

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL CHOIR SCHOOL OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION

Adopted 15th August 2015 (replacing previous version dated 2010)

1. **Adoption of the Constitution.** The association and its property will be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. This is the Governing Document for the Association.
2. **The Name.** The association's name is the Westminster Cathedral Choir School Old Boys' Association (henceforward referred to as the Association).

BACKGROUND

3. The Association has existed at an informal level for many years as a gathering of former Choristers educated at Westminster Cathedral Choir School, but as the School evolved, it was important to open membership to all Alumni and the Association was reorganized in 2010. An annual reunion has proved popular, marked by a sung Mass with Alumni and serving Choristers, and a reception formerly hosted by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster in Archbishop's House, and recently hosted in the Choir School Refectory.

OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION

4. The Association exists to provide a link between Alumni, School and Choir, to celebrate our unique Catholic education, and to foster any support that Alumni can return to the School and the Cathedral Choir.

MANAGEMENT

5. **Organisation.** The Headmaster of the School is the *ex officio* President of the Association. Routine management of the Association will be undertaken by an Association Committee less the President. The Committee comprises:
 - a. The Chairman – preferably an Alumnus with strong links to the Choir School;
 - b. The Vice-Chair;
 - c. The Treasurer;
 - d. The Newsletter Editor.

Alumni filling these appointments will normally be invited to serve for terms of 5 years. They should not normally be expected to serve beyond the age of 70. To ease attendance and associated costs, committee members should be sought from those in reasonably close proximity to the Cathedral.

The Terms of Reference for individual committee members are laid out at Annexes A to E.

6. **Duties of the Association Committee.** The Committee must manage the business of the Association and they have the following powers in order to further the Object (but not for any other purpose):
 - a. To raise funds for projects that further the educational experience of boys at the Choir School, as advised by the President. In doing so, the Committee must not undertake any substantial permanent trading activity with the Association;
 - b. To set aside income as a reserve against future expenditure;
 - c. To obtain and pay for such goods and services as are necessary for carrying out the work of the Association;
 - d. To open and operate such bank and other accounts as the Committee consider necessary;
 - e. To do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the Object.
7. No decision of the Committee shall be valid unless it receives the assent of the President, who is to consider whether the membership should be consulted for any significant changes.
8. **Appointments.** The President will appoint the Association Chairman, and approve his nominations for Committee.
9. **Allowable Committee expenses.** The Treasurer may settle claims from Committee members for individual expenses up to £35 to mitigate their costs when attending meetings or functions held on Committee business. Other office costs will be met on a case by case basis
10. **Changes to Constitution.** No change to the Constitution can be made without the approval of a minimum of three Committee members, including the President.

MEMBERSHIP

12. All Alumni of the Choir School are awarded Association membership on leaving in their final year. All members will sit within one of the following categories:

- a. **Life Member.** All old boys of the Choir School. Life Members since 2010 have paid an £150 membership fee, deducted by the Choir School from their original termly fee deposit. A tie, supplied directly to the School as required by Stephenson's School Uniform, will also be presented on leaving the School.
- b. **Honorary Member.** The Committee may grant Honorary membership to distinguished individuals who, by virtue of their position, will enhance the prestige of the Association. Honorary members will not be required to pay a membership fee. They will also be invited, normally as paying guests, to the annual Association reunion. The Committee will normally consider nominations for the award of Honorary status at its spring meeting.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

13. All Association activities should promote the Object at paragraph 4.
14. **Newsletter.** A magazine titled 'The Record' will be coordinated annually by the Newsletter Editor for publication and distribution before Holy Week. From 2010, the newsletter has been designed and printed by Mercer Design and distributed by the Committee via Royal Mail. The scope of the articles should be broad enough to appeal to more than just the alumni of the School. The newsletter will be distributed in hard copy to all Life members, including those joining from that year's cohort, and to Honorary Members. Soft copy will also be made available on the school website.
15. **Merchandise.** The Association should limit its merchandise for sale to the Association tie, with stock managed by the Vice-Chair, but stored at the school.
16. **Annual Reunion.** Subject to the agreement of the Choir School, the Association should invite its membership to a self-funding annual reunion. Since 2010 this has been organized as a sit-down meal, held at the school and entitled, 'The Cardinal Hume Dinner'. Where practicable, the event should be preceded by Mass. Other reunions may be sanctioned/ subsidised by the Committee, but should be open to all Members.
17. **Communications.** The Association will communicate routinely with members by letter. Information will be posted on the Choir School website and email alerts sent to members.
18. **Awards.** The Association will raise funds in order to support the activities of the School and make awards annually as it thinks fit. Since 2010 this has included presentation of the 'Cardinal Hume Award' to a current pupil in Year 7 at Prize Giving. A suitable recipient is advised by the President, and is a boy who has made an outstanding contribution to school life, and displayed Benedictine traits of commitment, helpfulness and good humour. Since 2010 the recipient has received a shield and a cheque

made up to the sum of £50.00. The recipient's name is also engraved annually on a bronze plaque, displayed at the Choir School.

