

The image features a white background with two large blue triangles pointing towards each other from the corners. Each triangle contains several black musical notes, including treble clefs, eighth notes, and beamed eighth notes. The text is centered in the white space between the triangles.

# *Walton Voices*

*Members Handbook*



Walton Voices is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales

Registration number 277148

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## 1. Introduction

Welcome to Walton Voices. This handbook is your copy to keep. It contains details about the choir, important information about your membership, information about the choir's constitution, our rules and how we are organised. It details our responsibility to you and your responsibility as a member.

## 2. The Choir

Walton Voices is a community choir. We believe that not only are we a choir for the community in and around Walton on Thames, but that we are a strong community ourselves. Our Management Team and Musical Director work hard to give us musical and social opportunities other choirs may not have, such as sell out concerts, performing with orchestras and professional soloists, social evenings, YouTube recordings and collaborations with talented musicians in a variety of prestigious venues.

We hope each member can take an active part in our community, not only through attending rehearsals and concerts, but in other ways too. For example, by contributing to our social media pages, helping with concert publicity and marketing or taking on a Team role. We believe that the more we contribute to the choir the more enjoyable it will be and we would rather have many members taking on small roles than a few trying to do it all.

We are proud to welcome singers from all backgrounds regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, relationship status, religious beliefs or financial standing. We do not have a formal audition procedure. If you are under 16 you are also welcome but you must be accompanied at rehearsals, concerts and other events by an appropriate adult.

We started in 1934 as Walton and Oatlands Choral Society and our history can be found on the Choir's website.

Since 2013 we have been performing as Walton Voices and formally adopted that as our registered name in 2020.

We are governed by our Constitution which is approved by the Charity Commission and a copy is available for reading or downloading on the choir's website. Printed copies of the constitution are available on request.

We are a registered charity and as such we have formal objectives approved by the Charity Commission.

“The objects (of Walton Voices) shall be to promote, improve and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of choral music in all its aspects by presentation of public concerts and by such other ways as Walton Voices through its Committee shall determine from time to time.”

To meet our objectives, we perform three main concerts a year and in addition hold outreach sessions with local schools and other organisations.

### 3. Membership Rules and Subscription

This handbook constitutes the Rules and Regulations of the Choir which may change from time to time but only if formally agreed by the Trustees. Should any discrepancy be found to exist between these Rules and the Constitution the latter takes precedence.

Our year mirrors the school year starting in September. Our rehearsals broadly follow local school term dates and the dates of concerts and rehearsals are published in advance. You will be expected to attend as many rehearsals and concerts as possible.

We have a subscription which is reviewed and set annually. You will become a member after receipt of your subscription. Details of current subscription rates, timing of payments and applying for Gift aid are shown on the choir's website. We allow potential members a chance to try us out before having to pay a subscription. Discounts are available for joint membership (same household) and for students in full time education. The subscription covers our running costs, including the hire of our rehearsal and concert venues and fees for our Musical Director and accompanist. Charitable donations to the choir can also be made.

You will be provided with music on loan and you have a responsibility to return this as instructed after each concert. It is a strict requirement that all markings you have made are erased before returning the music to the choir librarian. Markings must therefore only be made in pencil with a softness of at least B. The choir reserves the right to charge a member for any music that cannot be returned to the lenders whether through loss, damage or indelible markings. When possible, there is no charge for the loan of music, but this policy is reviewed annually. You will normally be responsible for your own costs for travel, subsistence, concert dress and rehearse at home resources.

#### 4. The Choir Organisation

The choir is governed by a Committee (the Trustees) who are accountable to the Charity Commission. They are responsible for the running and overall direction of the choir. They must ensure that it is being well run, delivering its charitable objects and that its income is being used correctly. They meet 3 or 4 times a year, the Musical Director will normally also attend these meetings but does not have a vote.

