

USEFUL CONTACTS

Director of Music: Andrew Morgan (07741 496869)

Safeguarding Coordinator – Ed Allingham (0117 9568461)

Robes Coords: Shirley Allingham / Kim Langbridge

Ministers: Charles Sugden
Becky Waring

Churchwardens: Pam Willis
Chris Mansfield

KEEPING UP TO DATE

Further information on the Frenchay Church Choirs is available on the church website at: www.frenchaychurch.org.uk

The choir is also on Facebook (Frenchay Church Choirs) and Twitter (@Frenchaychoir). Please follow us!

Both the website and Facebook page include details of rehearsal and service rotas, special events, and the latest music lists.

St. John Baptist Church



Choir Handbook

WELCOME

Welcome to the choir of St John the Baptist, Frenchay. We are delighted to welcome you, and aim to make your time in the choir as happy and successful as possible.

This handbook is designed to provide an insight into how the choir operates, the standards we aim to achieve, and our expectations of each other as choir members.

Becoming a member of Frenchay choir brings exciting opportunities and responsibilities. I hope together we can enjoy success, fun, friendship and fulfilment in the future.

Andrew Morgan
Director of Music

JOINING THE CHOIR

Anyone can join the choir. Whilst some degree of musicality is preferred (i.e. being able to sing in tune), the ability to read music or to sing from sight is not essential. There are no auditions. All you need is the ability to have fun, learn some new things and attend rehearsals and services regularly.

There is no membership fee. Music, robes and singing coaching will be provided without charge. In return, you are expected to contribute to the life of the church through singing regularly in services and taking part in fundraising activities to sustain the choir for the benefit of future members.

PARKING

Parking space is limited at the church on Sundays, and all members are encouraged to park outside the church grounds to allow the spaces near the door to be used by the disabled.

For Friday rehearsals, please take particular care to avoid trapping the cars of Junior Choir parents in the car park. If in doubt, please park outside the church grounds.

COMPLAINTS

The choir is committed to ensuring that all our members have a successful and enjoyable experience. If you have a complaint, you should first raise the matter with the Director of Music who will do his best to resolve the issue fairly and effectively within the resources available.

If the Director of Music is unable to deal with the matter to your satisfaction, he will inform the churchwardens and they will investigate the issue. If you have any concerns regarding the handling of any issue you have raised with the Director of Music you should engage the churchwardens in writing.

DATA PROTECTION ACT

The choir will only hold your contact details (address, phone number, email) for the purpose of ensuring the smooth running of the music administration. If you give permission, your details will be provided to other choir members as part of the contact list. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 you have a general right of access to personal data held about you, and where appropriate, to have it corrected or deleted. Any enquiries in this regard should be raised with the Director of Music.

b) Choir Support Group

The work of the music programme at Frenchay is supported by a Choir Support Group, consisting of:

- Director of Music
- Voice Part Representatives (Sop, Alto, Tenor, Bass)
- Junior Choir Trainer
- Junior & Senior Chorister Parent Representatives (x2)
- Choir Fund Treasurer

Your Voice Part Representative will seek your comments, concerns and suggestions, and will keep you informed of Group discussions.

c) Other Supporting Roles

The success of the music programme relies on a range of other supporting roles including:

- Music Librarian
- Robes Coordinator
- Sunday Teas Concert Programme Coordinator
- Junior Choir Responsible Adults
- Assistant Organist Bookings Coordinator
- Pre-service Sherry Keeper

It is healthy for both individual members and the choir that no one person should hold any one role for more than 3 to 5 years duration. To achieve this, you are encouraged to volunteer to help as vacancies arise.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are held in the church from 7:30pm – 9:00pm on Fridays during school term times. There may be an extra rehearsal before special events (e.g. Good Friday Cantata).

PERFORMANCES

The choir's primary role is to enable members of the church congregation to worship through music. It achieves this through providing the music for the morning service each Sunday.

The choir also sings for several special musically-focused services during the year (including Carols by Candlelight, Choral Evensong, a Good Friday Cantata), and a Summer Concert. Occasionally the choir may be asked to sing for weddings which contribute to fundraising efforts.

Warm-up rehearsals take place just before each morning service from 10:00-10:15am. For special musically-focused services there is an extended pre-service rehearsal, with timings published on the choir schedule.

These pre-service warm-up rehearsals are extremely important, as this is when any special aspects are finalised and there is an opportunity to rehearse with the organ. Choristers should be robed in their cassocks only for these rehearsals.

ATTENDANCE

Singers should arrive 10 minutes before the start of rehearsals/warm-ups to collect the right music and find a place to sit so that rehearsals may start promptly.

You should come to rehearsal as often as you can, singing for 75% of Friday rehearsals and Sunday services on average each term.

For special services a full choir attendance is needed, and you should plan your other commitments to deconflict with these times (typically 2 or 3 occasions per term).

ABSENCE

One singer's unanticipated absence can change the balance of a rehearsal or the success of a service. Don't underestimate the importance of your individual contribution to the choir.

