WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Statement of Purpose

1. The Rowland Singers Choral Society is a community choir based in West Sussex and is a *member of the National Association of Choirs*. The Choir comprises mainly adults but does on occasion have members who are under 18 years of age. The **Organisation**, (**we**, **our** or **us**) is committed to preventing and responding to risks of harm to and promoting the welfare of all children and adults at risk that we work with (i.e. as The Rowland Singers Choral Society's members). These individuals are referred to as the '**Beneficiaries**' of this Whistleblowing Policy.

2. We recognise the importance of this commitment to safety and welfare and, further, are committed to safeguarding all Beneficiaries without discrimination due to an individual's age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity leave status, marriage or civil partnership status, or sexual orientation.

3. The Rowland Singers Choral Society is a registered charity and has implemented this Whistleblowing Policy which will be reviewed annually, to meet its Charity status obligations. It is regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales

Legal Framework

4. The aim of this Policy is to help the Beneficiaries to raise any serious concerns they have about any other Beneficiaries or the Musical Director with confidence and without worrying that they may be victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

5. The Policy is drawn up in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which provides employees (in this instance Beneficiaries) who raise legitimate concerns (whistleblow) about specific matters within their organisation. Since the 25th June 2013 there have been some legal changes to what constitutes a qualifying disclosure. (Prior to June 2013 qualifying disclosures must have been made 'in good faith' when disclosed but not necessarily in the 'Public Interest'. Since June 2013, disclosures do not have to be made 'in good faith' but must be made in the 'Public Interest'.

6. This Policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as the following:-

- A criminal Offence.
- A failure to comply with any legal obligation.
- A failure in the protection of a child or adult at risk (see also the Safeguarding Policy).
- A miscarriage of justice.
- A health and safety risk to an individual.
- An act that may be deemed as radicalisation or a threat to national security.
- Abuse of authority.
- Unauthorised use of the Rowland Singers Funds.
- Possible fraud or corruption.
- Damage to the environment, or
- Concealment of any of the above.

7. It is not necessary for the individuals who raise the concern to prove the wrongdoing but they must have reasonable belief that one of the above has been or is likely to be committed the Public Disclosure Act has the following rules for making a protected disclosure:-

- You must believe it to be substantially true.
- You must not act maliciously or make false accusations.
- You must not seek any personal gain.

How to raise a concern:-

8. If the concern relates to a safeguarding matter then the processes within the Rowland Singers Safeguarding Policy should be followed *(add link to Policy on Website).*

- If the concern is a Whistleblowing one, then the Choir's Whistleblowing Officer, Ron Turner or Deputy, Rosemary Terry, should be contacted as soon as possible *(contact details).* If the concern relates to the Whistleblowing Officer or Deputy, then the concern should be raised with another Trustee *(see list of Trustees below).*
- Concern(s) should be raised in writing if possible, giving details of the background and history of the concern(s), giving names, dates and places where possible and explaining the reasons for the concerns. (Link to Whistleblowing Incident/Concern Form ....)
- Beneficiaries raising a concern under, and in accordance with this Policy will suffer no detriment from doing so (see below).
- Any disclosure of a concern will be treated seriously and dealt with in a consistent, thorough and confidential manner.

Protecting the Individual raising the Concern:-

9. If a Beneficiary raises a concern which they believe to be true, the Rowland Singers Choral Society, as a Charity will take appropriate action to protect the Beneficiary from any harassment, victimisation or bullying.

10. The matter will be treated confidentially if requested by the Beneficiary and their name will not be revealed without their permission unless it is a legal requirement. If the concern cannot be resolved without revealing the Beneficiary's identity, the Whistleblowing Officer will discuss with the individual, whether and how to proceed.

11. Concerns which are raised anonymously are far more difficult to deal with and tend to be less effective. The Whistlblowing Officer will take the following into account when considering whether or not to consider the concern raised:-

- the seriousness of the matter,
- whether the concern is believable,
- whether an investigation can be carried out based on the information received.

How the Rowland Singers Choral Society will deal with the Concern

12. How the concern is dealt with will depend on what it involves. It is highly likely that more information and/or an investigation will be required. The concern may be investigated by the Rowland Singers Whistleblowing Officer, the Trustees or may be referred to an external agency

e.g. the Police, Adults or Children's Social Care Services, an external auditor or an independent investigator.

13. If the concern is of a serious nature that has resulted in a criminal investigation, it may be necessary for the Beneficiary to give evidence in any proceedings.

14. The Rowland Singers Whistleblowing Officer or Trustees will give the Beneficiary feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation wherever possible.

15. If the concerns raised are not confirmed by any investigation, the matter will be closed. The Beneficiary will not be treated or regarded any differently for raising the concern and their confidentiality will continue to be protected.

ROWLAND SINGERS CONTACT DETAILS

Whistleblowing Officer – Ron Turner - turner.ronteresa@gmail.com; 07807 582450

Deputy Whistleblowing Officer - Rosemary Terry .....

TRUSTEES:

Chairman – Ron Turner - turner.ronteresa@gmail.com; 07807 582450

Secretary - Patricia Blows - patriciablows@hotmail.co.uk; 07789 040144

Treasurer – Sue McMillan - susan.mcmillan2011@gmail.com; 07747 765828

Vicky Bennison – vicksponge1@hotmail.co.uk; 07879 053446

Geoff Johnson – geoffrey.l.s.johnson@btinternet.com; 07805 081413

Helen King - hmtking55@gmail.com; 07595 350981

Jenny Porter – jennyporter111@gmail.com; 07746 749105

David Shelton - shelton830@btinterne.com; 07736 251202

LOCAL CONTACT DETAILS:-

Sussex Police –

- 999 in case of emergencies
- 101 for general inquiries

West Sussex Children's Social Care Services

- Integrated Front Door (IFD) – 01403 229900 – 09.00 – 17.00
- Out of Hours – Emergency Duty Team – 033 022 26664

West Sussex LADO – 0330 222 6450

West Sussex Adults Social Care Services –

- Contact Point – 01243 642121 – 09.00 – 17.00

- Out of Hours Manager – 033 022 27007

CHARITY COMMISSION – 0300 066 9197; whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk