

Wrablers Constitution as at February 2015

Object

Wrablers is a small chamber choir composed of a core of no more than 16 people, meeting weekly or fortnightly, to sing close harmony songs. To allow members to take occasional breaks, the larger group may consist of up to 20 members to cover absences. The group will be self-selecting and each member will be comfortable holding a part alone, and occasionally performing solo or as a lead singer with backing singers.

1. Membership

The group is intended for experienced harmony singers who want to have the opportunity to sing close harmony in small groups. Singers must be able to hold a part alone, (ie in a four-part harmony sing, they must be able to sing, for example, the alto part alone).

1.1. Learning and Practice

- a. Members undertake to take responsibility for their own learning and practice. This means that they will attend rehearsals having learned material at home to the best of their ability. Rehearsals are for putting parts together, blending and working on dynamics, not for learning or practising parts.
- b. Members will maintain their own portfolio of song sheets/lyrics/recordings from which to learn.

1.2. Attendance

Members undertake to attend rehearsals on a regular basis, and to arrive promptly wherever possible. Members who are unable to attend regularly may be asked to leave to make room for a new member who is able to attend more often.

A register of attendance will be kept by recording attendance on rehearsal minutes.

1.3. Breaks

Members may from time to time take breaks from Wrablers. Breaks of up to six months (or one term) may be taken as needed, but longer breaks need to be reviewed by the group as a whole.

2. Decision Making

Decisions are made democratically by a quorum of members. A quorum is defined as three quarters of the current membership. To be carried a vote must have 2/3 plus one of the quorum in favour.

3. New Member Recruitment

Wrablers will recruit only where new singers are agreed to be needed for vocal balance's sake. New members must be able to conform to membership requirements as set out above. As the choir matures, other methods of acquiring new members will need to be explored.

New members will be invited to attend a rehearsal and join us in the pub afterwards (we want people who are good to sing with AND good to socialise with). In advance of their first rehearsal,

Wrablers Constitution as at February 2015

potential members will be sent a part to suit their voice for a song which is part of our repertoire and asked to sing it with three others on the night.

New recruits will have a probation period of 6 rehearsals (usually 12 weeks, unless we are meeting more often just before a performance) in which to:

- a) make their minds up about us and whether they want to join us
- b) demonstrate they meet the recruitment criteria

At the end of this period, there will be a meeting of all members without the new recruit. In this meeting, the members will assess the new recruit against the Person Specification (Appendix A) currently in use, and may decide:

- a) by majority to extend their probation period
- b) by majority to terminate the new recruit's membership
- c) unanimously to terminate the probation period and confirm the new recruit's full membership

The new recruit's probation period will continue day-to-day until such a decision is made.

4. Resignation

If members resign, they must reapply for membership in the way described in section 3. *New Member Recruitment* above.

5. Management

It is proposed that the group be run as a collective, with decisions being made on a consensus-driven and egalitarian basis. (Although group management will be kept to a minimum and singing to a maximum).

A small sub group of members (perhaps on a rotating basis) will undertake the admin and management roles necessary to ensure the smooth running of the choir.

A list of regular tasks is available with members allocated to each task. We will review this list of tasks at each AGM and make changes as necessary.

The role of chair for rehearsals will rotate amongst the Wrablers, a schedule for which will be available on the website.

The choir has a website for the sharing of MP3s and other teaching materials at www.wrablers.co.uk/members. This site is password protected and will not be available to anyone who is not a member of Wrablers. Any member may edit this website, but its contents are not to be shared with non-Wrablers.

A public-facing website is located at www.wrablers.co.uk. This is to be used for publicity purposes, e.g. recruiting new members and to showcase our work to potential bookers. This is currently free as it runs as part of one of Wendy's existing sites.

Wrablers Constitution as at February 2015

6. Repertoire

The group will undertake to sing a good eclectic mix of songs drawn from many different musical traditions, including, but not restricted to, jazz, folk, Celtic, E European, gospel, African. On occasion, the group may choose to perform accompanied pieces, but in the main the repertoire will be accappella.

Members are actively encouraged to offer songs for the repertoire and to undertake to provide teaching materials for members to learn from. This is intended to

- a) enrich the repertoire
- b) develop members' skills in sourcing suitable repertoire
- c) develop confidence
- d) share the responsibility for repertoire
- e) allow members to share songs they love and ensure something for everyone in the repertoire.

