

# **SOMPTING VILLAGE MORRIS CONSTITUTION - 17 April 2019**

*(amended 6/11/21 ; 3/10/21; 5/10/23: 27/9/23)*

## **1. DEFINITION**

***Please note that items in the Appendix do not form part of the constitution and may be amended without an Annual General Meeting (AGM ) or Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), but do require appropriate committee approval.***

Sompting Village Morris (SVM) is a joint Morris-dance team for men and women, set up to practise and promote Morris Dance and related activities. The team practises throughout the winter months, and dances out regularly during the summer months. Sompting Village Morris also encourages members to take part in Folk Sessions (consisting of singing, music and the spoken word); in Mummers Plays; and in other performance activities.

### **1.1 Teams within the Side**

Men's dance team

Ladies' dance team

Musicians

*Morris Minors (when appropriate) -children's dance side:- membership limited to the relatives of members.*

### **1.2 Dance traditions**

Sompting Village Morris mainly performs dances in the Cotswold style but also perform dances in the Border and North-West styles.

## **2. MEMBERSHIP**

- Paid-up voting members must be aged over 16.
- Members are covered for Public Liability insurance by the Joint Morris Organisation Public Liability Policy

### **2.1 Full members**

- Sompting Village Morris will invite adults to join the side as full members if they perform a Morris activity to a standard that is deemed acceptable by the relevant officers of the side.
- A Full member is a paid-up, voting member, who is a performer in one or more of the teams specified in para.1.1, or a person who has been a performer in the past.

### **2.2 Honorary members**

- An Honorary member may be proposed, seconded and voted by a majority of voting members at an AGM or EGM, in recognition of significant services to Sompting (e.g. collecting money at stands).
- Honorary members do not pay subscriptions. Inactive Honorary members are non-voting.

### **2.3 Associate members**

- Adults can join Sompting Village Morris as Associates (i.e. non-performing members) at the discretion of the committee, and ratified by the majority of the voting members.
- This will normally be permitted when there is a significant association with the side.
- Examples of such associations are, (but are not limited to):-
  - a) being a Legal Carer for a child performing in the Morris Minors (when appropriate) or
  - b) making substantial contributions to activities, events or the running of the side.
- Associate members are paid-up, non-voting members.

## **2.4 New members**

- A new person who comes to practices as a performer will be assessed for competency over a period of several weeks. Unless they are an experienced performer, they will be asked to join the side as an Apprentice rather than as a full member.
- New members become apprentices when they are asked to do so by the Squire/Foreman. This will depend on when they have completed a sufficient attendance-record and gained proficiency in a suitable number of dances, as specified by the Squire/Foreman, and as ratified by the other full members of the team.

## **2.5 Apprentices**

- Apprentices are made up to full members when their attendance record and dance proficiency are deemed suitable by the Squire/Foreman (and for the men, by a senior member of the men's side). This may be at the end of the first dancing season, but is at the Squires'/Foremans' discretion.
- In order to comply with the requirements for full membership, men's and ladies' dance apprentices are expected to be proficient in at least three dances, be able to perform double and single stepping and to maintain regular attendance at practices.
- Men's and ladies' apprentices must be voted in as full members by the men's/ladies teams at their pre-AGMs.
- Prior to the Ladies pre-AGM, the Squire and Foreman will speak to each apprentice about their dancing progress and their readiness to be made up to a full member, or whether they would benefit from another season as an apprentice. The Squire/Foreman will make their recommendations to the voting men's/ladies' members by email before the pre-AGMs. The men/ladies are to return their vote by email to accept/decline the recommendation before the pre-AGM.
- The Squire/Foreman will speak to each apprentice to share the outcome of the vote in preparation of the pre-AGM.
- The announcement will be made at the pre-AGM where it is minuted.
- Formal acceptance as a Member (if vote carried) at the AGM.
- Apprentices are non-voting members. Apprentice members do not have voting rights at AGMs and EGMs.
- An Apprentice member's public performance may be restricted at the discretion of the relevant squire or co-ordinator.

## **2.6 Inactive members**

- Full members and Associate members may remain members of the side in perpetuity, (unless their behaviour is considered to be unacceptable by the committee and ratified by the majority of the voting members and they have been asked to leave).
- If a member allows their membership to lapse, (i.e. does not pay subs, and does not attend Morris practices or performances), it is accepted that they may be allowed to re-join as a dancer or musician, provided that their performance and behaviour is considered good enough by the appropriate Squire/Foreman/Co-ordinator, and this has been ratified by the majority of the voting members.
- A full voting member must display regular attendance at dance-practice sessions and/or dance-events in full kit, throughout the year, as evidenced by the SVM Attendance Register.
- Members who are not able to fulfil attendance requirements will be made Associate Members of SVM. (e.g. pay reduced subs; receive Newsletters; attend AGMs etc.), but are non voting members.
- Exceptions will be made for anyone whose absence is due to medical problems, or to family or work commitments.