FINANCE

19. The Association Treasurer will maintain books of accounts, which should be submitted annually to and inspected by the President. The financial year will end on 5 April.
20. The Committee is to make every effort to maintain the financial health of the Association.
21. The Committee may authorize expenditure on any other item it feels will benefit the Association, subject to the conditions stated above. Financial authority to withdraw money from and move it between the Association's accounts lies with the Chairman and Treasurer. At their own discretion but in accordance with the guidance in this Constitution, those Committee members are authorised to make payments up to the amount stated below, but such payments should be ratified by the Committee at the earliest opportunity:
 - a. Chairman - £200.
 - b. Treasurer - £100.
22. Application of the Income and Property.
 - a. The income and property of the Association shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the Object.
 - b. A member of the Committee may pay out of, or be reimbursed from, the property of the Association reasonable expenses properly incurred by him or her when acting on behalf of the Association.
 - c. None of the income or property of the Association may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend bonus or otherwise by way of profit to any member of the Association. This does not prevent:
 - (i) A member who is not also a member of the Committee from receiving reasonable and proper remuneration for any goods or services supplied to the Association.
 - (ii) The purchase of indemnity insurance for members of the Committee against any liability that by virtue of any rule of law would otherwise attach to a Committee member in respect of any negligence, default breach of duty or breach of trust of which he or she may be guilty in relation to the Association but excluding:

- (a) Fines.
- (b) Costs of unsuccessfully defending criminal prosecutions for offences arising out of the fraud, dishonesty or wilful or reckless misconduct of the Committee members.
- (c) Liabilities to the Association that result from conduct that the Committee member or other officer knew, or ought to have known, was not in the best interests of the Charity, or in respect of which the person concerned did not care whether that conduct was in the best interests of the Charity.

No member of the Committee may be paid or receive any other benefit for being a Committee member.

DISSOLUTION

- 23. If the Association is to be dissolved by resolution of the members, the Committee will remain in office and be responsible for winding up the affairs of the Association in accordance with this paragraph.
 - a. The Committee must collect in all the assets of the Association and must pay or make provision for all the liabilities of the Association.
 - b. The Committee must apply any remaining property or money as directed by the appropriate higher authority:
 - (1) Directly for the Object;
 - (2) By transfer to any charity or charities for purposes the same or similar to the Association;
 - (3) In such other manner as the President may approve in writing in advance.
- 24. In no circumstances shall the net assets of the Association be paid to or distributed among the members of the Association.

AMENDMENTS

- 25. Any provisions contained in Part 1 of this constitution may be amended provided that:
 - a. No amendment may be made that would have the effect of making

the Association cease to be a charity at law.

- b. No amendment may be made to alter Paragraph 4 ('Object') or Paragraphs 13- 14 ('Membership') without the prior written consent of the President.
26. Any resolution to amend a provision of the constitution should be passed by at least two thirds of of the Board of Committee, including the President.
27. A copy of any resolution amending this Constitution must be sent to the President within twenty-one days of it being passed.

Annexes:

- A. Terms of Reference – President**
- B. Terms of Reference – Chairman**
- C. Terms of Reference – Vice-Chair**
- D. Terms of Reference – Treasurer**
- E. Terms of Reference – Newsletter Editor**

ANNEX A TO WCCS OBA CONSTITUTION

TERMS OF REFERENCE: PRESIDENT

1. The Headmaster of Westminster Cathedral Choir School is ex-officio President of the Old Boys' Association. The appointment has full voting rights on the Association Committee. The President is responsible for the overall direction of the Association.
2. In addition to acting in accordance with the Association's Constitution, the specific responsibilities of the President are:
 - a. Advising the Committee of School matters that impact on the Association;
 - b. Appointing the Association Chairman, and approving his nominations for Vice-Chair and Treasurer;
 - c. Issuing Terms of Reference to the Association Chairman;
 - d. As available and necessary, attending routine and extraordinary meetings of the Association Committee;
 - e. Appointing Honorary Members;
 - f. Raising the profile of the Association within the School;
 - g. Acting as a Committee member of the Association in accordance with the Constitution;
 - h. Propose the recipient of the Cardinal Hume Award.

ANNEX B TO WCCS OBA CONSTITUTION

TERMS OF REFERENCE: CHAIRMAN

1. The Chairman is appointed by the President and has full voting rights on the Association Committee. An Alumni with a close relationship with the School will usually best fill the position. The Chairman is responsible to the President for the overall management of the Association.
2. In addition to acting in accordance with the Association's Constitution, the specific responsibilities for the Chairman are:
 - a. Advising the President on matters affecting the long-term direction of the Association;
 - b. Providing the President with nominations for Vice-Chair and Treasurer;
 - c. Issuing Terms of Reference to new Committee members;
 - d. Overseeing the work of the Association Committee members;
 - e. Chairing routine and extraordinary meetings of the Association Committee;
 - f. Providing a Chairman's foreword to the Newsletter;
 - g. Authorising payments up to a value of £200 at his own discretion, but seeking ratification from the Committee at the earliest opportunity;
 - h. Acting as a Committee member of the Association in accordance with the Constitution.

