

Fareham Philharmonic Choir

Welcome to the 'Phil'. We have been making music in Fareham for more than 120 years and hope you will enjoy singing with us.

We would like you to feel 'one of us' as quickly as possible: hence this brief introduction which aims to tell you something of our background as well as explaining how the FPC Society functions.

Personal Details of new member

Please could you complete the attached form at the back of the pack and return it to your Section Representative so that we have details of your address/ phone number for our records. If these details should change at any time, it would be helpful if you could let your Representative know so that our membership database is kept up to date. You will be asked to give us permission to store and use your details for the purposes of the Choir, and this permission will need to be renewed with every annual subscription.

Information for New Member (to be filled in by section rep)

Section Rep – please fill in details below so that the new member can get hold of you. You do not need to supply all the information.

Date

Section you represent: Soprano 1/ Soprano 2/ Alto 1/ Alto 2/ Tenor/ Bass 1/ Bass 2

Name of Section Rep

Address

Email address

Phone number

Mobile Number

Ex-Directory

Fareham Philharmonic Choir - Members' Information Sheet

History and Objectives

Eugene Spinney founded Fareham Philharmonic Society in 1898 with both orchestral and choral members. Over the years, the relative sizes and fortunes of the two sections have varied: today, we have a strong choir but, unfortunately, no permanent orchestra. However, there is a strong nucleus of local players who regularly support us in major concerts.

Our current conductor, Andrew Cleary, took over in January 2018. He aims to develop our singing technique and widen the repertoire of the choir. Andrew is a well-known musician and choral specialist, with unbounded enthusiasm.

The original aim of the Society was to 'foster public knowledge and the appreciation of classical music by public performance'. The wide range of baroque, classical and modern works performed in the past concerts show that this objective has been achieved with remarkable success.

Today, we meet each week to share in the joy of singing a wide variety of music, in a friendly atmosphere, whilst still seeking to fulfil the Society's original aims. We aspire to a high standard of singing; sight-reading ability is desirable but not essential, and we do welcome those who wish to improve their singing technique. You will be asked to take a voice test when you feel ready. (Usually a month or so after you have joined.) This will not be arduous; just a check to see that the basics are there, and that you are singing with the right section.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held each Monday from 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. at the United Reformed Church, Osborn Road South, Fareham, PO16 7DG. We make a prompt start so please be there from 7.15p.m. There is normally a short break around 8.30 p.m. providing an opportunity for refreshment and a chance to socialise with other members.

Rehearsals are not held during the Christmas and summer school holidays. There is usually an additional rehearsal on the Thursday evening before a concert.

There is normally much to learn in preparation for each concert so that it is expected that you will attend all rehearsals unless prevented by illness, travel, business engagements or similar circumstances. The minimum is normally 75% attendance of routine rehearsals, and participation in the final rehearsal on the day of the concert. However, performance with the choir remains at the discretion of the Musical Director.

Website

The choir has its own website at <http://www.fpchoir.org>

where a variety of information is available, including forthcoming concert details.

Concerts

The Choir performs three or four concerts each year, with popular works being repeated from time to time. You will be offered the chance to buy some music at the appropriate time – mainly that of the major oratorios, plus the ‘Carols for Choirs 1, 2 & 5’. We are often able to obtain quantity discounts when buying new music, so you should not miss the opportunity to add your name to the order list. You may choose however to hire your music: supplied on loan from our own, or another, music library, for which there is a **small hire charge**.

Appearance is a key part of any concert performance, so we ask you to use a music cover (obtainable from Jill Pickburn (Alto)) and to follow a uniform style of dress. Minor variations of the dress code are sometimes adopted for informal concerts, but for formal concerts we ask you to wear the following:

Ladies:

- a plain black long-sleeved blouse or top of your choice
- black trousers or **ankle-length** undecorated black skirt
- comfortable black shoes (closed toes) and black tights
- no sparkling, reflective or unsuitable jewellery which might distract the audience (a plain necklace and earrings are fine)
- a choir scarf, obtainable from Ann Gardner (Alto2) for a small charge, in a wide choice of colours

Men:

- black dinner suits with white shirts (not wing collar)
- black bow tie
- black shoes and socks

We sometimes have to prepare the concert venue before performances and clear it afterwards. If asked, please volunteer your services to the concert stage manager (Jonathan Winnacott) for this work (a tip: if you are going to handling the staging material, bring gloves to avoid splinters!)

Please ensure the success of every concert by selling at least three tickets and distributing posters in suitable places. Ticket sales should not be difficult because the use of professional soloists with the choir, a nucleus of professional players in the orchestra and our ever-increasing standard of performance should ensure an enjoyable evening for those attending. We have a lively front of house team and refreshment team, and these are always happy to have offers of help from you – or your partner!

Finances

Membership subscriptions are payable in full during September, or in three instalments payable in September, January and March. Subscriptions can be covenanted, thus attracting tax advantages to the Society.

Unfortunately, the use of professional soloists and musicians, and the spiralling costs of accommodation and music, mean that subscriptions cover less than half our net expenditure each year. We seek local business sponsors and hope to receive local council, county and regional grants each year. Nevertheless, we rely on a limited number of fund-raising activities to ensure our financial well-being. Please support our fund-raising activities and, in particular, buy at least one raffle ticket for each raffle (usually held about once a term) and donate at least one raffle prize per year.