## **2.7 Under 16 year-olds**

- Under 16 year-olds are eligible to perform in the Morris Minors (when appropriate), and/or in any of the above teams at 1.1, at the Squires'/Co-ordinators' discretion, provided that they have a relative/legal guardian (hereafter referred to as the Legal Carer) who is a fully paid-up member of the side.

- The Legal Carers are expected to be frequently present at both practices and programmed events that the under-16 year-olds, or Morris Minors (when appropriate) attend. They should show an interest in the history, customs, and performance ethos of both SVM, and 'The Morris' in general.
- If the Legal Carer is unable to attend a Morris Activity in person, they may appoint another adult as 'In Loco Parentis'.
- Members aged between 16-18 must ensure that the Bag/Squires/Co-ordinators hold contact details for their Legal Carer.

### **3. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

- The AGM will be held to review the previous year's dancing, to discuss matters for the coming year, and to elect new committee members.
- A quorum consists of 51 % of paid-up voting members.
- A decision voted in by a majority of the quorum is binding on the rest of the side
- The AGM is to be held at the beginning of the practice season.
- Full Members are expected to attend the AGM
- Nominees for committee positions must be proposed and seconded via email to the Bag at least two weeks before the AGM.
- The Bag will email to the side a list of the nominees one week before the AGM.
- Agenda items must be notified to the Bag at least one week before the AGM.
- Votes may be cast at the AGM or prior to the AGM in absentia, in writing or by e-mail to the Bag.
- Nominees may not vote for their own position.
- An AGM motion is carried if it is approved by a majority of the voting members.
- No vote is required if there is only one nominee for position.
- Minutes of AGMs/EGMs must be recorded, and made available to all members of the side.
- Pre-AGM meetings, held prior to the AGM, will take place for the Ladies', Men's, Musicians and Morris Minors' (when appropriate) teams, at which the following positions will be elected: - Ladies' Squire; Ladies' Foreman; Men's Squire; Men's Foreman; Musicians' co-ordinator; and Morris Minors' Co-ordinator (when appropriate).
- The posts of Bag and Treasurer will be elected at the AGM.

### **4. FINANCES**

#### **4.1 The Sompting Village Morris financial year starts on 1<sup>st</sup> September and finishes on the 31<sup>st</sup> August.**

#### **4.2 The side's income is from the following sources:**

- Sompting Village Morris members will pay annual subscriptions at a rate to be agreed each year at the AGM.
- Payment of subscriptions is due by 30 November annually. Payment of subscriptions will be waived for members aged between 16 -18, who are in full-time education.
- Sompting Village Morris will accept paid bookings and, where we choose to make a charge, this will be at a minimum of £30 per stand, unless agreed otherwise by the Bag and Squires.
- Money may be collected during appropriate dance stands.
- Sales of men's and ladies' kit items to performing members of the side
- Donations made to the side.
- Sompting Village Morris may also be in receipt of grant money and sponsorship funds. It is expected that such funds will be ring-fenced for specific purposes.

#### **4.3 The side's funds can be expected to be spent on the following items, without the treasurer referring to the whole committee, even if they exceed £50**

- Membership of The Morris Federation (which includes Public Liability insurance).
- Personal Accident insurance arranged through the Morris Federation.
- Purchase of Men's and Ladies' Kit items for performing members of the side

- Hire of venues for practice sessions of Sompting Village Morris and The Morris Minors (when appropriate) .
- Publicity including printing and stationery costs.
- Organised events and coach trips agreed by the side..
- At the committee’s discretion the side’s funds may be spent on other exceptional items, including items that are specific to members. Examples of such items are, but are not limited to:
  - Charitable donations
  - Contributions towards the upkeep of musician’s instruments or other members’ equipment used to support the side.
  - Travel expenses to paid dances stands, in exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the committee.
  - Gifts to support individual members.
  - Sundry items for organised events

#### **4.4 In the event of the Side folding**

Any money in the Sompting Village Morris Bank Account will be donated to a local charity in the West Sussex area, to be decided at an AGM or EGM.

