



Dover Choral Society

Policies and Procedures

Concert and rehearsal venue St. Mary's Church and Hall in Dover
Registered Charity No: 278071

These Policies were adopted at the DCS AGM on 03.09.2024 by the DCS Membership.

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Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

Dover Choral Society (DCS) are committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all those involved in the musical activities it organises in accordance with Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This includes but is not limited to; members, friends, volunteers, paid persons, and members of the public. This also includes but is not limited to; rehearsals, concerts, activities and events

Responsibilities

- Overall responsibility for health and safety sits with the DCS Committee
- Practical responsibility for health and safety at events and activities organised by DCS sits with the DCS Committee
- Whilst overall responsibility for health and safety sits with the DCS committee, all choir members should aim to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and report all health and safety concerns to a member of the DCS committee

Statements of General Policy

1. DCS will seek to prevent accidents and cases of ill-health by managing the health and safety at all events and activities it organises.

Procedures: relevant risk assessments to be completed for events and activities. Where regular venues are used the risk assessment will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if required. The DCS rehearsal venue St. Mary's Church large hall should not exceed the maximum capacity of 120 with chairs in rows and the small hall should not exceed the maximum capacity of 40 with chairs in rows.

2. DCS will provide clear instructions and information to ensure that members, friends, volunteers and paid persons are able to participate in rehearsals, concerts, activities and events in a healthy and safe manner.

Procedures: tasks performed by members, friends, volunteers and paid persons to be risk assessed and appropriate instruction to be provided (e.g. preparing and serving hot drinks, erecting staging, moving furniture).

3. DCS will engage and consult with members, friends, volunteers and paid persons on health and safety conditions.

Procedures: members, friends, volunteers and paid persons briefed on health and safety risk assessments for new venues / activities and updated on any changes in risk assessments for regular venues / activities. Establish clear lines of communication for members, friends, volunteers and paid persons to raise health and safety concerns.

4. DCS will implement emergency procedures including evacuation in case of fire or other significant incidents.

Procedures: Ensure at least two individuals are responsible for knowing fire procedures for hired venues and for communicating them to all of those present. Provide fire safety guidelines and evacuation procedures to all those attending rehearsals / concerts / activities / events. The DCS

Committee should ensure that exit routes are not obstructed or contain trip hazards, that electrical leads are not positioned across any walkway routes and that aisles are kept clear.

Electrical and Fire Safety

To reduce the risk of fire or shock from electrical appliances the following measures will be taken:

- All portable electrical items brought into St. Mary's Hall will be visually checked for safety and preferably inspected for fire safety (PAT), by a registered electrician
- Extension leads should not be overloaded above the maximum rating of the lead
- Coiled extension cables should be fully unwound prior to use to prevent overheating
- Multi-socket adaptors should not be used
- These Fire Safety guidelines for our rehearsal space and concert venue will be adhered to

First-Aid

For First-Aid assistance the following measures will be taken:

- DCS will ensure they are aware of all these First-Aid procedures, and where to locate First-Aid equipment at our rehearsal space and at venues.
- DCS will ensure that if an accident occurs, the accident book (kept in the hall kitchen) is filled in and signed. The First-Aid box can be located in the hall kitchen
- Where necessary, DCS will recruit volunteer First-Aiders with the relevant up to date First-Aid training
- DCS will ensure a list of First-Aid individuals is kept up to date

Refreshments

During rehearsal breaks those assisting with any tea and coffee dispensing should ensure the area is kept uncluttered to reduce the risk of accidents. Those dispensing hot water should be behind the bar counter. Should a spill occur, this should be cleaned up immediately to avoid slips and falls. Any kettles / airpots should be emptied of any residual hot water at the end of the rehearsal break. Individuals not helping with refreshments should remain outside of the kitchen.

Sound safety

DCS takes the responsibility of protecting the hearing of members, friends, volunteers, paid persons and audience members seriously. DCS will:

- Ensure there are open lines of communication for individuals to raise concerns about hearing
- Take concerns seriously; the DCS Committee will work with individuals to find ways to minimise risk
- Consider the protection of our audience's hearing when designing stage and audience layout for concerts

Insurance

The DCS Committee will maintain insurance to include cover for accidental and third-party public liabilities.

This policy will be reviewed and reapproved every year at the DCS AGM and kept up to date by the DCS Committee Secretary.

Evacuation Information

It is a mandatory requirement that while using St. Mary's Parish Centre, Dover Choral Society appoint a designated person / persons to be conversant with the location of all fire exits and first aid equipment.

