

Belfast Music Society
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

This policy applies to Board Members, volunteers and paid officials.

Why have a policy?

Board Members, volunteers and paid officials have an obligation to act in the best interests of BMS and in accordance with its governing document. Occasionally, conflicts of interests may arise where an individual's personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of BMS.

Such conflicts may create problems; they can:

- Inhibit free discussion;
- Result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of BMS; and
- Risk the impression that BMS has acted improperly.

The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

The declaration of interests

Accordingly, we are asking all Board Members, volunteers and paid officials to declare their interests, and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role in BMS. A declaration of interests form is provided for this purpose, listing the types of interest you should declare.

To be effective, the declaration of interests needs to be updated at least annually, and also when any changes occur.

If you are not sure what to declare, or whether/when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you would like to discuss this issue, please contact the BMS Chair for confidential guidance. Interests will be recorded on the governing body's register of interests, which will be maintained by the Hon. Secretary. If required, the register will be accessible by statutory authorities.

Data Protection

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. Data will be processed only to ensure that Board Members, volunteers and paid officials act in the best interests of BMS. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

What to do if you face a conflict of interest

If you believe that your interests potentially conflict with BMS, you should not be involved in decisions that could impact on your other interests. You should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion. The same applies if you face a conflict for any other reason. You may, however, participate in discussions from which you may

indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all users, or where your benefit is minimal.

If you fail to declare an interest that is known to the Chair or Hon. Secretary, they have the right to declare that interest.

Decisions taken where a board member or member of staff has an interest

In the event of BMS having to decide upon a question in which a Board Member, volunteer or paid official has an interest, all decisions will be made by vote, with a simple majority required. A quorum must be present for the discussion and decision; interested parties will not be counted when deciding whether the meeting is quorate.

Interested Board Members may not vote on matters affecting their own interests. They must absent themselves from the discussion.

All decisions under a conflict of interest will be recorded by the Hon. Secretary. The report will record:

- The nature and extent of the conflict;
- An outline of the discussion;
- The actions taken to manage the conflict.