



FRIDESWIDE VOICES

# CHORISTER HANDBOOK



# The Frideswide Foundation

## Patron

Andrew Parrott

## Board of Trustees

Sarah Foot (Chair)

Edwin Simpson (Secretary)

William Jensen (Treasurer)

Sarah Baldock

Patrick Craig

Pegram Harrison

The Frideswide Foundation exists to advance musical education and the Christian religion for the public benefit by promoting opportunities for girl choristers aged between 7 and 14 to sing within the Anglican liturgy in acts of public worship and in secular public performances in Oxford college chapels and elsewhere, in particular by supporting a girls' choir in Oxford called 'Frideswide Voices'.

## Frideswide Voices

### Committee

Will Dawes (Director of Music)

Jonathan Arnold (Worcester College Chaplain, Committee Treasurer)

Laura Ashby (Probationer Programme, Music Theory)

Sarah Coatsworth (Music Theory, Parent Liaison)

Cecilia Osmond (Vocal Coach, Committee Secretary)

Tanya Simpson (Committee Chair, Probationer Support, Safeguarding)

## Arrangements

### Calendar

Dates for the forthcoming term are published within the final weeks of the preceding term (see separate document). We will endeavour to communicate exceptional commitments that arise on days other than Mondays as early as possible. Terms will generally comprise 10 weeks of rehearsal/Evensong sessions on Monday evenings.

### Term Dates 2015–16

Michaelmas Term	Monday 7th September – Monday 30th November 2015, inclusive except Monday 26th October (half-term holiday)
Hilary Term 2016	Monday 11th January – Monday 14th March 2016, inclusive except Monday 15th February (half-term holiday)
Trinity Term 2016	Monday 18th April – Monday 27th June 2016, inclusive except Monday 30th May (half-term holiday)

Please note that there *will* be a rehearsal on the early May Bank Holiday, Monday 2nd May.

### Evensong

Evensong is usually at 6.15pm, although the timing may vary at some colleges. Families and friends are always most welcome to attend services.

### Dropping off/picking up

#### Worcester College

The drop-off and pick-up point is the Fellows' Car Park, between 4.30 and 4.45pm. Those arriving by car may enter through the big grey gates (the college porters may be contacted on 01865 278300 if shut). This car park is also the pick-up point after the rehearsal or service. Please note that the Fellows' Car Park should not be used during FV sessions.

#### Other colleges

When the rehearsal and Evensong are scheduled to take place in a college other than Worcester, the drop-off/pick up arrangements at the relevant college are as follows:

4.25–4.45pm	Meet a committee member/adult helper at the Porters' Lodge. Please do not enter the college without signing in with a FV representative.
7pm	Pick up from either the ante-chapel or chapel entrance or the Porters' Lodge.

We are not able to allow girls under 11 to leave without an adult, although of course you may make arrangements amongst yourselves for one adult to collect a group of girls. Older girls may occasionally travel independently, in which case please advise the Committee in writing.

### **Probationers and pre-probationers**

Pre-probationers will usually finish at 6.30pm on rehearsal days during Michaelmas Term. The session may be extended to 6.45pm later in the year.

Probationers will stay until 7pm each week on rehearsal days.

On service days all stay until 7pm (or the end of Evensong).

### **Robes (Evensong days only)**

#### **Full choristers**

Each chorister will be allocated a set of robes: purple cassock, white surplice and necker.

#### **Probationers**

Probationers wear cassocks until they become full choristers.

#### **Pre-probationers**

Pre-probationers should wear school uniform or white tops and dark bottoms for the first half of Michaelmas Term. They will be allocated cassocks later in the autumn (when they become 'Probationers').

***All choristers should wear smart black shoes and dark tights or socks on Evensong days, and hair should be smart and tied back if long.***

### **Refreshments**

A snack is provided by the helper(s) on duty at 4.30pm (see below). Choristers should bring a full water bottle, as other drinks are not normally available. If your daughter has a tight schedule please provide something for her to eat 'on the hoof'.

### **Music theory**

An optional session is offered from 4–4.30pm for Grade 2+ theory students (there will be a small charge for this extra session). Classes for beginners to Grade 2 level are provided during rehearsal sessions in three groups according to age and ability. Parents will be asked to cover the cost of study books for this.

### **Individual vocal tuition**

Cecilia Osmond gives individual vocal coaching during rehearsal sessions on a rotational basis. She aims to see each chorister at least once a term. Please let her know if your daughter is having singing lessons outside of Frideswide Voices, and if you would like Cecilia to provide coaching in addition to their regular lessons.

