

FCC Members’ handbook

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Version history

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	June 2025	Initial version
1.1	November 2025	Subscriptions – replacing termly with monthly subs payments Roles and tasks – non-committee roles no longer appointed at AGM

Membership and auditions

Membership of the choir is by audition and then reaudition every four years to assess each singer’s ongoing contribution to the choir’s sound. At both audition and reaudition, singers are expected to show competence in sight-reading, performing a prepared solo piece, and singing their part in pieces recently rehearsed or performed with the choir.

If a member is not able to demonstrate the required level of competence in a reaudition, their membership will be terminated. The member will be informed in writing by the Committee of the result of their reaudition within 2 weeks of the completion of all scheduled reauditions for members of their voice, based upon the Musical Director’s recommendation. If the member wishes to complain or contest the decision, they may raise their concerns with Committee

members, either verbally or in writing, prior to the final Committee meeting of the season (June/July).

The choir may also have non-singing members who are either regular members of the choir who require a period of absence (up to 12 months – after an absence of more than 12 months, membership ceases and a re-application would be subject to re-audition at the Musical Director's discretion), or members who do not normally sing with the Choir but assist at concerts, other functions or generally help its smooth running. Such membership is at the invitation of the Committee; it confers no voting rights, shall be reviewed annually, and shall be subject to ratification at the AGM.

Guests

For certain concerts, a larger force of singers may be required, as advised by the Musical Director. Committee members will ask friends of the choir if they wish to participate in such performances. An invitation to sing as a guest does not confer membership and no audition is required. Guests may be asked by the Treasurer to make a small contribution towards rehearsal costs.

Subscriptions

Members are required to pay an annual subscription, which can optionally be paid monthly via standing order. If a member joins partway through the year, the Treasurer will calculate a pro-rata amount. For members who are finding it difficult to pay the subscription, concessions can be arranged for individual circumstances, upon application to the Chair or Treasurer of the choir. Members who have not paid their subscriptions are not eligible to sing in concerts. If following a written warning from the Treasurer the member does not pay the subscription, membership may be terminated in accordance with the Constitution.

Please note that the subscription covers participation in choir activities for the full season (September to July). Refunds are not offered if members are unable to participate in individual rehearsals or concerts.

Members who pay income tax in the UK are asked to sign a Gift Aid form so that the choir can reclaim tax on subscriptions and on any additional donations the member may choose to make.

Attendance at rehearsals

Members are requested to attend all rehearsals and arrive punctually. If this is not possible, please give apologies to the Secretary in advance in writing (by email or other electronic message). An absence book is available at every rehearsal to enable members to give advance notification.

Members unable to attend a minimum of 75% of the rehearsals for a particular concert, or unable to attend the dress rehearsal on the concert day, will only be allowed to participate in the concert at the Conductor's discretion.

Please bring a pencil to rehearsals.

Music and scores

Normally, the Choir provides music hired from lending libraries or from the Choir's own music library. Members are fully responsible for any music loaned to them and must return copies promptly to the Librarian. If music is lost or damaged, any costs will be charged to members. If a member needs to withdraw from a performance or rehearsals, they are expected to return their music to the Librarian as soon as possible.

Solo opportunities

Solo parts are either allocated by the Musical Director (in the case of smaller roles) or auditioned for. Any paid-up member of the choir may audition for solos as and when they come up — there is no system of probation before you are allowed to take a solo role. Guest singers may be invited to take solos at the Musical Director's discretion.

Concert uniform

Men should wear a long-sleeved black shirt (with a black dinner jacket in colder weather, but no tie), black trousers and black shoes and socks. Women should wear all black: a full-length long-sleeved dress, or a long-sleeved blouse with skirt or trousers, black tights or socks and black shoes.

In hot summer weather, short sleeves and black sandals are accepted, and tights are optional.

For some concerts, men may be asked to wear a black dinner jacket with white shirt and black or red bow tie, and women may be invited to add a touch of red (jewellery, scarf, hair ornament etc).

The Secretary will confirm uniform details in advance of the concert.

