

**1] Commitment to safeguarding:**

Minehead and District Choral Society [The Society] believes that a child, young person or adult at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk and are committed to safeguarding their well-being and protecting them from harm. This is a primary consideration when Minehead and District Choral Society undertakes any activity, event or project. This policy encompasses:-

- [a] Members of the group who attend rehearsals and concerts
- [b] Relatives and friends of members who attend rehearsals and concerts
- [c] Audience members at public concerts

2] The policy **recognises vulnerable people** as :

- a] Children up to the age of 16 and young people aged 16-18  
[The Society does not accept members under the age of 16]
- b] Adults aged over 18 at risk including those defined as vulnerable by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; this might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, [chronic or otherwise], an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity.

3] The stamina, disciplines and skills required for choral singing [rehearsals and public performances] make it unlikely that membership of the Society would be appropriate or attractive to an adult with **serious** learning or physical disability, or **serious** physical or mental illness [including an addiction to alcohol or drugs]. Whilst the Society would welcome new members who may be vulnerable, it is clear that to achieve membership they would also have to possess physical and mental attributes necessary to maintain the traditional standards of a choir performing serious music at public performances. This would include the ability to understand and follow the directions of the Musical Director.

4] The Society will welcome a new member who is known to be vulnerable if they are able to cope with the rigours of Choral singing, but may require that the member is always accompanied by a responsible adult. If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in Society activities without a guardian, written permission including emergency contact details of any relevant pick-up arrangements should be obtained from parents/guardians if appropriate, and before the activity takes place.

5] The 'Named persons' for the purposes of this Policy will be the current holders of the post of Musical Director and the Chairman. Safeguarding Lead [Autumn 2023] will be Musical Director Marcus Capel who is up to date trained, and DBS checked.

6] A vulnerable person is not to be left alone with an adult, unless that adult is DBS checked and carrying out regulated activity.

7] All members of the Society bear a responsibility to react if abuse of a vulnerable person is suspected, which could include the possibility of an established member becoming vulnerable. If possible report to a Named Person but if necessary take direct action as in clauses 7a & 7b :-

- a] If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or in need of medical attention then the police and/or ambulance services will be summoned.

- b] If an individual is suspected of abusive behaviour at the time, then the individual will be removed from contact with the vulnerable person as quickly and as quietly as possible. If neither [7a] nor [7b] are deemed necessary by those present, then :-
- c] The matter will be referred to a Named Person who will make a written note of the circumstances and will then raise the issue with the Trustees. Any trustee personally accused or suspected of abuse would be excluded.
- d] If it is considered necessary to take the issue further then the following procedures would be available, to be carried out as soon as is operationally possible and ideally within a fortnight of the event in question.
  - [i] Consider **internal mediation** for less serious incidents, inviting all involved parties to a meeting including a Named Person, and allowing them to bring a supporter or representative. Written statements will be encouraged and a record kept of the meeting. Once meetings have taken place the committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing as soon as possible. If necessary, escalate the incident to the relevant authority or carry out further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
  - [ii] Request an **assessment by the local authority** social care department about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection, The relevant authority would be Somerset Council Adult Social Care, eMail adults@somerset.gov.uk, telephone 0300 123 2224
  - iii] Consider **approaching the police** if the abuse is seen to be criminal in nature,
  - [iv] **Cooperate fully** with any external body carrying out an investigation.
  - [v] Inform and cooperate with the **parents or guardians** of the vulnerable person regarding the suspected abuse,

8] **Conclusions**

If abuse is found to have taken place any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests the Society. Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the Society constitution.

This safeguarding policy was approved by a Quorate EGM of Society Members on \_\_\_\_\_ at which time the following were the Trustees of the Society :-

David Beach [Chairman] Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Penny Brown [Secretary] Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Jennie Norris [Treasurer] Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Audrey Beach [Librarian] Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Tina Salter [Minutes Secretary] Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Jill Strong [Trustee without portfolio] Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Val Stuart [Making Music Representative] Signed \_\_\_\_\_