



Just Sing Ladies and Just Sing Kids Portadown Constitution



1. Name

The name of the group shall be: Just Sing Ladies and Just Sing Kids.

Co-Founders: Mrs T Hannath, Mrs H Burns Mrs T McLean

2. Aims

The aims of the choir are:

- To run a community choir accessible to the community of Portadown and the residents of the local and surrounding community.
- To promote community cohesion
- To raise funds for the local community.
- To promote a love for singing, improve singing technique and musicianship.
- To provide open access to the choir and show an acceptance of all singing abilities.
- To establish a fun learning environment where ladies, who share a similar passion for singing, can come together and enjoy the art of performing together.
- To develop mental well-being. Using singing together as a tool to develop listening, concentration, teamwork, self-esteem, and self-confidence.
- To strengthen concentration and memory and broaden expressive communication. Helping singers feel energized and uplifted.

3. Values

The choir is not aligned to any political party or religious denomination. The committee and the choir performances reflect the commitment of the choir to issues relevant to the local and national community, which are concerned with equality, humanity and respect and which celebrate the rich diversity of our local and national community. The elected committee and its contracted Director will conduct business in ways which reflect and are consistent with these values.

4. Objectives and Powers

- To offer performances at community events including Portadown Music Festival.
- To employ a Musical Director.
- To book and hire premises and undertake any other work to further the work of the choir.
- To carry out activities of the choir without discriminating against any individual on any grounds, including race, religion, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, and with respect for all members.
- To receive monies and other forms of assistance only to further the aims of the choir.

5. Membership

a) **Full Membership of Just Sing Ladies** is open to any individual aged 18 or over.

Children from P4 to Year 9 can become **Just Sing Kids members**.

Musical experience is not necessary, but the ladies and children will be expected to sing in tune and may undergo a very informal audition. Previous experience of singing in a school or church choir is beneficial.

b) The Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer will keep a full record of all members and subscriptions paid.

c) Prospective members will be given their first week free as a taster session and will then join the choir by either paying a weekly fee for each session they attend or signing up to pay the termly fee.

Details of payment arrangements and any future changes to Full and Junior Membership will be determined and published by the committee.

d) Only Full Members who have paid membership will be allowed to vote at the AGM or other general meetings.

e) Membership will be payable at least termly via bank transfer. A cheque or cash will be acceptable if agreed with the choir manager. New members joining in the middle of a term will pay membership at the beginning of the next and will be expected to pay a weekly fee (£8) until the new term begins.

f) Any member who has had their membership terminated by the committee shall have a right of appeal at the next AGM or general meeting, whichever is sooner.

g) The committee will decide the membership fee at the beginning of each academic year. The committee will be concerned with keeping the cost as low as possible for members.

h) Members will be asked to opt into the choir What's App group. This group is solely for choir business only. Phone numbers of choir members are not to be lifted out of this What's App group and used for private use. Bad language and inappropriate posts will be dealt with accordingly. If the choir committee feel a member has broken the constitution/social media policy regarding the use of What's App, they will be dealt with under Section 8b parts i, j and k. **Choir members must read and be aware of the choir's social media policy which can be located on the choir website.**

i) If choir members choose to comment on the choir's What's App or Social Media pages/posts they must do so in an appropriate manner as set out in 5h. If the choir committee feel a member has broken the constitution regarding the use of What's App or social media, they will be dealt with under Section 8b parts i, j and k.

j) Choir members are expected to wear choir performance uniform (pink shirt, navy trousers and white trainers) or choir 'relaxed' uniform (navy trousers, combination of pink/navy on the top - zipper, hoodie, polo shirt etc) when performing in public. Choir rehearsal uniform (sweatshirts and polo shirts) can be worn casually to rehearsals.

Ceasing to be a member

k) Members may resign at any time in writing to the secretary. Any member who has not attended or/and paid their membership fee for one year will be contacted by the committee, who will then decide whether that member is deemed to have resigned.

l) If a member chooses to resign, they will be expected to return the choir music, or a fee of £75 will be charged.

6. Equal Opportunities

The organization will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age.

6a Diversity and Additional Needs

Just Sing is committed to equality and the promotion of diversity.

Whereby a person or child has additional needs, in relation to their mental or physical capacity, these will be discussed with the appropriate person. When acting on the outcome of these discussions, Just Sing will try to put measures in place, as far as is reasonably possible, to ensure the singer can access the services offered, whilst also maintaining a sense of dignity. Responsible adjustments will be made where possible.

