



Charity no. 1198865

Ethical Fundraising Policy

This policy applies to Colchester Operatic Society (COS) and its committees, including Colchester Operatic Society Second Edition (CO2), who are collectively referred to as “The Society” and “Colchester Operatic Society”.

Introduction

Colchester Operatic Society believes musical theatre is for everyone and should be at the heart of our Colchester Community. The Society aims to promote the advancement and improvement of general education in relation to all aspects of the art of drama and musical theatrical performance for all in the local community. The Society is governed by an Executive Committee made up of volunteers from its membership, who uphold the Society’s aims and constitution and are responsible for creating and upholding all Society rules, policies and procedures.

Rationale for Fundraising

To help guarantee the availability of ongoing funds to pay for its work, Colchester Operatic Society aims to maintain a broad base of different sources of funding. The purpose of this policy is to ensure clarity and openness to all our stakeholders.

For Colchester Operatic Society to continue its work, it needs income from production ticket sales, member fees and support in kind from members of the local community. In addition, by looking for funding from other organisations we build local partnerships through grants, sponsorship and donations, including through community fundraising. All of these sources of funding and support involve the local community in our work, fulfilling the aims of the Society.

Policy

Context

Colchester Operatic Society actively seeks opportunities to work together with external organisations and individuals to achieve shared objectives. However, it is vital that the Society maintains its independence and does not allow any external partnership to bring the name of Colchester Operatic Society into disrepute.

The Society therefore accepts financial support from, and partnership working with, companies and individuals on the following conditions:

- There are strong grounds for believing that it will result in a benefit to the Society’s beneficiaries



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- The Chair and Executive Committee members are satisfied that no adverse publicity will result from accepting such support
- There is no attempt on the part of the company or individual to influence The Society's policy or actions either explicitly or implicitly
- That initiatives do not compromise the independent status of Colchester Operatic Society

Cause-Related Marketing, Affinity Marketing and Product/Service Endorsement

- Colchester Operatic Society does not endorse or approve the products or services of any company.
- Only appointed members of the Executive Committee of Colchester Operatic Society will have direct access to its database and beneficiaries
- In order to ensure that all of The Society's cause-related promotion reflects its values, any potential initiative must come to the Chair and Executive Committee for approval.

Avoidance Criteria

Colchester Operatic Society will not accept any funding from companies directly involved in activities that run contrary to its overall aims. It will not accept financial support or partnerships with companies involved with any of the following activities:

- Animal testing
- Genetic engineering
- Human rights abuses
- Intensive farming
- Manufacture of environmentally hazardous products or chemicals
- Military contracts
- Mining
- Nuclear power
- The manufacture of tobacco
- Water pollution
- The manufacture of alcohol for productions involving under 16's

Acceptance Criteria



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When deciding whether to accept any particular donation, the Chair and Executive Committee members have a duty to demonstrate to the Charity Commission that they have acted in the best interest of the charity, and that association with any particular donor does not compromise the Society's ethical position, harm its reputation or put future funding at risk. Colchester Operatic Society complies with all relevant legislation, including money laundering rules, the Bribery Act and Charity Commission guidance, including terrorism and political activity.

Colchester Operatic Society would therefore not accept any of the following where the donation:

- Was known to be associated with criminal sources and/or illegal activity
- Would help further a donor's personal objectives, which conflict with those of the Society
- Would lead to a possible decline in support for the Society, and so risk a fall in the resources available to fund its work or damage its longer-term fundraising prospects
- Would otherwise impact adversely on the Society's reputation
- Accepting a donation from any particular source is inconsistent with Government policy

Purchasing

Colchester Operatic Society will not knowingly purchase goods and/or services produced and delivered under conditions which involve any form of abuse or exploitation of third parties. Evidence (not exhaustive) of such abuse and exploitation includes:

- The use of child labour
- Failure to pay employees a living wage
- Working hours are excessive
- Evidence of any form of inhuman, unreasonable or discriminatory treatment of employees

Colchester Operatic Society expects suppliers to accept responsibility for labour and environmental conditions under which products are made and services are provided and to make written statement of intent regarding the company's policy.



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Further Points

Colchester Operatic Society recognises that, in accepting funding from statutory bodies, it must consider the policy implications and obligations that might be tied to it and ensure that these do not contravene the aims of the Society.

The Society can seek to raise funds from a series of charitable Trusts and Foundations, but recognises that, simply because these have been registered with the Charity Commission does not mean that they are ethical givers. The Society therefore does not accept money from any charitable Trust if it is a requirement of grant receipt to advertise any company or organisation whose activities run contrary to the Society's aims.

Colchester Operatic Society will maintain accountability and open and honest relationships with all its partners, by regularly monitoring and evaluating its work.

This statement of policy is meant as a working guide for the Society. Any final decisions will be governed by the Executive Committee. It is the duty of the Executive Committee to advise of any potential conflicts of interest with regards to funding or partnerships, and for the Executive Committee members to act in the best interests of the Society at all times.

Policy created and approved March 2022

Reviewed August 2023 – no updates made

Reviewed October 2024 – updated Society logo. No updates made to content of the policy.