

Notes for New Members - September 2023

Welcome to Harleston Choral Society

Welcome! We are delighted that you have come along to our choir practice today. We do hope that you will enjoy singing with us and that you will become a permanent member.

Along with these notes, you should also have received a list of **diary** dates and a **GDPR form**.

GDPR form

Please **keep the top sheet** of information for yourself, **fill in** the consent form as clearly as possible with your personal details and then **return** it to Joanna Barfield, Membership Secretary. Thank you.

History

Harleston Choral Society was founded in 2000 by Anne Gee, an experienced singing teacher and pioneer in developing amateur choirs. She especially believed in encouraging people who were unaware that they could actually sing! Anne quickly introduced members to a varied and demanding repertoire. We were fortunate to have her son Nathaniel as our patron for many years.

Chris Bracewell was our Music Director from 2004 - 2017. Chris was a very experienced choral conductor and inspired the choir to new heights, for example in performances of Brahms' Requiem and Bach's St John Passion.

From 2018 - 2021, our Music Director was Janette Ruocco. During that time, we had great success performing a wide variety of music from Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle, to Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, to Chilcott's The Twelve Days of Christmas.

In March 2022, we were delighted to appoint Justin Bindley as our new Music Director. Justin has a wealth of singing and conducting experience. Our first concert with Justin was in June 2022 and we look forward to exciting times ahead.

We are very fortunate to have Karen Smith as our regular accompanist at our practices. Karen is a professional musician who also works with Eye Bach Choir.

Practices

We meet on Monday evenings during school term time from 7.30 pm till 9.30 pm in the London Road Church, Harleston. We perform our concerts in St John's Church, Harleston. There is a short break for refreshments at approximately 8.30 pm. For new members, the **first three practice sessions** are free. If you then wish to continue singing with us, a termly fee is due, currently £40.00 per term, (there are some concessions).

There are no auditions for our friendly community choir and we welcome everyone. Although it's an advantage to be able to read music, it's not essential. Music is provided free and – if available – we provide practice CDs for each voice part: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The first CDs are **free to new members** and thereafter there is a small charge. More experienced members are always happy to help and support with musical challenges and sometimes small groups meet in between scheduled practices.

Choir practices can often involve hard work, but the emphasis is on relaxation and enjoyment. Regular attendance is important and, to get full advantage, it is advisable to practise with at home during the week. It is useful to bring water, a pencil and reading glasses to practices!

Concerts

We perform two evening concerts a year: a Christmas Concert, which normally includes a substantial choral work and sometimes includes Christmas Carols, some with audience participation; and a Summer Concert in June when we usually perform a longer choral work. For some concerts, we also have professional soloists and an orchestra.

There are rehearsals on the **Friday evening** and **Saturday afternoon** before a concert in St John's Church. **Concert dress** is black tie for gentlemen and black for ladies.

Our Christmas concert will be on 9 December **2023** and will include Vivaldi's Gloria and shorter festive pieces by Saint Saens, Holst, Rutter and more.

Committee

We have a committee of up to 12 choir members who are elected during our autumn term AGM. The committee meets regularly to help with running the choir and organising our concerts. Many other members take on further important and essential tasks throughout the season.

Further information

If you would like any further information, please contact our Chair, Stella Brownsea, or our Acting Membership Secretary, John Awty, either during a practice session or as below:
Stella Brownsea heidihouse@btinternet.com 01379 854720

John Awty saintsjandj@btinternet.com 01986 782302

Or please visit our website: www.harlestonchoralsoc.org.uk