The Vauxhall Band
Speakers Policy

From 22nd July 2026

This is the Speakers Policy of The Vauxhall Band ("We"/"Our"/"Us").

Speakers

Our Approach.

We recognise that there are many diverse, genuinely and strongly held views within the sector and we recognise the right of individuals to hold these, where such views may legally be held. However, we will ensure that we act at all times in the best interest of our charity and that any decision to invite a particular speaker, notwithstanding other legal considerations, is also within our charitable objects and for the public benefit.

The invitation of a speaker, or participation in an event alongside a speaker, does not imply endorsement by The Vauxhall Band of all views held or expressed by that individual.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a "speaker" includes any individual who is invited to speak, present, write, record, broadcast or otherwise contribute content on behalf of, or in association with, The Vauxhall Band, whether in person, online or through printed materials.

Free Speech. Provided speech is legal, the right to speak freely includes saying things which may offend, shock or disturb others and, therefore, we will be alert to, rather than averse to, the risks of inviting speakers to participate. We will take a measured and proportionate risk-based approach when organising events, taking into account the reputational risk of proceeding with a speaker but also of being seen to be inhibiting lawful free speech without due cause.

Academic and Artistic Expression

We recognise that artistic practice, historical research and musicological scholarship may involve differing interpretations and opinions. Speakers may express reasoned professional opinions and interpretations, provided they are presented responsibly and are not knowingly misrepresented as established fact where significant scholarly disagreement exists.

Speakers. In particular, speakers:

- Must have appropriate skills, experience, expertise or professional knowledge relevant to the subject matter.
- May talk about contentious issues but always in a way that is designed to engage and inform the audience and never to inflame, alienate or mislead them.
- May express an opinion but never claim it to be a fact and:
- Any facts will be adequately underpinned with evidence to be reasonably seen as demonstrably true.

Politics. Additionally, we will not endorse any political party or be seen to campaign for a change in the law unconnected to our object(s), by hosting a particular speaker.

No Platform. In the very unlikely event, we might potentially consider refusing a speaker, this may be considered where:

- The aims of an organisation or individual's activities conflict with our charity's purposes (objects) or.
- There is risk of public disorder and/or.
- There is a risk of alienating the charity's beneficiaries or supporters.

Any 'no platform' decision would have a purpose-led underpinning to it and we would not refuse a speaker, unless it was demonstrably in the charity's best interests to do so.

Checklist

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that hosting a speaker:

- Is in the best interests of our charity, within our objects and meets the public benefit test.
- Would not reasonably be seen to be creating a barrier to free speech and the expression of legal but unpopular opinions.
- Is subject to appropriate due diligence checks to ensure our charity is not used to provide an (apparently reputable) outlet for unlawful views.
- The process for selecting speakers is rigorous but not so onerous that it is a barrier to hosting events.
- Is subject to adequate risk assessment and the risks of hosting (or prohibiting) an event may have on our people, beneficiaries and/or reputation, including managing responsibilities and risks in relation to the Equality Act 2010, the 'Prevent' duty and defamation laws.
- The event will be effectively managed with a procedure in place for dealing with incidents in case any should arise.
- Includes providing speakers with clear guidance ahead of events that sets clear boundaries on what we are willing to accept, which will also be included in any venue rental or hire conditions.

Decision Making

Where any doubt exists about the suitability of a speaker or the subject or the proposed content may be perceived to be contentious, Board prior approval is required. The details, points considered, and decision(s) will be recorded in writing.

Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Board	29.12.2024	Initial draft approved	Annually
2.0	Board	18.07.2025	Reviewed: Annex B added	Annually
3.0	Board	22.07.2026	Reviewed: Definition of speaker added. Clarification regarding artistic and academic expression. Additional guidance and resources added. Speaker Agreement usage clarified.	Annually

Regulatory Guidance

- Charity Commission E&W.
  - The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do (CC3).
  - Know your donor key questions.
  - Know you donor – checklist.
  - Designated persons list.
  - Political activity and campaigning by charities.
  - Protecting charities from abuse for extremist purposes.

- EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission)
  - Protected characteristics.
  - EHRC Response to Office for Students - Proposed regulatory advice and other matters relating to freedom of speech (24 May 2024).

The Speaker Agreement in Annex A may be used where considered proportionate to the nature, profile and risk of the engagement.

Annex A – Speaker Agreement

I will employ best endeavours to ensure that:

- To the best of my ability, I will:
    - Be sensitive to and meet the needs and wishes of the audience.
    - Advance the charity's work and.
    - Not do or say anything that might damage its reputation or offend its beneficiaries or others.
- I will disclose prior to speaking any matter that the charity might reasonably consider relevant to the event and which could give rise to significant reputational, legal or safeguarding concerns.
- I will not use my speaking as an opportunity to promote a company or other commercial activity.
- I will ensure:
    - Nothing included breaches UK law or regulatory guidance, including but not limited to that published by the charity regulator, Ofcom, the EHRC, ICO and ASA and.
    - My material has any necessary copyright or other IP approval to allow it to be used.
- I will not:
    - Include anything for which I do not have the necessary skills, experience and/or stature for the subject material I will be speaking on.
    - Include anything that may reasonably be perceived to be in conflict with the charity's charitable work or values.
    - Endorse any political party or be seen to campaign for a change in the law unconnected to the charity's work.
- I will present material in a way that is designed to engage and inform the audience and never to inflame, alienate or mislead them.
- If my material might contain or cover an issue that some people may find contentious or offensive, I will give the charity prior notice and all necessary details and will not include anything for which the charity does not give its consent.
- If will only include potentially contentious issues/material:
    - Where its inclusion is essential for my presentation and.
    - I will make every effort to minimise the risks both of causing offence and the degree of offence that might potentially be caused.
- What I say is accurate, balanced, objective and free from bias and.
    - Whilst I may express an opinion it will be clear it is my opinion, and I will never claim it to be a fact and.
    - Any facts will be adequately underpinned with evidence to be reasonably seen as demonstrably true.

- The charity is not liable or in any way responsible for any legal or regulatory action arising from a breach of this agreement on my part and I will be responsible for all legal and other costs associated with such a breach.

Annex B – Free Speech vs Hate Speech

Free Speech. We understand that freedom of expression includes the right to:

- Hold opinions.
- Receive and impart information and ideas.
- Express views (even if they offend, shock, or disturb others).

However, this right is not absolute. It can be legally restricted to protect issues such as public safety, the prevention of disorder or crime, and the protection of health or morals, or of the reputation or rights of others.

Hate Speech

Our understanding is that hate speech is criminalised through a range of legislation that prohibits speech inciting hatred based on certain protected characteristics. We define hate speech as speech, conduct, writing, or expression that is threatening, abusive, or insulting, and intended (or likely) to stir up hatred against a group based on their age, disability, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.