

SOUTHERN EARLY MUSIC FORUM

Rules and regulations

This handbook for members supports the Constitution adopted at the AGM of The Southern Early Music Forum (“SEMF”) on 4th September 2021. Numbered cross-references are to the relevant clauses in the Constitution as adopted at that meeting.

1. Objects, purpose and coverage

1.1 Clause 2 of the Constitution defines SEMF’s objects. In furtherance of these objects we focus particularly on the practice and appreciation of 'Early Music', for example by:

- a) co-ordinating, organising, sponsoring or promoting workshops or other relevant activities or events such as seminars, lectures, courses, concerts, recitals, broadcasts, or recordings
- b) disseminating information relating to early music to SEMF members and others, including through emails, newsletters, and via social media
- c) printing, publishing and distributing books, pamphlets and leaflets relating to early music.

1.2 As one of the nine regional Early Music Fora in the UK, SEMF’s normal area of operation (for live events) is the south and south east of England, in particular Hampshire, Surrey, West Sussex, the Isle of Wight, East Sussex and Kent. This list may be amended at the discretion of the Committee.

2. Membership and subscriptions

2.1 Clause 3 of the Constitution describes the standard arrangements for membership of a musical charity like SEMF; these give the Trustees (ie the Committee¹) the power to approve an application for membership. However, for SEMF, any individual with an interest in early music may join; no audition is required.

2.2 Clause 3(2)a of the Constitution requires the Trustees to “act reasonably and properly” in relation to membership applications; this means (among other things) that no individual can be excluded from membership of SEMF, and no adult barred from any official capacity on the committee, on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (*known collectively as protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010*).

2.3 The Membership Secretary maintains a list of the names and contact details of members. This is sent to all members about once a year to help them arrange informal music-making with each other. However, any member may ask for their name and/or some or all of their contact details to be omitted from this circulated list.

2.4 In accordance with charity law, it is open to any member to ask to see the full list of members, but to ensure compliance with data protection rules, only names will be provided in response to any such request.

2.5 Subscriptions to SEMF are payable annually; payment by standing order is encouraged. The standard rate of subscription is subject to approval by a simple majority of those voting at a SEMF Annual (or Special) General Meeting. The Committee may, at its discretion, set introductory rates and discounted rates for specified classes of member (e.g. age 25 and under or age 65 and over) or for types of payment e.g. paying by standing order.

¹ In accordance with charity law, all committee members are trustees and all trustees are committee members.

2.6 The Committee may, at its discretion, accept applications from a Body Corporate or unincorporated Society to become Affiliates of SEMF. Affiliate organisations are not members of SEMF and do not have voting rights.

3. Termination of membership

Clause 4 of the Constitution describes the situations in which membership of SEMF is terminated. Clause 4(3) means that any member whose subscription payment is more than six months overdue will cease to be a member and will not receive newsletters or other updates from SEMF. We will aim to send them at least one reminder before the six months elapse. After the 6 months has elapsed, lapsed members will be sent one more newsletter together with a final reminder.

4. Officers and Trustees

The general requirements for Officers and Trustees are set out in clause 5 of the Constitution. SEMF has up to 5 officers: the chair, the Treasurer, and the Secretary, the editor of the Newsletter, and the Assistant Treasurer, if one is appointed.

5. Appointment of Trustees²

(see clause 7 of the Constitution)

5.1 SEMF Annual General Meetings elect both the officers and up to 9 other committee members.

5.2 At each Annual General Meeting³ a third of the members of the Committee, including at least one officer, shall retire and be eligible for re-election for up to a total of four three-year terms.

5.3 Where nominations are required in writing, this can include electronic communications.

6. Meetings and proceedings of the committee

(See clause 10 of the Constitution)

6.1 The Secretary is responsible for keeping minutes of the proceedings of SEMF and of the Committee. The minutes will become the formal record of the meeting once they have been agreed by the Chair of that meeting (or, if the Chair is unavailable, the Committee member who chairs its next quorate meeting).

