

# THE SAINT JOHN SINGERS – All You Need to Know

## Who are we?



The Saint John Singers is a group of accomplished and committed amateur singers who lead the musical worship at some of our country's most beautiful cathedrals, minsters, and abbeys, whilst the resident choir is on holiday or otherwise engaged.

We warmly welcome new members to the choir and encourage anyone with some experience of church music and choral singing to contact us. Following an unavoidable pause in cathedral visits during the Covid-19 pandemic, we are keen to recruit new members to join our friendly, supportive, and committed group of singers.

## When do we sing?

- Usually three or four times each year, during school half terms and the Easter and Summer holidays.
- Visits normally take place at weekends, which start with a rehearsal on the Saturday morning.
- This leads to a lunch break, followed by a rehearsal in the choir stalls. Choral Evensong on Saturday afternoon is usually our first service.
- We then have 2 or 3 services on Sunday, with associated rehearsals. These may be Sung Eucharist, Matins and Evensong.
- Before each Cathedral visit, a workshop is followed by three full rehearsals, usually held at St. John's Church, Windlesham.

## What commitment do you expect from me?

- A love of singing and a desire to work hard and learn are of paramount importance. We recommend you attend a few rehearsals to try us out!
- There are no formal auditions, but we aim for a high standard, both in performance and commitment. Our MD will maintain a continual assessment of members' development.
- Each cathedral visit normally consists of Saturday and Sunday services, with rehearsals and relevant travel time.
- In preparation for our visit we have at least 3 advance evening rehearsals. You will need individual time for note learning in preparation of rehearsals.
- There are occasional Saturday Training Days during the year. These are used to build singing technique and repertoire.
- Cathedral dates and rehearsal schedules are published well in advance, so members are encouraged to fix holidays etc. to accommodate these. This ensures the choir has a consistent membership to provide a high standard at each visit.
- Since we replace the resident choir when they are on their own holiday, our singing dates will generally coincide with school holiday dates.

**Please give this serious consideration before making a commitment.**

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## **QUESTIONS?**

### **Do you provide music?**

In preparation for rehearsals music, together with a learning CD or sound file, is distributed by our librarian either on loan, free of charge, or hired at minimal cost. Members may occasionally need to purchase some copies.

### **When and where do you rehearse?**

Rehearsals normally take place on Thursdays or Fridays from 7.30 – 9.30pm at St John's Church, Windlesham: <http://www.windleshamchurch.org.uk/index.php/home/find-us>

Attendance is considered mandatory other than in exceptional circumstances, and by prior arrangement.

### **Do I need to be able to read music?**

Yes. Singers are expected to arrive at the first full rehearsal as note perfect as possible. This ensures rehearsal time is spent on interpretation and technique. Please note this is an important facet of the working of this group. Attendance at the workshop to assist with note learning is strongly encouraged.

### **Will I need my own robes?**

We do have a small stock which are available on loan, but most members do purchase their own in due course from our approved suppliers. Clothing visible under robes should be dark in colour. Black rubber soled shoes should be worn to avoid tapping whilst processing! Members will need to provide their own RSCM navy folders - these are available for purchase at an approximate cost of £10.

### **Do you arrange travel and accommodation for the weekend visits?**

You will be responsible for your own travel, food and accommodation arrangements. Many members car share and eat together. Group bookings at reasonably priced accommodation are sometimes offered for those venues not within commuting reach. We are a sociable bunch!

### **How much will it all cost?**

There is an Annual Subscription of £50. In addition there is a fee payable for each cathedral weekend. This can vary dependent on the costs, but is currently £40. There will be no charge for your first cathedral weekend – a gift from us to you.

### **Do you meet socially?**

We try to have a purely social gathering once a year. Past events have included a boat trip on the Thames with afternoon tea, a ride on the Watercress line followed by a pub supper, and a cream tea on a canal boat. All ideas are welcome!

## **TO SUMMARISE.....**

The costs involved are an annual membership fee, the weekend fees, travel, accommodation as necessary and incidental expenses. One-off expenses to consider are folder purchase, plus robes.

### **And the reward for all that effort?**

The privilege and joy of being part of the tradition of Christian worship in some amazing places alongside the fun and fellowship of a committed group of singers.

### **How do I join or find out more information?**

If you are interested in joining The Saint John Singers or have any further questions, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact our secretary on [secretary@thesaintjohnsingers.co.uk](mailto:secretary@thesaintjohnsingers.co.uk) or visit our website [www.thesaintjohnsingers.co.uk](http://www.thesaintjohnsingers.co.uk)