### **5. THE COMMITTEE**

#### **5.1 The newly elected officers will take up their Committee posts at the AGM, and will form a Committee, to run the day- to-day affairs of the Side and to make and to implement minor decisions on the Side’s behalf.**

- Nominations for the Committee will be notified before the AGM. Only Full Members may be nominated as Officers of the Committee.
- Committee meetings should be held often enough so that the Side can be run efficiently and effectively (generally every 3 months, or at the committee’s discretion).
- Minutes should be taken of all Committee meetings and kept as a record by the Bag, to be available on request of any full member.
- Any member(s) of the side may be invited to attend Committee meetings by the Bag.

#### **5.2 Committee Officers of the Side**

**The Officers of the Committee shall be:**

- Men’s Squire
- Ladies’ Squire
- Bag
- Men’s Foreman
- Ladies’ Foreman
- Music Co-Ordinator
- Treasurer

#### **5.3 Bag**

**The Bag is the secretary of the Side. The Bag’s principal duties are as follows:**

- to welcome new members and inform them of the way the Side is run and their rights and responsibilities as a member (including issuing a copy of this Constitution)
- to maintain an accurate and confidential contact list of all current members of the Side in accordance with current General Data Protection regulations
- in consultation with the Squires, to convene General Meetings and committee meetings
- to keep a record of the Minutes of side proceedings (including Committee meetings and General Meetings) and to produce these at the AGM or on request by any Full Member.

- to keep a central copy of this Constitution with the Minutes (for reference), and to make copies available to members at all General Meetings.
- To prepare an annual programme of dance events, including weekly pub bookings and weekend events.
- to provide full information to all members about dance events.
- to co-ordinate the organisation and administration of dance events.
- to conduct correspondence on behalf of the Side.
- To deal with any grievance within the side, either jointly with the Squires, or by reference to the Committee, or by consultation with particular members or with all members of the side.

#### 5.4 Squires

**The Squires are in charge of the Side during dance events. The Squire's principal duties are as follows:**

- with the Foreman, to decide when new members are competent to dance out with the Side
- with the Foreman, to plan and carry out dance policy in line with decisions made by the Side at the AGM
- to co-ordinate dance events: to decide which dances are to be performed
- To nominate dancers for specific dances
- To co-ordinate performances with Squires from other sides present
- To ensure timings of performances are known and to inform members of the Side of these timings.
- To have the final say in matters relating to dance performance, or to delegate this responsibility to another side member in his/her absence (including deciding whether members may dance out-of-kit or as Fool with the Side.)

#### 5.5 Foremen

**The Foremen are in charge of the Side during practices. The Foreman's principal duties are as follows:**

- to provide adequate instruction of the members in the performance of the Morris dances.
- with the Squire, to decide when new members are competent to dance out with the Side.
- with the Squire, to plan and carry out dance policy in line with the decisions made by the Side at the AGM.

#### 5.6 Music Co-ordinator

**The music co-ordinator's principal duties are as follows:-**

- To lead and co-ordinate the musicians in playing for the dances
- To keep a list and to distribute all dance music for the side, together with individual musical notation
- To arrange musicians' practices, so that musicians may become familiar with the dance tunes.
- To liaise with the Squires/Foremen regarding music needed for new dances.
- To have the final say in matters relating to music performance, or to delegate this responsibility to another side member in his/her absence,

#### 5.7 Treasurer

**The Treasurer is in charge of the Side's finances. The Treasurer's principal duties are as follows:**

- to ensure that sufficient funds are held in the side's bank account to cover regular annual expenditure
- to recommend the amount and interval of membership fees, in line with the basis laid down by the Side at the AGM.
- to collect membership fees and record their payment.
- to ensure that the Side's funds are properly banked/invested and that expenditure is in line with Side policy.
- to ensure that payments are authorised by two out of three independent signatories.

- The Treasurer has a discretionary limit for making payments without reference to the Committee: this limit is to be decided by the Committee (see Appendix 1)
- to keep proper account books recording the receipts and expenditure of the Side.
- to prepare a Statement of receipt and expenditure of the Side, made up to the end of the financial year for submission to a member (chosen by the Side) for audit, prior to the AGM, and to circulate copies to all full members for the AGM.
- To pay ongoing expenses associated with the side.
- The Treasurer may reimburse to members any expenditure incurred on behalf of the side, provided that the expenditure is associated with an agreed event or, if an exceptional item, that there has been prior approval by the committee. Members are required to produce appropriate receipts/invoices to the Treasurer for any such expenditure incurred.
- The Treasurer is not directly responsible for a bank account set up to run a “Major Event” (see 5.8). However, The Treasurer is expected to monitor the account and include it in the AGM report and audit report.

