

Portobello Orchestra – rules

The Constitution envisages the orchestra having “rules or bye-laws” for the conduct of its business. We are a small organisation with limited objects and the Committee wish to keep formal rules to a minimum. The purpose of this document is to supplement the Constitution in a few key areas – principally membership and the operation of the Committee – commonly dealt with in rules.

Objects (Article 2 of the Constitution)

The main means by which we advance the objects is performing at least three public concerts a year. The opportunity that the orchestra offers to amateur players to play in an orchestra also contributes to the objects.

Membership (Articles 3 and 4)

This section sets out how we define and record the “Members” of the orchestra for the purposes of the Constitution, and our expectations of Members. Those who wish to play regularly with the orchestra will normally be expected to become Members.

Conditions for membership

Membership is open to any individual over 18, subject to the section concerned not being oversubscribed. There are no auditions for membership.

Members must pay a termly subscription (unless excused) in order to retain their membership. Subscriptions are due at the beginning of each term and should in any event be paid by the end of the fourth week.

A Member who is unable to participate in a particular term should inform the Membership Secretary. Such a Member need not pay a subscription for that term. A Member who does not pay a subscription for three consecutive terms will cease to be a Member, but may re-apply for membership when they are again able to participate.

Becoming a Member

Subject to vacancies being available in the section in question, prospective new Members may “try out” the orchestra by attending one or more rehearsals. A person who wishes to continue to attend beyond four rehearsals will normally be invited to become a Member. Individuals who join part-way through a term may pay a reduced subscription for that term.

Invitations to become a Member should normally be issued by the Membership Secretary, who should consult the relevant section leader and other members of the Committee as appropriate.

New Members should complete a membership details form and be given the “Notes for New Members”.

Register of Members

The Committee will confirm the list of Members at or near the beginning of each term. This list constitutes the register required by Article 3(4) of the Constitution.

A hard copy of the register is available for members to consult (Article 3.(4)). It is not made available in electronic form.

Former Members

Members who no longer wish (or are no longer able) to play in the orchestra should let the Membership Secretary know so that the membership records can be amended accordingly.

Former Members who would like to remain on the orchestra mailing list should let the Membership Secretary know. Former Members are welcome to participate in events (eg away weekends or tours), subject to space being available.

Other players

The Committee may agree to the participation of guest players – that is, more advanced players who are happy to assist the orchestra by coming to some rehearsals and playing in concerts when available. Guest players are not “Members” of the orchestra and do not pay a subscription.

Waiting lists

Where there are no vacancies in the section concerned at the time of an enquiry from a prospective Member, the enquirer's details will be kept on file for a year with a view to our contacting them should a vacancy or deputising opportunity arise within that period.

Subscription rates

Subscription rates are set annually by the Committee, but may be varied in-year if necessary. Students and others who feel unable to pay the full rate may request a concession. The concessionary rate will normally be 50% of the full rate, but the Committee may agree to other rates if appropriate. Brass and percussion players who are required for only a small part of a particular term's repertoire may request a concession for that term.

Conduct

The Committee do not consider it necessary to set out a detailed code of conduct for Members. The orchestra is committed to working in a way that provides a safe environment for, and safeguards the well-being of, all those with whom, or for whom, we play. It should go without saying that Members will act responsibly and treat others with courtesy and sensitivity at all times. We have Members from many different walks of life and backgrounds, and of differing capabilities, and a diverse audience. Any kind of discrimination or abuse is wholly unacceptable. Any concerns should be raised with a member of the Committee.

Members are asked, in particular:

- to attend rehearsals regularly, be punctual and come prepared, having practised the pieces to be rehearsed. Rehearsal schedules are published on the website at the beginning of each term and are regularly updated;
- to assist with setting up prior to rehearsals, interval refreshments, and tidying up afterwards;
- to help generate a good audience for our concerts by promoting and selling tickets;
- to assist with the arrangements for concert days, including transporting equipment between venues (both before and after the concert), setting up the venue, providing refreshments and post-concert tidying up;
- to attend and participate in the Annual General Meeting.

Committee and officers (Articles 5-11)

Committee membership

The Committee must have a minimum of three members. While the Constitution specifies no maximum, we would not expect there to be more than 10 members. The members of the Committee are the Trustees and are elected by the Members at the AGM on a three-yearly cycle (ie at each AGM one third of the trustees are required to retire, but those retiring are eligible for re-election, subject to the next point).

No individual may serve as a Trustee for more than 5 consecutive 3-year terms.

If there are vacancies on the Committee, the Committee may co-opt any willing Member of the orchestra as a Trustee until the next AGM, at which the Trustee (if they wish to continue to serve) shall stand for election.

The conductor and leader are not members of the Committee but may attend Committee meetings (except when their own position is being discussed). The Committee may invite others to attend all or part of any meeting if appropriate.

Officers

The Constitution requires the orchestra to have a Chair, a Treasurer and a Secretary. The Committee may appoint committee members to other specific roles if appropriate. The Chair shall be elected annually by the Members of the orchestra at the AGM. Appointments to Treasurer, Secretary and any other officer positions deemed necessary will be made by the Committee.

Meetings and procedure

The Committee must hold a minimum of 2 meetings each year. One of these will be held in advance of the AGM to approve the annual report and accounts and any other business to be put to the AGM. In practice the Committee will meet at least three times a year, and further meetings are convened as necessary, for example in relation to concert organisation.

Subject to the Constitution (in particular Article 10), the Committee will determine its own procedure for meetings as necessary. It will aim to reach decisions by consensus as far as possible. The Chair of the meeting will put a matter to the vote if necessary, and has a casting vote in the event of a tie.

The Committee may conduct day to day business by email where appropriate but no matter which cannot be agreed by consensus may be decided by email (ie matters may not be put to a formal vote other than at a meeting). Any Trustee may request that a matter raised by email should be dealt with instead at a meeting. A matter will be regarded as agreed by email only if all the Trustees have confirmed their assent by email.

Meetings and decisions will be minuted by the Secretary or other person appointed by the Committee. Draft minutes, with action points, should be sent to Committee members within 14 days of the meeting and any agreed amendments appropriately recorded when confirming the minutes at the next meeting.

The Committee may adopt policies and procedures as necessary in relation to any aspect of its or the orchestra's activities.

Finance and accounts (Articles 13 and 17)

The Committee is responsible for agreeing fees, setting subscription rates and ticket prices and seeking such other sources of funding as are appropriate to the furtherance of the orchestra's objectives.

The orchestra aims to break even, taking one year with another, and to cover the ongoing costs of rehearsals, administration, and the presentation of a minimum of three concerts a year, from a combination of members' subscriptions and ticket sales.

The orchestra aims to maintain a working reserve equivalent to approximately six months average expenditure in order to accommodate short term fluctuations in subscription income and variations in concert expenditure – eg soloists' fees, hire charges and PRS fees, and additional players for more ambitious programmes.

Payments are required to be authorised by two officers. Procedures and controls are documented separately.

The orchestra prepares accounts on the simplified cash-based “receipts and payments” basis available to smaller charities.

The Treasurer is responsible for preparing the annual accounts and submitting them to the Committee for approval, arranging scrutiny by an independent person, and presenting them to the AGM.

General meetings (Articles 14-16)

The AGM will normally be held alongside a rehearsal, no later than the end of February.

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