ANNEX C TO WCCS OBA CONSTITUTION

TERMS OF REFERENCE: VICE-CHAIR

1. The Association Vice-Chair is appointed by the Association Chairman and has full voting rights on the Association Committee. The Vice-Chair is responsible to the Association Committee through the Chairman for all aspects of the administration of the Association in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Association's Constitution;
2. In addition to acting in accordance with the Association's Constitution, the specific responsibilities for the Vice-Chair are as follows:
 - a. Managing the recruitment of graduating cohorts from the Choir School into the Association when they leave the School in their final year by liaising with the School Secretary;
 - b. Maintaining the Membership contact database;
 - c. Manage merchandise stock – currently limited to the old boys' tie;
 - d. Maintaining a record of Association Minutes;
 - e. Preparation for the biannual meetings of the Committee;
 - f. Handling routine Association correspondence;
 - g. Raising draft Terms of Reference for issue to newly appointed Committee members and maintaining signed copies of current Terms of Reference on file for audit purposes;
 - h. Authorising payments up to a value of £100 at his/her own discretion, but seeking ratification from the Committee at the earliest opportunity;
 - i. Acting as a Committee member of the Association in accordance with the Constitution;

ANNEX D TO WCCS OBA CONSTITUTION

TERMS OF REFERENCE: ASSOCIATION TREASURER

1. The Association Treasurer is appointed by the Chairman and has full voting rights on the Association Committee. The Treasurer is responsible to the Association Committee through the Chairman for the management of Association books of account, payments and for Association financial planning.
2. In addition to acting in accordance with the Association's Constitution, the specific responsibilities for the Association Treasurer are as follows:
 - a. Management of the Association Bank Account, including payment of bills, paying-in of funds raised and maintenance of the cashbook (as described in the Appendix below);
 - b. Preparation of Association accounts for periodic audits;
 - c. Provision of a Treasurer's report at the close of each financial year, to include a report against the Financial Plan;
 - e. Ensuring the collection of membership fees and managing the transfer of Membership fees for new members into the Association Bank Account by liaising with the School Bursar;
 - f. Authorising payments up to a value of £100 at his discretion, but seeking ratification from the Committee at the earliest opportunity;
 - g. Acting as a Committee member of the Association in accordance with the Constitution.

FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

1. **Introduction.** The Association Treasurer's Terms of Reference set out the general responsibilities of the appointment. The aim of this Appendix is to give detailed guidance for the day-to-day procedures for the management of the account.
2. **Authority.** The Treasurer and Vice-Chair are authorised to make payments up to £100 at their own discretion. Payments over this amount, but not exceeding £200, may be authorised by the Association Chairman but the Committee must approve all other payments collectively. Expenditure decisions made by the Committee are to be recorded appropriately in the record of the appropriate meeting.
3. **Payments and Receipts.** All payments made from Association funds are to be passed through the Treasurer. Copies of invoices against which payments are made are to be retained by the Treasurer on file. All receipts are to be dealt with in a similar fashion.
4. **Membership Fees.** The majority of membership fees will be collected annually from the Choir School. The Vice-Chair will record new members' details, copy to the Treasurer, with a nominal roll.
5. **Merchandise.** All invoices for stock acquisition and monies received for sales are to be passed to the Treasurer for processing in the same manner as all other payments and receipts. The committee member responsible for merchandise will maintain an appropriate stock book and provide the Treasurer with a periodic summary, on request, of stock held.
5. **Cashbook.** The key to maintaining an auditable and well- managed account is a detailed and accurate "cashbook". The Treasurer is to ensure that all transactions are entered into the cashbook and that appropriate supporting documentation is held in the form of invoices and receipts. All entries are then to be annotated with the number of the counterfoil to which they relate.

ANNEX E TO WCCS OBA CONSTITUTION

TERMS OF REFERENCE: NEWSLETTER EDITOR

1. The Newsletter Editor is appointed by the Chairman and has full voting rights on the Association Committee. An Alumni of the Choir School will usually fill the position. The Newsletter Editor is responsible to the Chairman of the Association for all management aspects of the The Newsletter (“The Record”).
2. In addition to acting in accordance with the Association’s Constitution, the specific responsibilities of the Newsletter Editor are as follows:
 - a. Ensuring that the Newsletter chronicles not only the activities of the Alumni, but also other salient School events;
 - b. Ensuring that the Newsletter is financially viable and seek annual budget approval from the Association Committee;
 - c. Oversee the final production of the Newsletter, liaising with printers and ensuring final distribution;
 - d. Attending all Association Committee meetings, presenting reports as required;
 - e. Acting as a Committee member of the Association in accordance with the Constitution;
 - f. Maintenance of the Association content on the Choir School web site through the School’s web manager – currently Mercer Design.