### **5.8 Sub-Committee set up to run a “Major Event”**

- A “Major Event” sub-committee is set up when appropriate, at an AGM or EGM and will include a “Major Event” Co-ordinator and Treasurer, who are to be proposed, seconded and approved by the majority of the side, at an AGM or EGM
- The “Major Event” Treasurer manages the “Major event” bank account, and ensures that payments are authorised by two out of three independent signatories.
- The “Major event” sub-committee must provide an initial budget to the main committee.
- The “Major Event” accounts must be audited by a Sompting Village Morris member, to be chosen by the side.
- In the case of a shortfall in the “Major Event”, it is expected that this will be covered by funds from the side.
- It is not anticipated that the budget for any “Major Event” will incur a loss.
- The “Major Event” sub-Committee is expected to provide regular reports to the main Committee.

### **5.9 Committee representation for Morris Minors (when appropriate)**

- The committee may co-opt additional members if required, and this may include a representative from a Morris Minors’ team, if considered appropriate

### **5.10 Other non-committee positions**

**Non-committee positions will be determined at the AGM and their appointments minuted.**

- Publicity Officer
- Kit Officers (men’s and ladies’) (known as “Rags”)
- A-boards
- Designated Safeguarding Member (DSM) in accordance with the Safeguarding and Inclusion policy.
- First-aiders

## **6. KIT**

It is expected that the Men and Lady dancers wear the Sompting Village Morris kit, which is at the discretion of the Squires. The Current kit is outlined in Appendix 2.

### **6.1 Other performers’ kit**

Musicians Morris Minors (when appropriate) may wear Sompting Village Morris kit/costume specific to each particular team, as agreed by the relevant squires/co-ordinators.

## 7. POLICIES

Members of Sompting Village Morris shall read and agree to abide by the following policies:-

- Sompting Village Morris Privacy policy 2020  
(Details are available on the Sompting Village Morris website)
- Sompting Village Morris Safeguarding and Inclusion Policy 2019  
(Details are available on the Sompting Village Morris website)

## 8. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

- Changes to the constitution must be proposed and seconded by full members, and the proposal must be supported by a minimum of three other full members.
- Proposals will be carried by a majority vote of all full members at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).
- Full members who are unable to attend may send a postal or e-mail vote via the Bag.
- Details of the proposal must be submitted to the Bag in order that this may be circulated to members a minimum of two weeks before the AGM/EGM.

## 9. ENACTMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

- The Constitution will be dated, and signed by all current Committee members
- A list of names of those who attended the EGM with their votes (and any postal votes) will be appended.
- The Constitution will take effect from the date of signing
- Payment of subscription fees each year will constitute acceptance of the Sompting Village Morris Constitution

### **SOMPTING VILLAGE MORRIS COMMITTEE**

*Lyn Thomas (Bag)* -----

*David Chilvers (Treasurer)* -----

*Karen Chilvers (Squire)* -----

*Brian Anderson (Squire)* -----

*Topsy Stedman (Foreman)* -----

*Neil Stedman (Foreman)* -----

DATE :- -----

**Appendix 1: TREASURER'S DISCRETIONARY LIMIT FOR PAYMENTS**

The current discretionary limit for the Treasurer to make payments without reference to the Committee is £50.

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**Appendix 2: SOMPTING VILLAGE MORRIS MEN'S AND LADIES' KIT**

**Men's Kit**

- Black corduroy knee breeches
- White Morris shirt, open at the front
- Bell pads including bells and the Sompting red and gold ribbons.
- Baldrics including Sompting badges
- The number of badges worn on the baldricks is to be limited to four
- Red and white spotted neckerchief
- Black Morris hat with red and gold Sompting ribbon
- Pair of white handkerchiefs.
- Black shoes or trainers
- White knee-length socks

**Ladies' Kit**

- Black cotton pinafore dress with black and red frills/Sompting badge/rosettes/Sompting red and gold ribbons.
  - The number of badges worn on the dress is to be limited to four
  - White Morris blouse, open to the neck
  - 40 denier black tights
  - Black shoes, with footbells (2 large and 3 smaller – total 5 on each shoe)
  - Pair of armbands with 6 sets of Sompting ribbons interspersed with 5 smaller bells.
  - Pair of red handkerchiefs.
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**Appendix 3: SOMPTING VILLAGE MORRIS PRIVACY POLICY**

The Sompting Village Morris Privacy Policy is documented in 'Sompting Village Privacy Policy V1 April 2020'

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**Appendix 4: SOMPTING VILLAGE MORRIS SAFEGUARDING AND INCLUSION POLICY**

The Sompting Village Morris Safeguarding and Inclusion Policy is documented in "Sompting Village Morris Safeguarding and Inclusion Policy 12/5/19".

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