

Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir

Things choir members should know (Jan 2026)



Welcome to the Oxford Welsh, (or “OWMVC”). The choir has been singing since 1928 and we continually need new members like you to keep going. We are a registered charity and we sing at various events to raise money for good causes and these also help to cover our costs. We’ve put together this pack of information to help you find your way with us.

Basics

The Choir sings in 4 parts – Top Tenor (T1), 2nd Tenor (T2), Baritone (B1) and Bass (B2).

We don’t hold formal auditions and there is no need for prior experience. You will have a simple voice check and a discussion with our Musical Director which can be followed by trying you out in one or more of the parts. It’s more important to have a good ear for music than having a superb singing voice. The ability to blend is what makes a good choir so you need to match the others in your section and find your note in the harmony of the full choir.

It takes time and effort to learn sufficient repertoire in English and Welsh to be “concert ready” and this is often three to six months. But we have many ways to help you and the challenge is well worth the reward!

A wide range of learning aids are available in the “members area” of the choir website, including:

- Guide to Welsh Pronunciation
- Guide to Reading Music
- Guide to using *MusicScore*
- Teaching Tracks for all choir parts
- Spoken Welsh Lyrics

Also, you can download *MusicScore* software to play music files. Available via the following link - <https://musescore.org/en/download/musescore.msi>).

Choristers are encouraged to use all of these facilities and do regular homework, attend weekly rehearsals and learn from their colleagues in their voice section. Feedback will be given via the parts reps and the Musical Director and support will be given to achieve the required standard.

Subscriptions are currently £220 per year; we are able to offer payment by instalments and a reduced fee in certain cases. Also, subs are pro-rata from the start of the choir year for anyone joining during the year. Please complete the members’ information form which includes the option for a charitable gift aid.

We also operate a “Friends of OWMVC” programme for yourself, family or friends to join and further support the development and activities of the choir.

We rehearse throughout the year (except for a short break at Christmas), and we perform at charitable, fundraising or private events about once per month. We also hold three or four of our own concerts during the year. These include St David’s Day, Oxford Town Hall with a guest choir in the Autumn, and ‘regional’ events around Oxfordshire.

We can be followed on:

Facebook. <https://en-gb.facebook.com/OxfordWelsh>
And Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/oxfordwelshmalevoice>
And our website is at <https://oxfordwelshmvc.org.uk/>

Parts Representatives

Your Part Rep is the conduit between members of your vocal section and the committee. He will probably be the person who initially welcomes you and will assign you a choir ‘buddy’ – an experienced chorister from your section to help you follow the pieces (especially if you don’t read music or speak Welsh). They are also there to ensure you have the support you need, check on your progress settling in and keep a register of your availability for singing at future events. He will also be concerned for your welfare and be aware of rehearsal attendance. Please let him know if you’re unable to be at rehearsals for more than one week.

Music Copies.

A set of music for the current repertoire will be provided on loan. As new pieces are added to the repertoire you should request these from the librarian. Music must be kept in good condition and returned when requested or when you leave the choir. **Please don't punch holes in the music scores for filing and don't mark music with pen or highlighters - only pencil.** Clear plastic file pockets are best for protecting and filing your music. There are phonetic transcriptions of some pieces (available on request) but we recommend learning how to pronounce Welsh as it will be much easier in the long run.

Afterglow e-Book - contains words of songs used for social singing, Available for download from the members area of our website.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are every Thursday - 7.30 to 9.30pm - members are encouraged to attend regularly. You may not be allowed to stage at a concert if you haven't attended two rehearsals immediately prior to the event.

Bring a pencil and water to drink.

Please avoid chatting during rehearsals – especially if our MD is speaking or working with another section as it makes it hard for others to hear what they need to. We have a half-time break and many stay for a drink afterwards to socialise.

Your Parts Rep may ask you to sit in a specific place either to be helped or to help someone else.

Please do participate in the weekly raffle – the money goes towards our 'Social Fund'.

