

Proposed Adoption of Constitution and Updated Rules for the Society of Recorder Players

At the 2019 Conference the Trustees were given the task of creating a working group to look at the Society's rules which was set up with Pamela Flanagan, Jim Grant, Helen Hooker and Moira Usher. We have met several times over the last year and we now present a proposed constitution and revised rules for approval by Conference. We are presenting these documents for the following reasons.

Bringing us in line with other music societies

Most charitable music societies, orchestras, choirs and bands are run with a constitution as their foundation. This constitution is approved by the Charity Commission and broadly outlines the way the charity is run. Such groups also usually have a set of rules and byelaws, which cover in greater detail the everyday running and functions of the charity.

For some reason, lost in the mists of time, the SRP was never set up this way. Our Rules function as our Constitution for the purposes of the Charity Commission. This means that every time we wish to make even a small change to our rules these adjustments have to be approved by both our Conference and the Charity Commission. This makes the process very long winded and slow.

By having a formal Constitution (based heavily upon the Charity Commission's own recommended model for societies such as ours) the Charity Commission would only need to approve this broader outline, which would rarely need to be changed. Alongside this we propose having a set of rules which go into greater detail about the running of the Society. Future changes to these rules would need to be approved by Conference but *not* by the Charity Commission.

A smaller, more nimble Committee

For many years now it has been widely felt that the number of SRP Trustees is too large. With nearly 20 members, getting everyone together at a meeting is all but impossible. The trustee group is quite unwieldy and decision making often takes longer than would be ideal. Another downside of having a large group of trustees is its cost to the Society. By its very nature a large group will cost more in travel expenses for meetings than a small one, and a large meeting room is required too.

With our proposed Constitution and revised Rules the trustees would consist of just four officers and five ordinary members, allowing them to be more cost effective and nimbler in their decision making.

Encouraging fresh trustees

Under the current rules, it has become all too easy for trustees to return to their posts year after year, resulting in some inevitable stagnation. The proposed rules would allow trustees to serve just two terms before they have to stand down. This would allow for a greater turnover bringing fresh ideas to the table. It would of course bring the need to encourage more SRP members to consider becoming trustees but members may do so more willingly if they feel they won't be stuck with the job for decades!

Urgency to update rules with Charity Commission

We updated the rules last in 2015, but for one reason or another the set currently approved by the Charity Commission is our 2009 Rules. It is not important at this stage why this error occurred, but it does add some urgency to our current proposal.

If Conference is willing to approve the Constitution we can submit it to the Charity Commission and then be confident we have the necessary documents in place to run a Society fit for the 21st century.

The Rules working party therefore recommend these documents to Conference delegates for approval.