The following notice must be read verbatim at the beginning of each DCS term:

'In the unlikely event of a fire your attention is respectfully drawn to the fire exits (POINT OUT THE EXITS TO THOSE ASSEMBLED). These exits must be kept clear 'at all times'.

In the event of the alarm sounding, I / we (designated person / persons) will direct the evacuation through a suitable exit. Please leave the building as quickly and as safely as possible. Please do not linger to collect your personal belongings. Please assemble in Stembrook car park and wait there.

Please DO NOT re-enter the building until the ALL CLEAR has been given by the fire and rescue service. Thank you.'

Safeguarding Policy

We at Dover Choral Society (DCS) take very seriously our responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of those at risk, that is children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006 was passed to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, by preventing individuals who are deemed unsuitable to work with those at risk from gaining access to them. The law requires any organisation involving those at risk to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to their welfare is minimised and, where there are concerns, to share them with other agencies, as appropriate. This policy is to provide principles that guide our approach to the protection of all vulnerable individuals.

For the purposes of this policy, anyone up to the age of 16 is classed as a child, those aged 16 - 18 are classed as young people and anyone over 18 years old who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant emotional or physical harm or exploitation is classed as a vulnerable adult. DCS generally comprises of Members / Friends who are independent adults, but occasionally we may be joined by children or young people (generally children or young people of choir members), and possibly vulnerable adults, who may rehearse and / or perform with us. Therefore, we recognise the need to safeguard all at risk, keeping everyone from harm, and so we have adopted the following Safeguarding Policy.

Who does this policy apply to?

- All Members and Friends of DCS
- All those who are paid and involved with DCS
- Volunteers and anyone working on behalf of DCS or taking part in DCS activities

Our policy aims to:

- Protect children, young people and adults at risk who are involved in any way with DCS events and activities
- Ensure all choir members, and all those involved in any way with DCS events and activities understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals they may be interacting with
- Ensure that safeguarding of all individuals at risk is a primary consideration for all those involved with DCS

The DCS Committee will designate a committee member or other co-opted choir member to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL shall undertake appropriate training as required and will be identified to all as the principal person an individual should turn to if they have any concerns or queries. Contact details for the DSL will be available at all rehearsals / events / activities.

Any concern regarding an individual associated with the choir must immediately be reported to the DSL (or in his or her absence to a member of the DCS Committee) who will take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a safeguarding concern. This includes:

- Receiving and recording information from the person expressing the concern
- Assessing and clarifying the information
- Consulting with and informing the Chair of the DCS Committee
- Making referrals to statutory organisations (e.g. the local authority child protection services / the Police, etc.) as appropriate
- Storing and retaining records according to legal requirements
- Maintaining confidentiality, subject to the principle of the welfare of the individual at risk being paramount which means that information may have to be shared (but only with people who 'need' to know about it)

When DCS organises an activity or event they will ensure that:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy
- There is a main contact for safeguarding on the day – preferably the DSL, or in their absence a member of the DCS Committee or a co-opted choir member, this will be an individual who ideally has been DBS checked
- The main contact for safeguarding on the day has access to emergency contact details and other relevant details (e.g. picking up arrangements for at risk people)
- An at-risk individual is not left alone with one adult, there should always be at least two adults

Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents:

The DSL (or person reporting in their absence) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention, in this instance the police and / or ambulance service should be called
2. If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with an at-risk individual at the current time, they should be removed in a sensitive manner from direct contact with the at-risk individual

If none of the above applies the DSL (or person reporting in their absence) will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them
- Speak with Committee Members present to decide how to handle the concern, excluding any Committee Members who are involved in the incident
- Escalate the concern by:
 1. Raising concerns with the police, for serious or possible criminal offences
 2. Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether an individual at risk needs protection
 3. Completing an internal investigation, for less serious incidents where they feel internal mediation will be successful

Where cases are escalated the DCS Committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident. Where an internal investigation takes place, the DCS Committee will inform all parties involved of the reported concern as soon as possible. **Please note, you do not need to be in the ‘at risk’ category to seek help. Our safeguarding policy is there to protect everyone and to keep all from harm.**

This policy will be reviewed and reapproved every year at the DCS AGM and kept up to date by the DCS Committee Secretary.

Finance Policy

Introduction

This policy is set up to show that Dover Choral Society's (DCS) finances are being properly managed. Legislation requires the DCS Treasurer to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a fair view of the state of affairs of DCS, application of resources including income and expenditure of DCS for that period. DCS use the Charities SORP (Statements of Recommended Practice) for guidance, which provides recommendations and requirements setting out how to prepare 'true and fair' accounts in accordance with UK accounting standards. The SORP is updated from time to time to take account of changes to accounting standards and / or charity law.