Roles and tasks

The choir is run by a small committee of trustees which meets on average once a term, elected in accordance with the Constitution (see also "[Election and retirement of trustees at the AGM](#)" below. As well as its Officers (Chair, Treasurer, Secretary) the Committee appoints elected committee members to appropriate roles, including those covering publicity and a Making Music representative.

In addition, there are a number of operational roles for which members are invited to volunteer. A task list is available showing responsibilities for specific tasks throughout the choir's season. The Committee appoints a Librarian and a Concert Manager who are answerable to the Committee and the Musical Director, and they are invited to attend Committee meetings as required. (Normally volunteers fulfilling these roles are not voting members of the Committee or charity trustees, unless they have separately been elected to the Committee.)

All members are expected to help with necessary tasks such as providing tea, coffee and cake during rehearsals, arranging audience refreshments, or setting up and dismantling staging for concerts. Publicity for the choir and its forthcoming concert season is through our website,

social media, and mailing list; members are requested to help promote the choir through their social media as they can. We also print flyers for each concert and ask members to distribute them to local shops and notice boards.

Ticket income is an important source of revenue and members are expected to make an effort to sell tickets for choir concerts. Members are also expected to assist with other fundraising efforts as requested by the Committee.

Election and retirement of trustees at the AGM

1. The trustees will hold a committee meeting no less than 28 days in advance of the AGM to agree the agenda and to confirm which trustees will retire.
2. One third (or the nearest to one third) of the trustees will retire, these being the longest serving.
3. Alongside the notification of the AGM, which will be issued in accordance with FCC's constitution, the Secretary will confirm in writing (email) the names of the trustees who will be retiring, and invite nominations via a nomination form. Nominees must be proposed and seconded by members.
4. The Secretary will provide members with as much notice of the nominations as is practically possible, especially where the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies.
5. The election of new trustees to replace the outgoing trustees will take place at the AGM.
 - a. In the event that only one person is standing for the trustee vacancy, no election is necessary.
 - b. In the event that there are more nominees than vacancies, then a vote will be taken among members present at the AGM by show of hands in accordance with a procedure determined in advance by the trustees.
6. In the event that trustees resign in between AGMs or are removed in line with the provisions of clause 8 of FCC's constitution, the trustees may co-opt a qualifying person as defined in clause 7(2)(a) to act as a trustee until the next AGM.

Retiring trustees are eligible for re-election in accordance with the constitution, but may serve no more than 3 x 3-year terms (9 years total). The committee will consist of no less than 5 and no more than 8 trustees including officers.

Small singing groups representing FCC at events

The choir makes some income from singing at weddings, funerals and corporate events. Since the repertoire required for such occasions is often different from that being prepared at the time for choir concerts, a small group of singers may meet separately from, and in addition to, normal rehearsals.

Any such small group, on such an occasion, should follow the principles laid out below:

- Status: approval from the committee should be sought before the group represents itself as being part of, or working on behalf of, FCC.

- Participation: this should normally be restricted to singers who are current members, were members in the past or have sung with FCC at FCC concerts. In other cases, guidance should be sought from the committee and the Musical Director.
- Standards: great care should be taken that the group presents itself in performance in a manner consistent with the presentation of FCC.
- Proceeds: the aim of the group must be to raise funds for, or awareness of, FCC. Therefore, the group should be known to the organisers of the event as 'members of Finchley Chamber Choir' and the choir's share of proceeds from performances must be transferred to FCC, after deduction of approved expenses. The choir member who coordinates the event shall be responsible for ensuring this, guided by, and answerable to, the committee.

This does not in any way preclude members of FCC from participation in other groups as they see fit.

Recognition of former members

At the discretion of the committee, former members who have contributed in a significant way to the choir, may be invited to become honorary patrons at no additional expense to them.

Related policies and documents

The choir collects a small amount of personal data about its members, patrons and supporters. The choir's Privacy Policy is published on the choir's web site www.fcchoir.co.uk.

The choir has a Safeguarding Policy which is also available on request from the Secretary.