Performance Accessibility

It is important that all members are able to keep themselves safe onstage and, in a rehearsal, /performance venue. They must be able to access the rehearsal/performance area independently and if not, with support.

Just Sing recognizes that some members may be unable to independently or safely access a rehearsal/performance arena. The rehearsal arena and backstage areas at an event can be an inherently noisy, disruptive, hazardous environment, in some cases with limited space and accessibility. In this instance, the committee should consider the following:

Providing specific chaperones

Conducting a Risk Assessment

Making reasonable adjustments

Providing alternative arrangements to encourage participation

Liasing with the venue

In this case where a chaperone cannot be afforded/provided and there are no available volunteers within the group, following a risk assessment and consideration of reasonable adjustments, the committee may conclude on the grounds of health and safety that it is not suitable for an individual to partake in an activity. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Individuals on the committee may not be held solely accountable in this instance, should a case of discrimination arise, and it is ultimately a case for the Just Sing Team.

Everyone has a responsibility to keep themselves and others safe during rehearsals and performances.

7. Musical Director

The responsibilities of the Musical Director shall be the musical direction of the Choir; the selection of the music; the appointment of the Accompanist and other musicians as and when required and subject to the approval of the Committee; and the auditioning and selection of singers.

The MD will select vocal soloists via two processes on an either/or basis:

The first process involves an audition, where upon the soloist will be asked to sing either a song of their choice or a section of a piece previously learnt in the choir.

The second process will be used if the MD feels a less confident singer may need approached and encouraged to 'give it a go', without the need for a formal audition.

It is the choice of the MD to decide which process he/she will use for a given piece of music.

8a. Meetings

Committee Meetings

- a) The Secretary will send the minutes of meetings to all members of the committee and the Musical Director. They can also be made available to any member who asks for them.
- b) Any proposed changes to the constitution or proposal to dissolve the choir will be discussed with the committee at their meeting. Proposed changes will need to be voted for by 51% of the committee to be passed. Any other matters will be put to the vote at any meeting and decided by a simple majority of those present and eligible to vote.
- c) The Musical Director will have the casting vote wherever there is a tied vote.
- d) The AGM will **normally** be held in the spring term of each academic year, though this may be changed at the discretion of the committee. The Secretary or other members of the committee will ensure all choir members have written notice of the meeting no less than 14 days before it is due.
- e) The business of the AGM will have standing items; these will include:
- Election/updating of Committee members and Officers.
 - Financial report
 - Other Officers' reports
 - Musical Director's report
- f) Rehearsals and meetings will be held at Portadown Rugby Club or, as far as possible, in venues which provide access to all.
- g) A written notice of any extraordinary General Meeting and agenda will be sent to all members no less than 14 days before the date of the meeting.
- h) The quorum for all General meetings including the AGM will be 5 members.
- i) A general meeting can be called by the Secretary at the request of the committee or by at least five members.
- j) Committee meetings can be called by the Chair or at least 5 committee members. The quorum for a committee meeting is 5 committee members, 2 of which need to be officers.

8 b Committee meetings and Officers

- a) The committee will be comprised of:

Musical Director, who shall be responsible for developing the choir and helping the committee steer the choir in the right direction. The MD will also act as chairperson.

Choir Manager, who will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the running of the choir. Coordinating or acting as membership secretary.

Chair, who shall chair both general and committee meetings - usually the MD.

Secretary, who shall be responsible for the taking of minutes and the distribution of all papers - committee and choir

Treasurer who shall be responsible for maintaining accounts

Librarian (s) who shall be responsible for all music given to members. This includes numbering and stamping music, assigning to members, recalling music should a member leave and assigning a fine if the music is not returned.

Technician who shall be responsible for uploading google forms, updating the website, updating the monthly online newsletter - in general, anything that requires technical expertise.