In preparing these financial statements, the DCS Treasurer and Committee are required to:

- Select and apply a suitable accounting software
- Observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (Statements of Recommended Practice)
- Make reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates
- State whether UK Accounting Standards and Practices have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed, and explained in the financial statements

The DCS Treasurer is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of DCS. Both the DCS Treasurer and Committee are responsible for safeguarding the assets of DCS and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The DCS Treasurer and Committee should monitor costs against the budget agreed by the Committee. The DCS Treasurer and Committee give their time and expertise voluntarily and receive no remuneration or other benefits.

Funding and expenditure

DCS Treasurer and Committee plan expenditure for the year regarding DCS objectives, whilst also complying with the procedures on reserves and within the bounds of sound accounting practice. Detailed records are kept of all income and payments, and this is analysed regularly and projected, and actual figures are produced for all DCS Committee meetings and Membership AGMs.

DCS Treasurer and Committee will annually review the manner and level of payment to our Musical Director and Accompanist. Our main source of funding is through membership subscriptions, donations and ticket sales. Additional funding is through the government 'Gift-Aid' scheme, through any fundraising activities and occasional local government / other grants or funds. Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the DCS Treasurer and Committee, and any restricted funds will be used for the purpose given only.

Examination of accounts

- All cheques must be signed by one of the three named signatories, mandated
- All expenditure must be agreed by the DCS Treasurer and Committee
- The DCS Treasurer is the primary user for online banking. If a secondary user is appointed, they should check the online account regularly and report when this has been carried out at the next subsequent Committee meeting, noting any observations
- Banking should be carried out promptly
- The current financial position must be a standing item at all committee meetings
- The Treasurer will reimburse the cost of agreed expenditure against receipts or online evidence of payment

- All DCS financial accounts will be examined by an external Auditor, qualified for the purpose in line with legal requirements, at the end of the DCS financial year (31st May)
- The DCS Treasurer, directed by the Committee, will submit the accounts and accompanying documents required by law, to the Charity Commission as soon as possible after the yearly examination of DCS accounts

Fundraising events / performances

For fundraising events or performances, the Charity Commission recommends that the following controls are in place:

- Records are maintained for each fundraising event, in sufficient detail to identify gross receipts or takings and costs incurred
- For all events for which there is a ticket income or entrance money:
 1. Tickets are all pre-numbered
 2. A record is kept of all persons who have been issued with tickets to sell, and the ticket numbers that have been allocated to each person
 3. A record is kept of which tickets have been sold
 4. All money from tickets and any unsold tickets are collected
 5. A reconciliation is made of receipts against tickets sold

Gift-Aid

Donations made under Gift-Aid are treated as if the donor had already deducted basic rate tax from them. DCS can then reclaim this tax to increase the value of a donation. The DCS Treasurer ensures complete and accurate returns are made maximising the value of donations to DCS and ensures that proper records are maintained reducing the risk of amounts being reclaimed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Accurate records and timely returns ensure that DCS receives the tax recovery promptly and with confidence. Full details of the records that must be maintained are set out on the HMRC's website.

The DCS Treasurer will:

- Check to ensure that amounts expected from committed donors have been received
- Check to ensure tax repayments due have been received

Financial reserves

The DCS Committee aim to maintain a reserve fund, which will be reviewed periodically to ensure we meet all financial obligations should DCS close. If DCS were at any time to close, the DCS Committee together will determine the distribution of leftover funds.

Role of the Treasurer:

- Oversee the financial affairs of DCS and ensure they are legal, constitutional and within accepted accounting practice
- Ensure proper records are kept and that effective financial procedures are in place
- Monitor and report on the financial health of DCS
- Oversee the production of necessary financial reports / returns and accounts
- Make fellow committee members aware of their financial responsibilities and take a lead in interpreting financial data to them
- Ensure monies are promptly banked
- Arrange payments as appropriate and arrange appropriate signatures on payments
- Make the necessary arrangements to collect payments from any debts due
- Liaise with Committee Members and Musical Director to ensure the financial viability of DCS
- Evaluate the financial viability of plans and proposals

