to ensure turnout at concerts is good and in acknowledgement that we all have busy lives.

Members are expected to do their best to attend rehearsals regularly and to attend as many concerts as is possible if they cannot manage all of them. Concert dates are usually booked well in advance to enable members to plan their busy diaries.

We would ask that members inform their part reps if they are unable to attend rehearsals or concerts,

Protracted absences can be unavoidable. In such a circumstance we would ask the members to speak to the MD to discuss the viability of performing at a concert on their return.

Music: The choir has a very large library of music which we add to constantly. We have two librarians who should be able to provide copies of current repertoire music copies. Members would be expected to practice at home using copies to at least learn the words and hopefully their part. We also provide a computer based version to enable those who may prefer to use a computer to support their learning. Please ask to access this if needed.

Organisation of the Choir.

The choir is a registered charity and therefore we have a written constitution. Members should be provided of copy of this document once they formally join the choir. We have an active committee which meets monthly. Any member can raise an issue via their part rep through committee meetings. We also have a smaller music committee which discusses repertoire and concert organisation. Please see 'How Steeton Male Voice Choir Works'. Members are at liberty to make suggestions on all music matters again through their part reps or through any member of the music committee. Committee(s) membership will be posted on the notice board at rehearsals and is on our website.

Finances

As already mentioned we have an annual subscription of currently £80 which can be paid in quarterly instalments. Our financial year starts in January. New members will pay a proportion of the annual subscription depending on when they formally become choir members after their induction period.

We charge organisations to book the choir as a source of income. We sell CDs and DVDs at most concerts again as a way of raising funds. We would ask that members who are **tax payers** sign a **Gift Aid** declaration which can be obtained from the treasurer.

Concerts

We are involved in concerts locally and regionally and a good number of these are collaborative concerts with other choirs, brass bands and other musicians and singers of various styles. We are constantly attempting to put on a range of concerts in wide ranging venues to attract audiences and expand our repertoire. SMVC also run a school programme. We hope to visit a school once a term to perform for children and students to promote choral singing generally and hopefully sow seeds of interest in singing in a choir. We do get involved in prestigious events at times and have performed in some prestigious venues including The Royal Albert Hall, Elland Road, Durham Cathedral, Belfast Cathedral, Fountains Abbey and Chatsworth House. Most recently a group of men from SMVC were involved in the production of a film called 'Ilkley' (due for release in 2019). On occasions we do sing at weddings.

Social Activities

SMVC does engage in a range of social activities which can include choir dinners (including a Christmas dinner), quizzes, and Christmas sings in pubs. There are plans to do occasional pub sings as a recruitment exercise as well as having fun. When we have visiting choirs it is usual practice to arrange a post concert social event (afterglow) in a local hostelry. Some choir members do like to gather in local hostelrys after rehearsals and all are welcome.

The choir does have a **Ladies Group** which does great work in supporting the choir. This involves providing refreshments for choir and audiences at concerts, raising funds through raffles, coffee mornings and plant sales. They also meet socially from time to time. Wives, partners and female friends of the choir are all welcome to join this group.

Travel and Tours

The choir on occasions are invited to concerts beyond our local area and we often make a day of it. Subsidised coach travel is provided on these occasions. On occasions if a concert is a significant distance away again coach travel is provided.

Most years the choir undertakes a tour. These vary from 2 nights to 4 nights and in recent years we have been on tours to Belgium and Germany, Cornwall and Devon, Warwickshire, The North East and Northumberland, Northern Ireland and for 2019 we are travelling to Eastern Scotland to the Kingdom of Fife taking in Edinburgh. These trips are subsidised for choir members but partners and guests are welcome to join us.

The Steeton Chimes : several times a year we publish our choir magazine. The editor is always happy to receive suitable items or articles for this publication and new members are encouraged to provide a 'Pen Portrait' of themselves to tell the choir some background information about themselves and perhaps a little bit of their musical history/interests.

Website : we have a new website which will be developed in coming months.

Steetonmalevoice.co.uk