We have six Trustees: The Chair, The Secretary, The Treasurer and three other Trustees. Trustees serve for 3-year terms, up to a maximum of 9 years and are appointed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). All Trustees must be members of the choir. If the Trustees cannot come to a majority decision on a voting matter the Chair must use its casting vote to maintain the status quo.

At least two of the Trustees must resign each year but can stand for re-election at the AGM (subject to the maximum noted above).

Reporting to the Trustees and responsible for the day to day running of the choir is the Walton Voices Management Team (the Team).

The composition of this Team can change depending on the workload and the needs of the choir but typically comprises:

Musical Director  
Concert Manager(s)  
Marketing Manager  
Librarian

Social Secretary  
Membership Secretary  
Social Media Officer  
Webmaster

Librarian  
Safeguarding Officer(s)  
Voice Part Representatives

Meetings are held regularly between relevant Team members and the Officers of the Choir (i.e. the Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer) to ensure that all preparations and publicity for concerts and other events are completed in a timely fashion and within agreed policy and budgets.

The current Committee and Team Members are listed with contact details on the choir's website.

#### 5. Our Responsibility to you.

We recognise you have joined us through choice and we therefore try to provide an environment in which we all can have enjoyment and the opportunity to perform exciting music both old and new without undue stress. We want to provide this at an affordable cost. To that end with the Musical Director we choose music which will sometimes be challenging but hopefully within our collective ability. We will endeavour to provide suitable rehearsal premises and appropriate venues in which to perform. We also want to have fun and we often organise social events to that end. Every rehearsal has a 15-minute break to allow members to chat, have a cup of tea or just relax.

We have a safeguarding policy (Appendix I) to help ensure that no choir member is subjected to improper treatment. If at any time, whether at a rehearsal, concert or social event you feel uncomfortable or something has happened which you need to talk about then please speak to one of our safeguarding officers, a Trustee or a Voice Representative. We also have a complaints procedure (Appendix II) should the need ever arise.

## 6. Your Responsibility as a Member

Firstly, read and understand this handbook. It contains a lot of useful information.

While the choir organisers will do their best to make your membership enjoyable you can help by observing the following:

### a) Rehearsals.

- Please try to arrive on time by 7.45pm.
- Please do not chat (or sing however quietly) when other voice parts are rehearsing.
- Please return from the break on time.
- Please help in setting up and clearing up before and after rehearsal.
- Please keep your phone on silent.
- Please try and let your Voice Representative know if you cannot attend.

### b) Concerts/Events.

We expect all members to attend concerts but recognise that not all members can, or perhaps wish to, perform at every concert, however it is important that we know final numbers in advance. Therefore, some time before a concert or an event your Voice Representative will ask you for a commitment as to whether you will be performing. This lets the Musical Director assess the balance of the choir and it allows the

concert manager to organise the necessary seating and to arrange suitable transport if needed. We will attempt to make the commitment date as late as possible to allow you the maximum flexibility.

- Please take note of the relevant dress codes for concerts as these change from time to time depending on the nature of the event.
- Please ensure you have a black Walton Voices folder.
- Please arrive on time.
- If you have volunteered for the set up and/or the clearing up team, please allow for this in your travel arrangements.
- Please adhere to the instructions for returning music.
- Please sell tickets.

### c) Volunteering

The choir can only continue to exist through the enthusiasm and commitment of its membership. Don't leave it to "them" to organise everything. We hope all members will contribute in some way, whether it is being a Team or Committee member, volunteering to help when needed, setting up for the tea break or producing a concert programme! Any skills you have and can bring to the choir be they organising skills, computer skills, marketing skills or just a willingness to help in any way please let a Team member or your Voice Representative know. You will not necessarily have to sign up to attend Team meetings, but you would be helping under the guidance of a Team member and the more volunteers we have the better.

d) Stay up to date.

Please make every effort to read communications from the choir. You will see details of how we communicate in section 7 below. We try to communicate in a timely fashion. Please ensure you stay in touch.

e) Courtesy to other members.

