



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Sheringham and Cromer Choral Society (SCCS) is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services and practice. The Trustees of SCCS realise that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not), and intend to do their best to eliminate any discriminatory practices which may occur during all or any of the activities of SCCS which may affect all or any person connected with it, including the Trustees (Committee members), Musical Director, Accompanist, Members, potential members, soloists and orchestral players, members of the audience at concerts and events, volunteers and workshop attendees.

SCCS will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of —

- Race
- Colour
- Gender, sexual orientation or identity
- Ethnic or national origin
- Disability – physical or mental
- Partnership status or home responsibility
- HIV or AIDS status
- Age
- Political or religious belief
- Trade union activity
- Socio-economic background
- Refugee or asylum seeker status

As a provider of a service to the community, SCCS accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. SCCS realises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action which will be taken by SCCS in order to achieve equal opportunities.

SCCS recognises that some users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with the SCCS Equal Opportunities Policy. SCCS will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client. If this does not resolve matters, the issue can be referred to the Committee who will decide how best to remedy the situation.

SCCS will share the contents of this policy document with all members and make copies freely available to all enquirers. The contents of the policy will be reviewed from time to time by the Trustees.

OBJECTIVES ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. Membership is open to all without audition within the spirit of Clause 4 of the Constitution dated 26 November 2018.
2. Every reasonable attempt will be made to accommodate Members with visual, hearing, or physical disabilities.
3. Every reasonable attempt will be made to ensure that rehearsal and concert venues have disabled access and facilities.
4. All members are encouraged to stand as Committee Members at the Annual General Meeting thereby trying to ensure a genuinely wide representation of the membership and to develop a greater diversity in the Committee Members, networks and membership.
5. In managing the affairs of SCCS, the Trustees and Musical Director will do all that they can to ensure that the programme of works to be performed and other activities organised are as inclusive as possible.
6. Whilst much of the standard choral repertoire is of a religious nature, and performance venues are often in church buildings, this should not be taken to imply that the SCCS has an affiliation to any faith in particular, or that there is a requirement on the part of its members to have such.
7. The financial viability of SCCS is dependent upon all Members paying the annual subscription as determined by the Trustees. Every effort will be made to accommodate flexible payments for those Members who genuinely have problems in paying the annual subscription in a lump sum. There is a small bursary fund, administered by the Treasurer, to cover the costs of fees for current Members or potential Members who are facing genuine financial hardship who would otherwise be unable to join SCCS. Free membership is available for all Members of school age or who are in full time education.
8. Wherever possible, communications to Members will be made—
 - (a) verbally at rehearsals;
 - (b) in writing via email or postal services;
 - (c) on the SCCS web site and / or via Twitter.
9. As wide a range of media as possible will be used to publicise concerts and events including posters and flyers, newspapers and journals, internet-based web sites including SCCS's own web site, social media and, on occasion, radio and television.
10. Ticket and programme prices will be set at reasonably viable levels with discounts available for early booking. SCCS will endeavour to keep concert tickets free for those under 18 years old.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Trustees of SCCS have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with SCCS to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work in SCCS projects are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the SCCS Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working as SCCS volunteers.

The Trustees will bring to the attention of all volunteers and service users the existence of this policy and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

If any service user or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the Trustees.

All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

USE OF LANGUAGE

Members should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone. Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

All materials used or developed by SCCS will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

No Member should be subject to sexual harassment. This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including—

- verbal sexual abuse;
- physical contact;
- repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive.

If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the Member who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

In the event of any instances of discrimination, or perceived discrimination, an attempt to deal with these on an informal basis will be encouraged. If this does not resolve matters, the issue can be referred to the Committee who will decide how best to remedy the situation. Any such formal referral will be investigated promptly, impartially and confidentially. However, a record of the complaint and outcome will be kept on record, such record to be kept securely by the Hon. Secretary along with other confidential documents.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Equal Opportunities Policy of the SCCS will be constantly reviewed by the Trustees to ensure that no Member of the group is put to a disadvantage either directly or indirectly. This monitoring will apply to the practices of the Trustees, the Committee Members, Musical Director, Accompanist, Members, potential members, soloists and orchestral players, members of the audience at concerts and events, volunteers and workshop attendees.

It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this Policy.

The Trustees of SCCS will review this policy every 2 years. Members of SCCS will be informed of any changes to the policy and be invited to comment.

Adopted on: 4 May 2021

Review date: 4 May 2023