

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?

We normally have two full concerts in a year. The first takes place around mid-April (our Spring Term), and the second around the end of November or early December (our Autumn Term).

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.

We are exploring the possibility of adding a Summer Term to our year, although people tend to do other things at this time.

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.

Our subscription level is:

£67.50 per term, or

£125 for the year (2 terms) if paid in advance

If we hold a Summer Term this would require a small addition subscription.

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.)