Key Events in our Calendar

St David's Day Concert - usually the Saturday closest to 1st March

Annual Gala Concert normally held in Oct with a guest choir.

Annual General Meeting (held within 6 weeks of the end of the financial year (30th September).

Social events: (dates vary.)

We are a gregarious bunch who like to socialise and include our spouses/partners. We typically hold an Annual Dinner, Summer Social, and a Christmas Party.

"Afterglows" tend to be held in a nearby pub after our concerts, for socialising and more singing.

Concert 'Rules' and Protocols

Arrive at the designated time to allow for staging and final rehearsal.

The choir marshal will instruct how the choir will process on & off stage and advise on stage formation.

Jackets should be buttoned and pocket flaps outside the pockets.

No water bottles on stage.

Stand with arms to your sides.

When sitting, place hands on knees

No talking or rustling of sweet wrappers etc while on stage or while guests are performing.

Other Documents

Constitution of the choir

As a registered charity we must have and abide by a constitution. This covers our rules and procedures. You can read the Constitution via the choir website/Join/Members Area

Rehearsal Schedule

This document includes:

- Repertoire List – current regular pieces we sing
- Events Schedule – concerts and other events (often includes pieces to be sung on forthcoming concerts
- Rehearsal Schedule – pieces to be rehearsed on a weekly basis

Do refer to it each week so that you can prepare appropriately but be aware that things may change. The schedule will be updated and distributed via email monthly.

Membership List

A list of all the choir members by section and their contact details.

These details are intended for choir matters only. Members should not use these addresses to promote personal interests without requesting committee permission. Updates will be periodically distributed via email.

Music Library List

A full list of the music we hold in our library is available on request.

Welsh Pronunciation

For the non-Welsh speakers, there is a brief guide to the Welsh pronunciation of letters and diphthongs. Phonetic transcriptions may be available for some songs but you are encouraged to try to learn the pronunciation as it will make learning new pieces easier. Audio files are available for some songs on our website members area. As the choir was founded by South Walians, we adopt South Walian pronunciation.

Other Information

Committee Members	Name
Chairman	Lloyd Evans
Vice Chairman	Dominic Fawcett
Treasurer	Steve Holder
Secretary	Nick Portsmouth
Events Secretary	Dominic Fawcett
Events Secretary	Richard Jones
Voting member	Paul Bedford
Voting member	Dave Evans
Voting member	Peter Johns
Other Key Roles	
President	Philip Gibbs
Musical Director	Helen Swift
Accompanists	Tim Croston and Andrew Patterson
Music Librarian	Andy Martin
Uniform Officer	Peter Johns
Friends of OWMVC Secretary	Richard Jones
Marshall	Dave Evans
Membership Secretary	Nigel Hill
Part Reps for 1st & 2nd Tenors (T1 & T2), Baritones and Bass parts (B1 & B2)	T1 – Paul Bedford T2 – Ken Mingard B1 – Steve Williams B2 – Mike Weaver
Red Uniform	
Scarlet red jacket, provided - obtained through Uniform officer when concert ready.	£20 deposit required
<u>Plain</u> white fly-fronted shirt with conventional turn down collar.	self purchase
Black Bow Tie	self purchase
Black evening dress trousers (with black satin ribbon trim down the leg).	self purchase
Polished black shoes and black socks.	self purchase
Blue Uniform	
Choir blazer and long choir tie - obtain through Uniform officer.	£20 deposit required
Mid-grey trousers - Farah with pockets as follows: Farah Frogmouth Pocket Trousers - Code MT129 – select colour “Grey” or Farah Slant Pocket Trousers - Code MT164 - select colour “Grey”	self purchase
Polished black shoes and black socks.	self purchase
Plain white shirt with turn-down collar.	self purchase
Other items of clothing such as pullovers, polo shirts or fleeces may be available for purchase from time to time. Enquire with the Uniform Officer.	