Please treat others as you would be expected to be treated.

## 7. Communication

You will have given your contact information to the Membership Secretary, please make sure it remains up to date. Please see our GDPR policy in Appendix III. The choir has a website [www.waltonvoices.co.uk](http://www.waltonvoices.co.uk) and this is the primary source of information for all choir matters. The members' section is password protected.

We also read out notices at rehearsal before the break. These are posted on the website the following day and placed on the noticeboard at the following week's rehearsal.

We have Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube accounts for the choir and we hope that choir members will actively support these and share, like and spread the marketing material via these media. The social media tag for all these accounts is @waltonvoices.

We have a Walton Voices members page on Facebook for discussions and to reinforce notices ahead of rehearsals or concerts. Some voice sections also have WhatsApp groups to socialise within their group. Important information

regarding concerts, is sent to members by email so as well as checking your email address is up to date, please ensure that the choir's email address is on your approved list to avoid emails going to your spam or junk folder.

We will occasionally ask for feedback via online surveys. Please do respond as your opinion matters.

Your Voice Representative is also an important two-way channel of information.

If you do not have access to a computer or email, please let your Voice Representative know otherwise you could miss important messages.

### 8. Other Important Information

Your membership needs to be renewed each year. Should you have financial problems causing you to have difficulties in paying your subscription please talk to your Voice Representative in confidence.

Choir members, the MD and accompanist are entitled to the reimbursement of money spent out of their own pocket when such money has been spent on legitimate matters to do with the choir and has been pre-authorized by two officers.

Should you leave the choir please return any choir property you may have, this would normally be any music and your black folder.

The Trustees have the right to cancel an individual's membership if in their opinion it is in the best interests of the Choir so to do. The procedure is explained in clause 3(4) of the Constitution. The member, or someone on their behalf, can make representations to the Trustees before membership is cancelled but the Trustees decision is final.

Finally, we hope you enjoy being a member of Walton Voices.

## 9. Your Personal Notes.

This page is blank for you to add any Personal Notes

## APPENDIX I

### **WALTON VOICES CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

#### Definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is much wider than “child protection”. It can be defined as:

- protecting them from maltreatment.
- preventing impairment of their health or development.
- ensuring that they live in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable them to have the best outcomes.

#### Context

The Committee and members of Walton Voices are clear that it is everyone’s responsibility to help other people to feel safe, especially those who are vulnerable in any way. However, they acknowledge their particular obligation to establish the Choir’s policy and implement its procedures designed to protect and safeguard the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults who may be members of the Choir or present at Choir events.

An important aspect of the fabric of a Society whose members value the social aspects of membership is that we are alert to the well-being of our fellow-members, particularly if they appear to be behaving differently, or stressed. If a fellow-member is in distress for any reason we should try to listen and support.

### Policy

It is Walton Voices policy to:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that, as much as possible, all members understand their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding.
- Remind members at appropriate times that:
  - we all have a responsibility to help other people to feel safe, especially those who are vulnerable in any way.
  - if they see or hear anything that suggests that a child, young person or adult is at risk in any way, it is their responsibility to tell a designated officer.
- Provide safeguarding learning opportunities for specific officers and members with relevant responsibilities, and for any members of the Choir who wish to be better informed.

- Follow agreed procedures to minimise and manage the risks of young people and vulnerable adults being unsafe at Society events.
- Be respectful of others' right to privacy where possible, keeping to a minimum the number of officers who are aware of specific risks, but being clear that our duty to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents or concerns of abuse and that support is provided to those who raise or disclose the concern.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Ensure that, as and when necessary, Choir officers liaise promptly and constructively with safeguarding officers from local government and police services.

Please note the above is an extract from the Choir's detailed Policy and Procedures Document which is posted on the Walton Voices website and which you are encouraged to read.