Child Protection Officer (s) who will be responsible for the protection and well-being of the children in Just Sing Kids

Funding officer who shall be responsible for seeking out possible avenues for funding. This officer will also complete the documentation needed for this process.

b) Officers and committee members will continue their assigned role each year until they feel either they would like to stand down from their position or if the Musical Director and Choir Manager feel it is time for a new choir member to take over a particular position. New committee members can be added if the current committee members feel there is somebody who would be an asset to the committee. If a nominee is unavailable to attend the AGM but has agreed to their nomination in advance of the AGM, then that person may still be elected at the AGM. All committee members will be nominated and seconded before moving to a vote.

c) Any member of the choir can volunteer to serve as a committee member, and all members will be expected to help with the running of the choir from time to time.

d) The Musical Director and Choir Manager can take on more than 1 role on the committee.

e) The committee can co-opt any member as a full committee member to fill an officer vacancy until the next AGM.

f) The committee can establish working groups and sub-committees to deal with specific aspects of the running of the choir. Any working group must consist of at least two members. Any proposals made by the working group shall be subject to approval by the committee.

g) The committee, or any working group, can invite any non-member with special expertise to attend committee or working groups meetings but they may not have voting rights.

i) Any offensive behavior, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the equal opportunities policy and choir protocol may be asked not to attend further meetings or to resign from the group if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the management committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

j) For a more serious breach of the constitution or behaviour which conflicts with the values of the choir, a verbal warning will be given. A second verbal warning will be followed by a written warning. If there is no change in behaviour or the problem persists, the committee can take a vote of no confidence in that member and ask them to leave the committee or choir.

k) Where the behaviour or problems are such that there is no alternative but to act immediately, the committee may convene an emergency meeting for the express purpose of determining whether a vote of no confidence should be taken, and the person is asked to leave the committee or the choir.

l) The meeting will be minuted and available to all members of the choir except where a personal matter is discussed. The meeting will need 5 committee members for it to be quorate and the five people need to agree by a unanimous vote on the appropriate action to be taken.

9. Finances

- a) The choir will have a bank account in its name which will be maintained by the elected officers. All monies will be paid into that account.
- b) Any money paid out in the name of the choir in excess of £25.00 will be paid by cheque from the bank account or via a bank transfer. Two signatures will be required for any cheque to be valid.
- c) Sums of £25.00 or less can be issued in cash on the authority of the Treasurer with the full knowledge of other committee members that the amount has been paid.
- d) Any expenditure on behalf of the choir will require a receipt which will be given to the Treasurer as evidence of the purchase.
- e) No committee member will derive any financial benefit from the group other than the payment of reasonable expenses, unless a committee member e.g., accompanist, MD or manager is being gifted for their services.
- f) Any committee member who carries out an activity agreed by the committee will not be liable for any debts and will be reimbursed from the choir funds.
- g) Any activity not agreed by the committee may not be reimbursed.
- h) The choir's financial year will run from 1st September to August 31st
- i) Each AGM will receive a financial statement for the preceding year audited by a person chosen by the committee, but not a member of the committee.

9b Payment

An amount will be gifted per session (which will include preparation at home and before/after rehearsals) by the core team or committee to the accompanist, MD and manager, if and when required. This amount will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be dependent on the level of membership fees received each year.

10. Amendments to the Constitution

Any proposed changes to the constitution can be ratified by the core team and/or the full committee. A proposal to dissolve the choir will be discussed with the committee at their meeting. Proposed changes will need to be voted for by 51% of the core team/full committee to be passed. Any other matters will be put to the vote at any meeting and decided by a simple majority of those present and eligible to vote.

11. Child Protection



Just Sing's Safeguarding policy can be located on the Just Sing website.

Notably:

The choir will annually assign 3 designated officers to oversee any Child Protection issues.

Each week the MD and accompanist plus 2 - 3 other adults will attend rehearsals.

Anyone working with Just Sing Kids will be Access NI verified. The choir will pay for this fee.

A parent's guide will be provided to parents with details of pick/drop off, permission to use images of their child on social media/choir website. etc. the parent/guardian will sign to say they have read and understood the details of the Safeguarding policy.

A note of concern will be drafted, to allow anyone who has a concern about a child, to complete the form and give to the MD of the children's choir, which can then be given to the appointed person. This note of concern must state that any complaint will be reported to Gateway within 24 hours.

Dissolution

a) The choir can only be dissolved by a vote at a general meeting, in accordance with section 5 and 8.

b) If the proposal to dissolve the choir is passed, and after settling all proper debts and obligations, such as rent and fees, the disposal of any remaining assets will be donated to a local charitable organisation. The charitable organisation will be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.

This constitution was agreed and adopted by Just Sing Choir on 5th September 2023.

It was reviewed and updated Monday 13th May 2024.

The constitution is reviewed annually at the last meeting of the choir committee. E.g. May 2025

Date/...../.....

Name and position in group

Signed

Name and position in group

Signed

Name and position in group

Signed