## **Pre-probationers and probationers**

The pre-probationers are trained by Laura Ashby in choral singing, musicianship and basic theory. They join the full choir for the warm-up and for short periods of rehearsal each week.

Probationers rehearse primarily with the full choir, and have additional theory/musicianship sessions during rehearsals.

## **Reading rota**

Usually the readings at Evensong are contributed by our choristers (year 4 and above), and are greatly appreciated. Please let Sarah Coatsworth know ([frideswidevoices@gmail.com](mailto:frideswidevoices@gmail.com)) if your daughter would like to join the reading rota.

## **Commitment**

There will be 25 choristers (including probationers and pre-probationers) from September 2015. This number will ultimately increase to about 28. We very much hope that we can count on your commitment and that of your daughter for the natural term of their involvement. This will be until the end of Year 9.

Attendance at each of the weekly rehearsals and services is required. If your daughter is ill and unable to attend, please notify us by e-mail or phone message on the day, or sooner if appropriate. Those who miss a rehearsal through illness may be asked to observe rather than participate in the service the following week, as they may not be sufficiently familiar with the repertoire.

Exceptionally, where commitment, level of engagement or musical/vocal progress are causing a girl to be uncomfortable within the choir, the Director of Music or a member of the Committee may contact parents to address the issues.

## **Parent/carer information**

### **Communication**

A termly letter will present all the practical information you should need to facilitate your arrangements and your daughter's participation.

Please use the FV e-mail address for communication with Committee members, including day-to-day arrangements. If your e-mail is intended for a particular member of the committee please indicate this in the subject line.

E-mail address: frideswidevoices@gmail.com  
FV mobile phone: 07580 171419 (for use on FV Mondays – only checked intermittently otherwise)

The choir website is currently under development ([www.frideswidevoices.co.uk](http://www.frideswidevoices.co.uk)).

### **Parent/carer contact details**

We will ask you to complete a form with up-to-date contact details and health information at the start of each academic year. Please contact Sarah Coatsworth if there are any changes during the year. Contact details (e-mail and telephone) are circulated to all parents. We do not generally circulate postal addresses, but can put you in touch with families who live in your area if you wish.

### **Parent helper rota**

We greatly appreciate the support of parent/carer helpers each week – one person for rehearsal weeks and two to support when FV is singing Evensong. The adult helpers prepare the snack (sandwiches and fruit) in advance and oversee snack time at 4.30pm. They also supervise during the break, and remain nearby throughout rehearsals to help any chorister who needs to leave for a toilet break or requires support in the rehearsal. Adult helpers also need to remain available after the rehearsal or service until choristers have been collected by parents.

Frideswide Voices can refund the cost of the snack up to £8 per week. Sarah Coatsworth organises the rota; please contact her if you have any questions about arrangements. You are welcome to arrange mutually convenient swaps.

### **Choir socials**

There will be a social event at least once a term or so for choristers, and possibly one for parents. Help in coordinating these events is always welcome; please let a Committee member know.

## **Supervision and pastoral care**

Frideswide Voices undertakes to supervise all choristers between 4.30 and 7pm on scheduled evenings. Please do not leave girls unattended on college premises either before or after the rehearsal/service. Please contact Sarah Coatsworth (Parent Liaison) or Tanya Simpson (Chair/Safeguarding) if you have any pastoral concerns that we should be aware of. We also need to know if any girl develops a medical condition that is likely to impact on her wellbeing or effective participation in the choir. Please contact Sarah Coatsworth in writing if necessary.

We take our responsibilities on child protection issues very seriously. The full FV Safeguarding Policy (reviewed annually) is available in a black folder for parents to consult at rehearsals and is on the FV website.

The Frideswide Voices Safeguarding Lead is Tanya Simpson.

All Committee members, the Director of Music and all teaching/coaching staff are DBS-checked and will undertake regular, appropriate Safeguarding training.

## **Subscription**

The subscription for Michaelmas Term 2015 is £50. Pre-probationer families are asked to pay an extra £10 registration fee. Please make an electronic payment to the following bank account before the first rehearsal of each term, giving your daughter's name and 'MT15' or 'HT16' or 'TT16' (as appropriate) as the reference:

Account name	Frideswide Voices
Sort code	30-96-26
Account number	17975868

## **Bursary**

Funding is available to support a chorister bursary in case of financial need. Please get in touch with Jonathan Arnold for further information.