If you know you will not be able to attend a service or rehearsal, you should sign your name on the "Signing-out" list in the choir vestry.

In the event of a short-notice emergency (e.g. falling ill on the day), please text or phone the Director of Music.

MUSIC

All music will be provided to you on loan. You must return it immediately following the service in which it is used, or when asked to do so by the Music Librarian. On leaving the choir you should return any items allocated to you.

If you already have your own copy of a piece, you may use it only if it is the identical edition, as much time can be wasted if singers are using different versions.

FUNDRAISING

The music programme at Frenchay aspires to be self-funding, and as one of the main organisations within the church community the choir also has a role to play in supporting the financing of the wider church.

To achieve this, fundraising events are held throughout the year. Foremost among these are weddings, where a fee is paid to choir funds when the choir sing. You are expected to sing for a number of these weddings each year as well as participate in other fundraising initiatives.

Sponsorship, grants and other financial support are always required. Many companies support their staff's activities and will contribute to funds. Do try to find out if your employer has such funding – your personal approach is likely to be the most successful.

If you have ideas for fundraising and/or are willing to organise an event, please advise the Director of Music.

ROLES SUPPORTING THE MUSIC PROGRAMME

a) Appointed roles

The Director of Music, Junior Choir Trainer and Assistant Organists / Accompanists are engaged by the Churchwardens on behalf of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). All other roles are voluntary.

SAFEGUARDING

The choir is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all singers. Adult choir members are not required to undergo a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check. If you volunteer as a Junior Choir Responsible Adult you must comply with the DBS-checking and appointment process. A copy of the Frenchay Church Safeguarding Policy & Procedures is available on request.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The choir is committed to ensuring that no member, staff, visitor or other person, with whom it may come into contact, receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, race, colour, sexual orientation, political affiliation or disability. By becoming a member you agree to abide by this policy.

During Communion services, it remains the personal decision of each choir member whether they wish to receive Communion, receive a blessing, or remain in the choir stalls.

SOCIAL EVENTS

There are a range of social events during the year, including parties at Christmas / New Year, and at the end of the summer term. If you are willing to organise a social event, please advise the Director of Music.

DRESS

There are 3 forms of choir dress in use. In all cases, jewellery should be discreet and long hair should be tied back.

a) Traditional Robes

You will be issued with a numbered robe to wear during services. RSCM ribbons/awards may be worn where the appropriate tests have been passed. These items are issued on loan to you from the church for the duration of your tenure in the choir and it is your responsibility to care for them appropriately and return them on leaving the choir.

Surplices, collars, cuffs and ties should be washed at least twice a year in preparation for Christmas and Easter.

Academic hoods may be worn with robes on festal occasions (e.g. Carols by Candlelight), but must not be worn during Eucharist services.

You may wear clothes of your own choice underneath the robes **only if they cannot be seen**. Where clothing is visible underneath the robes the following principles apply:

Ladies:

- Dark (preferably black) skirt or trousers
- Smart black shoes – trainers, flip-flops and walking shoes are never appropriate
- During winter months, a long-sleeved white top is an acceptable alternative to wearing cuffs
- During summer months (May to September), either bare arms or a long-sleeved white top is an acceptable alternative to wearing cuffs

Men:

- Collared shirt, preferably with a tie
- Smart black shoes - trainers and walking shoes are never appropriate

b) Good Friday Cantata

- Black shirt / blouse
- Black trousers / skirt
- Smart black shoes

c) Alternative dress

For concerts and Taize services, the alternative dress code will be used. This consists of:

- Single solid-coloured top (preferably not a pastel shade)
- Black trousers / skirt
- Smart black shoes

RECRUITMENT

New members are always welcome throughout the year and you are encouraged to bring along potential new recruits. New singers are invited to sing for rehearsals with the choir for a few weeks before making a firm commitment.

If the Director of Music considers that the balance of the choir would be adversely affected, or there is some other musical reason to do so, he may recommend that a potential new member explore other avenues in developing their singing voice before considering joining the choir.

As Frenchay Senior Choristers grow in skill and experience they may be invited to join the full choir at the discretion of the Director of Music.

EXPECTATIONS OF CHOIR MEMBERS

The choir aims to be an enjoyable, fulfilling, successful and friendly group. To achieve this we ask that you:

- Arrive on time for all rehearsals and services prepared to give your best
- Listen to the Director of Music, following directions as they are given
- Avoid talking to each other during rehearsals and services
- Keep your music in order and have a pencil with you
- Take care of your own and others property
- Avoid leaving valuable items unattended
- Keep the choir vestry clean and tidy
- Treat everyone with respect
- Avoid eating or chewing during rehearsals and services
- Never use cups – bring a bottle of water with you
- Avoid smoking anywhere within the church building or church grounds
- Keep mobile phones switched off completely during rehearsals and services
- Ensure no hazardous or illegal substances or articles are brought into the choir environment, reporting any dangers, hazards or accidents to the Director of Music
- Participate in fire evacuation practices
- Tell the Director of Music if you change your address or other contact details