- Regularly report the financial position at committee meetings
- Publish annual accounts as required by current legislation
- Lead on appointing and liaising with auditors / independent examiners
- Undertake bookkeeping duties ensuring bookkeeping is kept up to date
- Regularly carry out reconciliations
- Ensure the Gift-Aid system is in place; liaising with the DCS Secretary to ensure the records and systems are in line with current GDPR and with current relevant taxation laws
- Oversee the selling of concert tickets and ensure proceeds are banked promptly and adequate record systems are maintained
- Liaise with Making Music and ensure annual membership is paid promptly, including any outstanding payments not covered by the venue licence
- Ensure appropriate insurance cover is attained and maintained (keeping records of the cover)
- Knowledge and experience of current fundraising finance practice relevant to voluntary and community organisations
- Knowledge of bookkeeping and financial management (as necessary)
- Good financial analysis skills
- Ability to communicate clearly

This policy will be reviewed and reapproved every year at the DCS AGM and kept up to date by the DCS Committee Secretary.

Data Protection Policy

Introduction

To operate efficiently Dover Choral Society (DCS) gather, store and use personal information pertaining to both individuals and businesses. DCS take the protection of privacy very seriously. We take good care to safeguard personal data and to process this data fairly and lawfully in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). This Data Protection Policy explains how DCS handles personal information of members, friends, volunteers, paid persons, businesses and members of the public.

Individuals have the right to be informed about the collection and use of their own personal data. This is a key transparency requirement under the UK GDPR. Articles 13 and 14 of the UK GDPR specify what individuals have the right to be informed about.

Overall data control sits with the DCS Committee, who will control how personal data is collected, stored and used, however, all those handling personal information of others on behalf of DCS have a responsibility to gather, store and use personal information in a correct and lawful way according to the Data Protection Act 2018.

Information that may be gathered, stored and used

DCS Members and Friends are asked to complete a General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) form upon becoming a Member / Friend. This form is an outworking of the Data Protection Policy and is stored physically in a secure location and is reviewed periodically to ensure the information contained is relevant and up to date. Information that may be gathered, stored and used:

- Names
- Email addresses
- Postal addresses
- Phone numbers
- Financial information
- Any other personal information it is necessary for DCS to hold

Dover Choral Society will:

- Explain clearly to individuals why the collection of their personal data is required and the purposes in which it will be used
- Only collect relevant personal data for the legitimate purposes of the society
- Ensure that personal data collected is accurate and up to date
- Hold electronic data in a secure password protected environment by the DCS Committee
- Hold physical data such as membership forms etc. securely
- Only share personal data with Trustees / Committee Members where it is 'absolutely' necessary
- Ensure personal data is held no longer than necessary

Individuals have the right to:

- Request to access their own personal data
- Request that their own personal data be updated or deleted

The sharing of personal data by DCS Members and Friends

If an individual requests the personal contact details (e.g. email / phone number) of a DCS Member or Friend via the DCS Committee, the DCS Committee will request the permission of that Member / Friend.

Provided that Member / Friend consents to their contact details being shared, the contact details will be shared with the individual. If the Member / Friend does not consent, then their contact details will not be shared.

Personal data breach

This DCS Data Protection Policy has been put in place to prevent personal data information from being lost, stolen, misused or becoming corrupted. However, in the unlikely event that DCS experience a personal data breach the Committee will complete the following:

- Ensure all Trustees / Committee Members are informed right away
- Establish when and how the breach occurred and who exactly is affected by the breach
- Take measures to minimise the breach as much as possible
- Assess the risk to the person / persons because of the breach, informing them of what has happened, possible and likely impacts it might have on them and what DCS are doing to manage the breach and reduce the risk of future occurrences
- Inform the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within 72 hours of the breach being recognised
- Report the breach to the Charity Commission
- Ensure the breach is documented physically and electronically
- Conduct an internal investigation into how the breach happened and what measures need to be taken to minimise the risk of similar breaches occurring again in the future

Personal data review

A regular review of all personal data will take place to establish if DCS still has good reason to keep and use the data held at the time of the review. Generally, a data review will be held yearly and no more than 2 years after the last review. This review will be carried out by the DCS Committee.

Criteria for deleting personal data:

- Does the reason for keeping the personal data still apply?
- Is the personal data still being stored for its original purpose?
- Do we still have consent to store and use the personal data?
- Is the personal data still accurate?

Occasionally, even if members cease their DCS membership, some of their personal data may still need to be retained for legitimate purposes such as gift-aid records, payments made or received, DCS Meeting minutes etc. However, personal data will only be retained if deemed as 'absolutely' necessary by the DCS Trustees / Committee.

This policy will be reviewed and reapproved every year at the DCS AGM and kept up to date by the DCS Committee Secretary.