

Shenfield Operatic Society Constitution

October 2017

Aims:

1. The society shall be called Shenfield Operatic Society (SOS).
2. The aim of the Society shall be to foster the love of musical theatre in the district.

Membership:

3. The Society shall consist of:
 - a. **ACTING AND NON-ACTING MEMBERS**, who will:
 - i. Be eligible to vote
 - ii. Pay a joining fee. See paragraph 26a
 - iii. Pay a membership fee. See paragraph 26b
 - iv. Pay a show performance fee if performing on stage. See paragraph 26c
 - b. **HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS**, see APPENDIX A: – A member who has rendered special or long service to the Society, who will:
 - i. Be eligible to vote
 - ii. Be recommended by the Committee to the Society at the A.G.M. and approved by the membership
 - iii. Pay no membership fee
 - c. **PRESIDENT**, who will:
 - i. Be eligible to vote
 - ii. Be elected annually at the A.G.M. by the membership
 - iii. Pay no membership fee; no joining fee will be required at the end of his/her term
 - d. **PATRON**, who will:
 - i. Not be eligible to vote
 - ii. Be elected annually at the A.G.M. by the membership
 - iii. Pay no membership fee
 - e. **HONORARY LIFE VICE PRESIDENTS**, see APPENDIX B:– for truly outstanding support to the Society over many years but NOT currently a member, who will:
 - i. Not be eligible to vote
 - ii. Be nominated at the A.G.M. by the membership
 - iii. Pay no membership fee
 - f. **FRIENDS OF THE SOCIETY**, who will:
 - i. Not be eligible to vote
 - ii. Pay an annual fee to receive advanced notice of Society's performances/events. See paragraph 26d
 - iii. Be able to apply for one free ticket for a show of their choice within a twelve-month period
 - g. **SPECIAL FRIENDS OF THE SOCIETY** – This is for one year, although a friend may be re-elected. Non-members who have made a truly supportive contribution to the Society's work, who will:
 - i. Not be eligible to vote
 - ii. Be recommended by the Committee to the Society at the A.G.M. and be approved by the membership
 - iii. Receive the benefits of Friends of the Society without having to pay for them
4. **Eligibility**
 - a. The minimum age for Acting and Non-Acting membership shall be sixteen. See paragraph 19.
 - b. All members between the ages of sixteen and eighteen will be placed in single-sex dressing rooms and will be accompanied by a person of the same sex who has produced evidence of police clearance

- c. Applications for membership shall be made in the appropriate form and shall be submitted to the Committee for its decision. Acting Members shall be subject to a successful audition within one month of first introduction.
5. If a member's subscription, or any part of it, lapses for more than 2 months, then the person will need to re-apply and pay a further joining fee - although the committee has the power to waive the audition. See paragraph 26.
6. A currently subscribed member is defined as **either**
 - a. a member who has paid the whole year in advance **or**
 - b. has paid consecutive monthly fees continuously since membership, and up to the start of the current month

Committee & Structure:

7. The prime function of the Committee is to pursue the aims of the Society whilst seeking to maintain effective fiscal control. To that end:
 - a. The Committee will undertake to set the membership levels such that the fees received from the members will reflect the general overheads as reported in the annual accounts.
 - b. The Committee will decide on show/performance selection and select the audition panel for each.
8. Minutes shall be taken of all Committee proceedings – however any minutes of sub-committees and working groups shall be confidential to the Committee.
9. Unless specifically excluded by minutes, all the decisions reached and actions taken by the Committee are deemed to have been unanimously agreed on by the full membership of the Committee.
10. All Members of the Committee shall be voting members of the Society and be elected annually at the A.G.M.
11. The Committee has the power to create sub-committee working groups from members and non-members alike; however any proposals made in these groups has to be put before the Committee for ratification.
12. The management of the Society shall be vested in a Committee of 12, to be elected at the Annual General Meeting comprising:
 - a. Chairman
 - b. Vice–Chairman
 - c. Secretary
 - d. Treasurer
 - e. Production Controller
 - f. Membership Secretary
 - g. Social Secretary
 - h. Printing Manager
 - i. Promotions Manager
 - j. Up to three members of the Society
13. Six members of the Committee, one of whom must be the Chairman, Vice–Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer, shall form a quorum.
14. The Committee shall have the power, and duty, to fill any vacancy that may occur during its year of office. It shall have the power to co–opt onto the Committee any voting Society Member it so desires or reassign roles within the Committee. Any such rearrangements should be communicated to the membership as soon as practicable.
15. The Committee shall have the power to decide any questions arising out of these Rules, other matters connected with the Society, and make and maintain and publish all necessary orders, regulations and by–laws in connection herewith.

16. The Committee has the power to form a disciplinary sub-committee to investigate members' behaviour.
- This Committee may strip any person of membership (including life members) for any behaviour that may bring the Society into disrepute
 - This sub-committee will have the power to recommend any sanction it sees fit
 - In any case, the member will have a chance to put forward, in person, mitigating circumstances to a meeting of the disciplinary sub-committee.

