

HAMPSTEAD CHORUS: NEW MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION SCHEME

1. By way of brief background, Hampstead Chorus (HC) is a charitable association (UK registered charity number 1174146), which is unincorporated and run by its committee of trustees. Members of HC are entitled to attend and vote at HC's general meetings. There is usually only one meeting a year- being the annual general meeting (AGM), held in or about February. The main function of the AGM is for members to consider the annual report and accounts of HC, to deal with trustees' retirements/ resignations/elections and to discuss in outline plans for the future. Members have other membership rights such as nominating trustees and requesting the trustees to call a special general meeting.
2. In the past, eligibility for membership of HC has been linked with singing with the choir and paying the termly subscriptions, but was not automatic, requiring a singer to have sung with the choir and paid subscriptions for three out of the previous six terms.
3. In July 2024 the trustees adopted new membership rules and approved a new scheme for subscriptions, designed to strengthen the link between a person singing with the choir (and paying subscriptions) and membership of HC. The new scheme will come into effect at the beginning of the Autumn term (on 1 September 2024). It will work as follows:
 - i. There will be an annual membership subscription for the year from 1 September to 30 August the following year, with the subscription payable in three termly instalments. For the year 2024/ 2025, it will be £250, payable as follows: the Autumn term (£100); the Spring term (£100) and the Summer term (£50).
 - ii. If a singer is not already a member of HC, payment of the Autumn 2024 Term instalment or any subsequent instalment will be treated as an application for membership of HC, which the trustees will approve (subject to a very limited discretion to refuse an application), so that the singer will become a member of HC. If a singer, does not wish to become a member of HC, the singer may opt out of membership by emailing secretary@hampsteadchorus.org.uk.
 - iii. Under the new membership rules members are required to pay the termly instalments of the annual subscription. If a member does not pay a termly instalment within 6 months of it becoming due, their membership will automatically terminate. If, before the expiry of that 6 month period, the member pays the next termly instalment, that payment will be treated as an application to renew their membership on the expiry of that period. This rule will apply to all members, including those who are already members at the date the new scheme comes into effect. In broad terms, the practical effect of these rules is that a member will only cease to be a member if they do not pay two consecutive instalments of the annual subscription. If they cease to be a member, they will be free to become a member again in the future by paying the instalment due for any term.
 - iv. Membership entitles the member to the right to vote and attend AGMs of HC etc, as set out above.

- v. Members are free to resign their membership of HC at any time.
4. **Importantly, the new scheme is not intended to and will not affect the way in which the choir operates in practice, permitting singers to sing with the choir for one or more terms each year on payment of the subscription instalment due for that term.** Moreover, subscriptions will only fall due after the first two rehearsals of each term, leaving unchanged the practice of giving singers an opportunity to try out singing with the choir before payment is required. **The scheme's only practical effect is on the governance of HC**, being designed to ensure that those singing with the choir and paying the termly instalments of the annual membership subscription are members of HC (unless they opt out of membership).
5. All members of HC who are UK taxpayers are encouraged to sign a Gift Aid form, to allow HC to claim Gift Aid on membership subscriptions. (Note that if a singer opts out of membership, HC will not be able to claim Gift Aid on their subscription.)
6. Copies of HC's Constitution and Membership Rules can be found on HC's website at [] or obtained on request from secretary@hampsteadchorus.org.uk.

Mary Stokes

Secretary of Hampstead Chorus

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