Religious songs are not forbidden, but the repertoire will never consist of mainly, or only, religious songs at any given time.

Wrablers will aim to learn a new repertoire of about 10 songs a term. As well as this, a core repertoire of "old favourites" will be kept live by regular revisiting.

7. Rehearsals

It is proposed that Wrablers meet every two weeks, with one-day weekend rehearsals every two to three months. Additionally, a smaller sub-set (or sub-sets) of Wrablers may meet in the "off-weeks" to work on small group songs.

Rehearsals generally last for two hours, including AOB. We have a short break of five minutes in the middle to allow for comfort breaks.

Rehearsals continue throughout the summer. Members who are away or unable to attend for several weeks are expected to catch up on their learning while away.

7.1 Rehearsal Elegance

In order to use our time most efficiently at rehearsals, we will follow the following procedure.

1. Song leaders are responsible for having start notes for their songs, and for giving them at rehearsals
2. Members will arrive knowing their parts (including the name of the part they are on, and who their fellow singers are)
3. Knowing one's part is defined as: knowing the notes (melody) of the part, but not necessarily the words, which can come later
4. We will sing through each of the individual parts when introducing a new song
5. We will practise singing in quartets to improve the blend
6. We will as far as possible get used to singing whilst not standing to others on the same part

Wrablers Constitution as at February 2015

7. If a song is transposed up or down at rehearsal, a new myr file and sheet music will be produced for playback and reading purposes. New MP3s will not normally be produced.
8. Feedback on how the song is going will be done through the song leader, to avoid the general rabble that otherwise ensues.
9. When rehearsing for performances we may wish to use the formation in the illustration below for reference:



8. Feedback

As per the person specification, members of Wrablers should be prepared to offer and receive constructive feedback from other members of the group on various aspects of their membership, such as their contribution, performance skills, blending, and so on.

Feedback will be given in as supportive a way as possible, and where known, in the recipient's preferred format and style.

9. Performances

The group will actively seek performance opportunities. All members are encouraged to look for local opportunities for performance opportunities.

Wrablers will produce at least one, preferably two, major performances a year, to which all members are encouraged to contribute.

Members are also encouraged to actively seek additional performance opportunities. Members may decline to take part in other performances to suit their personal circumstances, but participation in the major performances is required unless there are good reasons not to.

10. Musical Director

Wrablers has no permanent musical director, as the preferred option is to retain control of our repertoire and management, but from time to time we may engage a teacher or tutor to coach us on aspects of our performance.

We will continue to book Wrablers-only workshops with, e.g. Polly Bolton and to find new tutors for similar workshops and we may also attend open workshops and activities with the intention of sharing repertoire and skills with the larger Wrablers group.

Wrablers Constitution as at February 2015

Members are encouraged to investigate possibilities of new teachers and workshops and to suggest them to the group.

11. Costs

Members will pay an annual subscription of £10.00 to cover the purchase of new music and / or musical instruments. This subscription may be reviewed from time to time. Subscriptions are due in January every year.

Mercedes kindly offered to continue to act as Treasurer.

Wrablers Constitution as at February 2015

Appendix A

Wrabler Person Specification

Essential Qualities for Membership

1. Be a competent harmony singer, ie
 - a. Be able to sing in tune
 - b. Be able to hold your part against another
 - c. Be able to blend your voice with the ensemble
2. Put the work in, ie
 - a. Attend rehearsals regularly
 - b. Attend rehearsals on time
 - c. Be responsible for maintaining your own learning materials
 - d. Come to rehearsals having learned your part
 - e. Participate in the tasks required to keep Wrablers active, ie:
 - i. Lead a song occasionally
 - ii. Chair rehearsals
 - iii. Produce minutes

Desirable Qualities for Membership

1. Take part in social and learning events, eg
 - a. Come to the pub after rehearsals
 - b. Come on singing weekends
 - c. Be a nice person
2. Do the other, occasional hard work:
 - a. Arrange gigs
 - b. Produce publicity materials
 - c. Find new repertoire
3. Be able to give and receive feedback in a constructive and supportive way
4. Have a good sense of humour