



Holmbury St Mary Choral Society

Charity number: 1113693

Appointment of a Musical Director

The Choir

Holmbury St Mary Choral Society – Holmbury Choral – is a non-auditioned choir of around 35 singers, based in the Surrey Hills. Our repertoire ranges through works written across the last 5 centuries, with a particular emphasis on 20th-century and contemporary composers. Repertoire includes *a capella* and accompanied works and we have an excellent professional accompanist who is usually available for all rehearsals and concerts. Holmbury Choral was founded 100 years ago to participate in the [Leith Hill Musical Festival](#), where we compete with other local choirs. We won several trophies this year, including the prestigious Keith Willis Memorial Award: Festival Conductor Neil Ferris' choice from all the recitals across the 2026 Festival.

In the last 4 years, we have benefited from the inspiring and successful musical direction of Cole Bendall. Cole will be leaving us in the summer and we are now recruiting a new Musical Director to start in September 2026.

We stage well-supported Winter and Summer concerts at different local venues and host a *Come and Sing Carols* evening in December. Concert programmes have frequently included works involving instrumental performers and, occasionally, professional ensembles and solo singers. Rehearsals are held at 8.00 – 9.45pm on Thursdays during term-time at Abinger Hammer Village Hall (RH5 6QX), with additional dress-rehearsals before concerts. More information about the choir, recent concerts and repertoire can be found on our website: <http://holmburychoral.org/concerts/>

Responsibilities of the Musical Director

- Propose music and programming ideas to the Committee, considering the venue and the anticipated audience, as well as the rehearsal time and choir configuration available.
- Rehearse the Choir weekly during term-time and provide technical and musical guidance on the performance and interpretation of the works being rehearsed.
- Prepare the Choir for the Leith Hill Festival and conduct the Choir in the competition.
- Conduct the Choir and any soloists and instrumentalists in performance.
- Ensure that the highest possible musical standards are achieved at rehearsals and at concerts.
- Arrange for the engagement of instrumentalists and any soloists, auditioning them if necessary; recommend and arrange for 'bumpers' to augment the choir in concerts if necessary; agree the budget available with the Committee before appointment.
- In a timely fashion, provide information for advance publicity and programmes, together with programme notes.
- On request, attend and contribute to Committee meetings in a consultative capacity.
- Consult with and obtain agreement from the Committee before committing the Choir to any expense.
- Arrange for a suitable deputy if the Musical Director is exceptionally unavailable for a rehearsal.

Musical Director: Person Specification

We are looking for someone who:

- Is an accomplished choral conductor, effective through personality, musicianship, technique and communication and is confident and competent in directing rehearsals *a capella* and with piano accompaniment.
- Is a singer and vocal coach who demonstrates a commitment to interpreting and communicating the emotions of the music and text.
- Has the ability and experience to plan, in consultation with the Committee, challenging, varied and stimulating programmes, introducing new music alongside more familiar repertoire.
- Provides positive encouragement and empathetic understanding of the Choir's needs.
- Engages with Choir members' high expectations to inspire continuous improvement.
- Is able to call upon contacts with professional instrumentalists, ensembles and singers and is confident in instrumental conducting and able to work effectively with them.

Contract and Remuneration

The Musical Director, though not a Committee member, is expected to attend Committee meetings and is encouraged to join in with the Choir's social activities.

The successful applicant will contract with Holmbury St Mary Choral Society on a self-employed basis and not as an employee. The appointment will take the form of a rolling one-year contract, subject to at least one term's notice from either party.

Fees are paid for each rehearsal, performance and attended Committee meeting. Remuneration is negotiable and will be agreed in line with experience. The Musical Director is required to provide their own transport and travel in their own time, at no additional cost to the Choir.

Applications and Selection Process

To apply for this post, please send your CV with a covering letter briefly outlining the qualities you will bring to Holmbury St Mary Choral Society and contact details for two relevant referees, to **Margaret Yule, Committee Chair, at shootlands@aol.com no later than Friday 8 May 2026.**

Please note that referees will only be contacted for short-listed Candidates.

- **Long-listed Candidates** will be invited to an interview with two Committee members, to be conducted virtually.
- **Short-listed Candidates** will be invited to audition with the Choir on the evening of Thursday 4 June. This will comprise a 30 to 35-minute rehearsal in which the Candidate will briefly introduce themselves, lead a vocal warm-up, rehearse a piece from the current Choir repertoire and a short item of the Candidate's own choice, which should be suitable for reading at sight.

Key 2026 Dates

8 May: Applications close

11 May: Interview Candidates selected

18-20 May: Interviews (via Zoom)

21 May: Shortlisted Candidates informed

4 June: Rehearsal auditions

8 June: Preferred Candidate informed

12 June: Appointment confirmed

10 September: First rehearsal

In applying for this post, we assume that you are happy for us to use and store your personal data for the purposes of the recruitment process.