Social Activities

We hope you find rehearsals to be friendly and sociable occasions. In addition, we sometimes hold social events such as 'Beer and Skittle' evenings or barbeques, summer picnics and Christmas socials.

Role of Section Representatives

In a large choir such as the 'Phil', it can sometimes be difficult for members to find out what is going on, or to make their views known to the Committee. Therefore, each section of the choir has a Section Representative whose job it is to be the communication channel for such information. They should introduce you to other members of the section and answer any questions you may have.

Other sources of information are:

- The Constitution of Fareham Philharmonic Society, a copy of which is held by the Hon Secretary. FPS is the parent body of Fareham Philharmonic Choir.
 - Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (which are available in an A4 folder by the noticeboard and posted on the notice board four weeks before each AGM)
 - Minutes of Committee Meetings (which are available in an A4 folder by the noticeboard and posted on the notice board during rehearsals and in the members' area on the choir website www.fpchoir.org)
- Section Reps also have copies of these minutes.

Mailing List

The choir mails or emails fliers about one month before each concert. Choir members have provided most of the names on the mailing list over the years. New members are asked to make their contribution towards our concert advertising by adding names of friends and relatives to that list. Please pass names and addresses to your Section Rep. Mailings are solely to advertise forthcoming concerts!

We also email out details of other musical activities in our area, for your interest. Advertising from partner organisations, allows us to use their publicity networks free and we hope that you will allow us to send you these emails too. You will be asked to fill out an agreement form when you join, and then annually with subscription payment.

Voice Test 4

Your Section Rep will have explained that after a comfortable settling-in period every new member does a brief and informal voice test with our Musical Director, Andrew Cleary, and our Deputy Conductor, Sheila Javes. This is usually done straight after rehearsal, after about four weeks. Please arrange a time via your Rep. There is no hurry to do this, but it is necessary before you can sing in a concert.

You will not be expected to perform any difficult musical feats, but please come prepared to sing something short, of your own choice. Andrew may also ask you to sing a few simple scales and some of the music we are currently rehearsing.

Any further questions?

Please contact our Secretary, Jay, if you have any questions on 01329 314125 or by email secretary@fpchoir.org

About the Voice Assessment

Information for new members and those returning to the choir after a substantial break

We want our choir to be a community resource, but it is not possible to operate a completely open door policy whilst maintaining good musical standards and an adventurous programme.

The voice assessment is not designed to try and catch you out! It is actually quite straightforward but does ensure at the same time that all members of the choir have met some basic musical requirements.

You can attend rehearsal for as long as you like until you feel comfortable with a voice test. We will offer you the chance to take the voice test usually after four practices.

This informal opportunity to sing to the musical director usually lasts between five and eight minutes and is usually conducted straight after rehearsal on a Monday. The only people present will be the Musical Director and the Deputy Conductor, unless you wish to have a friend or Rep with you.

The assessment may include the following components, each of which will be accompanied on the piano:

1 To sing up and down a scale. This establishes your vocal range.

2 a) To sing either the upper or lower of two notes, as directed, after two notes have been played simultaneously.

b) To listen to a short tune that will be played twice, and then sing it as accurately as possible, unaccompanied. This tests your musical ear.

3 To sing an extract from an accompanied piece of your own choice.

It could be a hymn, a popular song or a folksong, or something more complicated if you wish.

This shows what your voice can do when you are singing something you know well. If you can supply two copies of the music for this, it would be helpful but is not essential.

4 To sing your own voice part in a short straightforward passage from something that was rehearsed earlier that evening. This shows whether you can hold a vocal line on your own. We are not looking for excellent sight-reading, just for the ability to give as good an account of the piece as you can and to keep going even if you do make a few mistakes. If you happen to be a good sight-reader then that is a bonus!

Most people pass without any ado. Sometimes we feel that an individual would benefit from a little more experience, so we invite them to continue singing with us at rehearsals a while longer before being reassessed. Very occasionally we recommend that a person gains some experience in a choir performing less demanding pieces before they reconsider joining the FPC or some other remedial activity. Re-assessment of members is at the discretion of the Musical Director.

If you have any questions about any of the above, please do not hesitate to ask one of us.

Andrew Cleary – Musical Director

Sheila Javes – Deputy Conductor

New Member Information

Please fill this in and give to your section rep, who will pass it onto the Secretary. All personal data supplied will be kept securely in accordance with the FPC Data Management Policy. You should receive a copy of this and another form (!) from your section rep. This second form, showing your agreement to our policy also needs to be returned to the section rep.

Name

Date joined

Section you wish to sing with: Soprano 1/ Soprano 2/ Alto 1/ Alto 2/ Tenor/ Bass 1/ Bass 2

Address

Email address

Phone number

Mobile Number

Ex-Directory **Yes / No**

Section Rep: when you have made note of these details, please give this slip to Jay Cox (Hon. Sec.) so that the membership list can be updated.

I.C.E.

In case of emergency, the secretary compiles a list of contacts and telephone numbers to be contacted on the member's behalf. Three copies are made, and kept in sealed envelopes, held by the secretary, the Chair and the MD.

Emergency contact 1	
Name	
Relationship to member	
Contact telephone number	

Emergency contact 2	
Name	
Relationship to member	
Contact telephone numbe	