6.2 In the interests of sustainability, the Committee will carry out as much business as possible by electronic means. In particular, and subject to the agreement of the Committee, Committee meetings may be held by video-conferencing or other suitable electronic means in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants. Any Committee member participating in such a meeting shall qualify as being present at the meeting. Meetings held by electronic means must comply with rules for meetings, including chairing and the taking of minutes.

7. Finance

(See clause 13 of the Constitution)

7.1 The Committee may, at its discretion, authorise the Treasurer (and the Assistant Treasurer, if one is appointed) to manage SEMF's bank account on-line in accordance with our bank's requirements. On-line payments must be authorised (normally by email) by two

² ie Committee members and Officers

³ Starting with the next AGM after the one at which the new Constitution is adopted

officers before they are made, and a record of such authorisations must be kept by the Treasurer for inspection by the Accounts Examiner.

7.2 SEMF may receive donations, grants in aid and financial guarantees; tickets for any events which it promotes may be offered for sale to non-members.

7.3 SEMF may charge members for admission to events which it organises, but will endeavour, to the extent allowed by the requirements of the Charity Commission (and, if relevant, HMRC) to charge members (and members of other Early Music Fora who offer reciprocal arrangements for SEMF members) less than non-members.

8. Annual General Meeting

(See clause 14 of the Constitution)

8.1 Subject to the agreement of the Committee, the AGM may be held by video-conferencing or other suitable electronic means in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants. Any member participating in such a meeting shall qualify as being present at the meeting. Meetings held by electronic means must comply with rules for meetings, including chairing and the taking of minutes.

8.2 The AGM will normally be chaired by the Chair of SEMF. In his/her absence the Secretary will chair the meeting; in the absence of both Chair and Secretary, the Committee members present will elect a Chair from among their number.

8.3 Business to be included at the meeting will include the election of officers and committee members (in accordance with section 5 above), the Committee's annual report, together with the accounts for the preceding SEMF financial year (independently examined in accordance with Charity Commission requirements), and the appointment of the Accounts Examiner.

8.4 Arrangements for voting at an AGM will depend on whether the meeting is a physical meeting (in which case voting would normally be via a show of hands) or is held by electronic means (eg video-conferencing software often includes a "poll" facility). The Committee will agree suitable voting arrangements beforehand; the Chair of the meeting will explain these when the meeting begins. In the case of an equality of votes the Chair of the meeting will have a second or casting vote.

8.5 The AGM may also approve the appointment of an Honorary President and up to two Honorary Vice Presidents. These positions are wholly honorary; those appointed will not be members of the Committee or Officers of SEMF. Appointments as Honorary President or Honorary Vice President will be annually renewable and will be subject to vote at the AGM.

9. Special General Meetings

(see clause 15 of the Constitution)

9.1 Clause 15 of the Constitution sets out the basis on which SEMF may hold a Special General Meeting (previously called an EGM).

9.2 Subject to the agreement of the Committee, any SGM may be held by video-conferencing or other suitable electronic means in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants. Any member participating in such a meeting shall qualify as being present at the meeting. Meetings held by electronic means must comply with rules for meetings, including chairing and the taking of minutes.

9.3 A Special General Meeting will normally be chaired by the Chair of SEMF. In his/her absence the Secretary will chair the meeting; in the absence of both Chair and Secretary, the Committee members present will elect a Chair from among their number.

9.4 Arrangements for voting at an SGM will depend on whether the meeting is a physical meeting (in which case voting would normally be via a show of hands) or is held by electronic means (eg video-conferencing software often includes a “poll” facility). The Committee will agree suitable voting arrangements beforehand; the Chair of the meeting will explain these when the meeting begins. In the case of an equality of votes the Chair of the meeting will have a second or casting vote.

10. Procedure for publication, review and amendment of this document

10.1 These Rules and Regulations will be circulated to members with the newsletter and published on the SEMF website.

10.2 The SEMF Committee will review this document at regular intervals, and at least every 3 years. Any changes must remain consistent with the SEMF Constitution. Changes agreed by the Committee will be communicated to members as soon as possible thereafter; the revised document will be subject to confirmation by majority vote at the following AGM.