

Aylesbury Festival Choir

Interested in joining? Some questions answered.

Do I need to pass an audition?

No, we do not put you through an audition. We do want you to be able to sing in tune. And enjoyment of singing is certainly a plus! If you are at all uncertain, we will usually put new members next to one or two of our stronger singers in their voice part, for support and encouragement.

Do I need to be a good sight-reader?

No. Although being able to read music is, of course, helpful, it is not essential. There are many online rehearsal aids available nowadays and our regular singers frequently use these, even if they are good sight-readers.

What sort of music do you sing?

We have a varied repertoire of choral music (i.e. with Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass parts). This can extend from large “older” works such as Haydn's “Creation” and “modern” works such as Karl Jenkins' “The Armed Man”, through to smaller pieces such as French songs and opera choruses. Many of our concerts also feature top-rate soloists singing with us, and musical groups in support.

How can I know if this is for me?

If you like, we will sit you next to an experienced singer who will show you the ropes, and help you confirm that you have identified the voice part that suits you.

Should you be joining part-way through the term, we will also give you guidance on catching up.

Do you offer any advice to a singer?

Our Music Director is always happy to offer advice, but more regularly we can recommend online sources for rehearsal aids (files to download or CDs to buy) which are tailored to each voice part. These allow you to rehearse in the privacy of your own home.

When do I need to make a commitment?

We want you to feel comfortable with our music, and also with us! So we're happy to offer you attendance at a couple of rehearsals before we ask you to make your subscription. Should you decide that AFC is not for you (and we hope you don't!) then there is nothing further required

How often do you perform?

Two main concerts are performed each year by the full choir, at the end of our Autumn and Spring terms (the Autumn term also includes our Christmas Concert). We also have a Summer Concert, which normally uses a smaller set of singers.

What about rehearsals?

We rehearse on Thursday evenings, each week, leading up to a concert. Spring Term sees us rehearse from the start of January through to April, and Autumn Term runs from the start of September through to November or December.

Where and when do you rehearse?

We meet at Bedgrove Junior School in Aylesbury. The full address is:

Bedgrove Junior School,
Ingram Avenue,
Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire,
HP21 9DN

and we use the school car park.

Rehearsals start at 7.30 pm (except for the first session of a term which starts at 7.00 pm so that music can be handed out), and run through to about 9.30 pm. We do have a tea/coffee/biscuit break halfway through, when a lot of socialising takes place.

Is it hard work?

We sing music of differing levels of difficulty, so sometimes concentration is required, certainly. For most of the time, we are just enjoying the challenge of making a grand sound. And of course, as the term progresses, we have learnt our way through the music.

What support do you have?

We employ a professional conductor and accompanist. You can find out more about both of them on our website.

What will it cost me?

We ask for subscriptions from our members to meet our costs, which cover, for example, the fees for our conductor and accompanist, hire of the rehearsal venue, costs involved in staging concerts, etc.

We offer three subscription levels:

Tier 1: £80.00 for each of the Autumn and Spring terms, and £50 for the Summer term - paid per term.

Tier 2: £190 for the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms together - paid in advance in the Autumn term.

Tier 3: £150 for the Autumn and Spring terms together - paid in advance in the Autumn term. If a member has chosen this tier but decides to sing in the Summer term also, this will require the normal £50 subscription.

Note that the Autumn term also includes our annual Christmas Concert.

In addition, there is normally a small charge for hiring the music for a term. (Some members prefer to buy their copies, and then keep them.)