## APPENDIX II

### **WALTON VOICES COMPLAINTS POLICY**

If members of Walton Voices have a complaint or concern about the running of the choir they are encouraged to raise it with their voice representative, the safeguarding officer or any other member of the Committee or the Management Team as may seem appropriate either in person, by telephone or by e-mail. The names and contact details of the Committee and the Management Team are on the choir's website. If the matter is not resolved by that member of the Committee or Team they or the member may refer it to another suitable Committee or Team member.

If a member of the Committee or Team cannot resolve the matter informally, or feels that it would be better addressed by the full Committee, they will raise it at the next Committee meeting in order that it is properly considered and responded to.

If a concern is related to safeguarding it should be initially addressed to the safeguarding officer or their deputy and it will be dealt with under the choir's safeguarding policy.

## APPENDIX III

### WALTON VOICES GDPR POLICY

#### 1. Your personal data – what is it?

Personal data relates to a living individual who can be identified from that data. Identification can be by the information alone or in conjunction with any other information in the data controller's possession or likely to come into such possession. The processing of personal data is governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (the "GDPR").

#### 2. Who are we?

Walton Voices is the data controller. This means it decides how your personal data is processed and for what purposes.

### **3. How do we process your personal data?**

Walton Voices complies with its obligations under the “GDPR” by keeping personal data up to date; by storing and destroying it securely; by not collecting or retaining excessive amounts of data; by protecting personal data from loss, misuse, unauthorised access and disclosure and by ensuring that appropriate technical measures are in place to protect personal data. We use your personal data for the following purposes: -

- To administer membership records.
- To maintain our own accounts and records (including the processing of gift aid applications where applicable).
- To inform you of news, events and activities related to Walton Voices.

### **4. What is the legal basis for processing your personal data?**

- Explicit consent of the data subject so that we can keep you informed about news, events, activities and services and process your gift aid donations and keep you informed about forthcoming events.
  - As practical guidance, emails to those on the choir’s address list should not be used primarily to promote events other than those of Walton Voices. However, an email relating primarily to Walton Voices matters may also inform readers briefly of events likely to be of interest and contain information or a link that would enable those who are interested to find out more.

- The processing relates only to members or former members (or those who have regular contact with it in connection with those purposes) and
- There is no disclosure to a third party without consent.

## **5. Sharing your personal data**

Your personal data will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be shared with other members of the choir to carry out a service to other choir members or for purposes connected with the choir. We will not share your data with third parties outside of the choir without your consent.

As practical guidance, when forwarding an email from an outside party to one or more choir members, do not copy that outside party on the forwarded email since they would thus have the choir member's email address.

## **6. How long do we keep your personal data?**

We retain your data while it is still current; gift aid declarations and associated paperwork for up to 6 years after the calendar year to which they relate.

## **7. Your rights and your personal data**

Unless subject to an exemption under the GDPR, you have the following rights with respect to your personal data: -

- The right to request a copy of your personal data which Walton Voices holds about you.
- The right to request that Walton Voices correct any personal data if it is found to be inaccurate or out of date.
- The right to request that your personal data be erased when it is no longer necessary for Walton Voices to retain such data.
- The right to withdraw your consent to the processing at any time.
- The right, where there is a dispute in relation to the accuracy or processing of your personal data, to request that a restriction be placed on further processing.
- The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioners Office.

## **8. Further processing**

If we wish to use your personal data for a new purpose, not covered by this Data Protection Policy, then we will provide you with a new notice explaining this new use prior to commencing the processing and setting out the relevant purposes and processing conditions. Where and whenever necessary, we will seek your prior consent to the new processing.

## **9. Contact Details**

To exercise all relevant rights, queries or complaints, please in the first instance contact the Secretary via email on [info@waltonvoices.co.uk](mailto:info@waltonvoices.co.uk)

You can contact the Information Commissioner's Office on 0303 123 1113 or at the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire. SK9 5AF.

### **10. Date of Review**

This Data Protection Policy will be reviewed annually at the first Committee meeting following the Annual General Meeting.



