

Nelson Civic Choir

Constitution Consultation Meeting – Summary

Venue: The Boathouse Restaurant, Nelson

Date: 27 January 2026 - **Meeting Began:** 7:00 pm

Attendance: Approximately 30 members

Purpose: Informal consultation on the draft Nelson Civic Choir Constitution prior to formal consideration at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 24 February 2026. No votes were taken.

Meeting facilitation

The meeting was chaired by **Todd Padgett (Chairperson)**, supported by **Inga Lane (Deputy Chair)**, **Gretchen Howard (Treasurer)**, and **Jason Balla (Music & Artistic Director)**.

Joe Waller attended and contributed as a constitutional consultant. The committee guided discussion, responded to questions, and recorded feedback from members.

Context and legal requirements

Members were reminded that all incorporated societies in New Zealand must re-register under the **Incorporated Societies Act 2022**. For the Nelson Civic Choir, this requires adoption and lodging of a compliant constitution by **5 April 2026** in order to retain incorporated status.

Work on the current draft constitution began in 2021, with an initial draft prepared by **Conal Atkins**. Since then, the document has been reviewed against the new legislation, compared with other organisations, and refined with professional legal input and member feedback.

Key aims of the draft constitution

The committee outlined the principal improvements in the draft, including:

- Clearer and more timely communication with members
- Better definition of committee roles, responsibilities, and limits
- Inclusion of the Music Director on the committee (ex officio)
- Committee approval of budgets for each performance
- Improved transparency and governance consistency

Membership and inclusivity

Members discussed wording around membership definitions, including the use of “member” versus “financial member,” and the clause stating that members are accepted by the committee. The committee clarified that this provision is intended as a safeguard for rare circumstances, not a barrier to participation.

There was broad support for adding clearer language confirming that the choir is **open, inclusive, and non-auditioned**, while allowing reasonable discretion in exceptional situations.

Membership fees were confirmed as remaining at **\$200** for the current year, as previously agreed. Existing arrangements for reduced fees for new members joining later in the year were clarified and supported.

AGM voting and commencement of the new constitution

Questions were raised about voting eligibility at the AGM and when the new constitution takes effect. It was clarified that the choir continues to operate under the current constitution until the new one is adopted at the AGM.

Once adopted by resolution, the new constitution takes effect immediately and is then lodged with the Registrar within the required timeframe. Members must be paid up by the AGM in order to vote, with full notice of requirements to be circulated in advance.

Special General Meetings (SGMs)

Significant discussion focused on Special General Meetings. Members supported changes ensuring that when **10 financial members request an SGM**, the committee is required to convene it and may not alter the stated purpose or agenda. This was seen as strengthening member rights and reducing procedural confusion experienced in the past.

Participation, voting, and privacy

The draft provisions for electronic participation and absentee voting were discussed. Members supported the ability to vote by email when unable to attend in person, provided votes are handled privately and appropriately by the Secretary. Proxy voting was noted as requiring further legal clarification.

Committee structure and appointments

The draft constitution sets the committee size at a **minimum of three and a maximum of seven**, in line with the Act. Members discussed wording clarity around elected versus appointed roles, particularly for Treasurer and Secretary positions.

The committee explained the rationale for allowing an **appointed external Treasurer** (non-voting) if required, supported by professional bookkeeping and accounting services, to ensure continuity and reduce workload. Members requested clearer wording to remove ambiguity and duplication, which the committee agreed to address.

Financial transparency and conflicts of interest

Members supported clearer expectations for regular financial reporting to the committee, with information available to members on request. Discussion also covered conflicts of interest, with clarification that related-party transactions are permitted provided they are fully disclosed and properly recorded.

Next steps

All feedback from the meeting has been noted and will be considered in refining the draft constitution for clarity, consistency, and legal compliance. The revised draft will be circulated ahead of the **AGM on 24 February 2026**, where members will be asked to formally vote.

The committee thanked attendees for their constructive engagement and ongoing commitment to the Nelson Civic Choir.

Meeting closed at: 8:45 pm

Signed: _____

Todd Padgett - CHAIR

Date: _____

28/01/2026