Performance:

17. If any Member's absence from rehearsals causes detriment to a production, the matter shall be referred to the Committee and necessary action shall be taken - up to the cancellation of membership, necessitating reapplying in the future. See paragraph 26.
18. No-one may audition for a part in any of the Society's productions unless:-
- They are already currently subscribed members - see paragraph 3a **or**
 - They have been asked to audition by the Committee - see paragraph 19.
 - In case of NEW or LAPSED members: they must have paid a JOINING FEE - see paragraph 26a, which is payable before any audition or rehearsals are attended.

19. Guest Performers:

- may be asked to audition for a part in a production if it is NOT possible to cast from the membership but ONLY with the consent of at least a quorum of the Committee;
- may be asked by the Committee to join the chorus without audition, but on recommendation, if it is felt that a production could not realistically be cast from the membership alone;
- pay no performance fees, joining fees or membership fees;
- shall be encouraged, by the Membership Secretary, to join the Society as paid up members if they wish to take part in subsequent Society productions;
- any guest performer under sixteen will be chaperoned at all times as required by law.

General Meetings:

20. The Society's accounts shall be prepared annually and made up to 31st July unless otherwise determined by the Committee. The independently examined accounts shall be presented to the Society at the A.G.M. for approval having been made available at least 7 days in advance.
21. The AGM of the Society shall be held on a date to be fixed in September, or as soon as practical thereafter. The reports of the Committee shall be presented (Chairman's, Secretary's and Treasurer's;) the officers and other members of the Committee elected - the previous year's Chairman will conduct the elections even if s/he is not standing; and all general business transacted by the newly elected committee. **Note:** No business should be conducted at the AGM unless it has been circulated to members beforehand, although points of information or requests for action to the Committee can be made at the end of the meeting.
22. No alterations or additions to these Rules shall be made, except at a General Meeting nor unless 14 days prior to such a meeting, a written notice of the proposed alterations or additions has been given to the Secretary. The Secretary shall then notify members no fewer than 7 days prior to the meeting, by distributing a schedule of proposals.
23. The Committee may at any time, for any special purpose, call an Extraordinary General Meeting, subject to the Membership receiving 14 days notice in writing of the date for the meeting and the purpose for which the meeting is required.
24. The Committee shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting, forthwith upon the requisition in writing of not less than twenty voting members, subject to the membership receiving 14 days notice in writing of the date for the meeting and the purpose for which the meeting is required.

25. Twenty voting members, or at least 50% of the voting membership, whichever is the smaller, personally present - or represented by proxy - at any General Meeting shall form a quorum. Minutes shall be taken of all proceedings at General Meetings.

Fees & Finance:

26. The Society receives fees as follows, see **APPENDIX C:**

- a. **Joining fee.** For a new or rejoining member:
 - i. The joining fee is set at three times the monthly subscription.
 - ii. In exceptional circumstances the committee has the power to waive the joining fee
 - iii. The joining fee is payable before auditions or rehearsals are attended
 - iv. People in full time education are eligible a discounted joining fee
- b. **Membership fee.** This is a monthly charge for being a member
 - i. If paying annually the fee charged is twelve times the current monthly charge.
 - ii. If paying by standing order the payment date should be the 1st of each month
 - iii. It is the responsibility of the member to change the standing order when the rate set by the committee changes.
 - iv. People in full time education are eligible a discounted membership fee
- c. **Performance fee.** This is the charge for acting members of a production.
 - i. Performance fees for each production shall be determined by the Committee.
 - ii. The performance fee should be fully paid by the Dress Rehearsal.
- d. **Friends.** The fee for being a friend
 - i. This fee is set from time to time by the committee

27. The committee has the power to offer further discounts to special categories of people for either the joining or membership fee.

28. On resignation or expulsion from the society no fees or subscriptions are refunded.

Appendices:

These are for information only and shall not be deemed to form part of the Constitution.

APPENDIX A:

Honorary Life Members

The following people have been granted the award of Honorary Life Membership:

Mrs M Borthwick-Jones
Mr B Davies
Mr H Hobbs
Mr J Morris
Mrs J Scott

Mr L Cooper
Mrs K Davies
Mrs G Godbold
Mrs C Reader
Mrs C Thomas

Mrs M Coston
Mrs A Harris
Mrs E Morris
Mr P Reader
Mr D Thomas

APPENDIX B:

Honorary Life Vice - Presidents

The following people have been granted the award of Honorary Life Vice - President:

Mr N A Brown JP
Mr M Dodwell
Mr J Hawkins
Mrs P Jones
Mr R Scott
Mr V Wade

Mr I Cox
Mr C Godbold
Mrs M Jones
Mr J Patchick
Mrs A Veale
Mrs S Witney

Mrs J Dodwell
Miss L Hall
Mr J Jones
Mrs M Patchick
Mr R Veale JP
Mr T White

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APPENDIX C:

Current Fee Levels: 2017 -18

Joining Fee	£30-00
Membership Fee	£10-00 per month
Friends' Fee	£30-00
Full-time Student Membership Discount	50%
Full-time Student Joining Discount	50%