

Choral Scholarships at St Oswald's Guiseley

Background Information

Choral Scholarships are for the academic year September 2026 to July 2027, with the option of renewing the scholarship for successive academic years while the scholar remains in full-time education. The general attendance requirement is a weekly Thursday evening commitment between 19.00 and 20.30 and a rehearsal and service singing on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month at 18.00 (rehearsal at 17.15 for Choral Evensong) and the 2nd Sunday at 10.00 (rehearsal at 9.15 for Choral Matins). There is also an expectation that Scholars attend major festivals and events including:

- Advent Carol Service
- Christmas Concert
- Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
- Ash Wednesday
- Passion or Palm Sunday Concert
- Maundy Thursday
- Good Friday
- Easter Sunday (Where possible)
- Summer Concert
- Remembrance Sunday

A monthly choir diary is produced which outlines choir commitments and music to be included in services etc. Participation in the scholarship scheme does not confer upon any scholar the status of an employee of St Oswald's, Guiseley. Neither does this information and agreement constitute a contract of employment. All scholars will be reviewed regularly and especially as the end of the academic year approaches. The viability of the scheme will also be assessed. Should the Parochial Church Council not be in a position to sustain the scholarship scheme on financial or other grounds, notice will be given to the scholars at the earliest opportunity. Ordinarily, the expectation is that a scholarship runs for an entire academic year. That said, if it should prove necessary, the scholarship may be terminated by either party with one month's notice in writing, or with immediate effect by the church if musical progress or attendance has not been positive, formal meetings have taken place, opportunities for improvement given, and an improvement has not been seen over a sustained period. Scholars, where appropriate, are responsible for registering for Self-Assessment with HMRC and completing a tax return on their income from St Oswald's Church. Upon taking up a Choral Scholarship, the period between the scholar starting (usually during September) and Advent Sunday is counted as a probationary period. Following Advent Sunday, assuming a positive start in terms of musical ability, progress and commitment, the scholarship will be confirmed for the remainder of the academic year.

Expectations of the Choral Scholarship Scheme

St Oswald's Church expects choral scholars to sign in at the beginning of each session; to display excellent levels of attendance at rehearsals and services as well as an enthusiasm for music making and a positive attitude; to arrive for rehearsals punctually, allowing time to robe beforehand. Choral scholars should prepare music before rehearsals, especially where repertoire is new or demanding, ensuring the highest possible standard of music making and the most effective use of rehearsal time. Choral scholars must dress smartly for service singing, with black or dark brown formal shoes. Choral scholars should always set the best examples of preparation and commitment and be sensitive to the fact that they are remunerated for their singing, for which in return a professional mindset and an understanding of the dynamics inherent in a choir of paid scholars and unremunerated volunteers is important.

St Oswald's Guiseley has a long history of choral music and continues to be a thriving centre of music in the area. We hope to offer a rich and immersive choral and musical experience, allowing the building of musicianship, ensemble skills, sight reading skills, experience of a professional musical environment, opportunities for solo singing, and an appreciation of musical fellowship in the worship of God.

The scholarship programme is overseen by the Director of Music, who is the primary port of call for any questions or issues during the scholar's tenure.

Level of Scholarship Award

The following model has been agreed, unanimously by the PCC. The baseline expectation is that students are available for weekly Thursday evening commitment between 19.00 and 20.30 and a rehearsal and service singing on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month at 18.00 (rehearsal at 17.15 for Choral Evensong) and the 2nd Sunday at 10.00 (rehearsal at 9.15 for Choral Matins). There is also an expectation that Scholars attend major festivals and events as outlined earlier. There is scope for more involvement, in which case, scholars will be remunerated accordingly and that positive commitment rewarded.

Each attendance will be remunerated in line with the minimum wage (approximately £16.28 per attendance) meaning that a full attendance across the year will equate to around £1300. Payment will be made monthly and will be based on figures from the signing in book.

In cases of prolonged illness, genuine emergency etc, the scholar should talk to the Director of Music. In such genuine cases, open communication is key, and a scholarship will not be withdrawn in such cases, but rather a period of extended leave and returning date will be agreed. If necessary, the Director of Music may involve The Rector for general awareness, or to assist in making a judgement call. Where an understandable and accepted absence necessitates authorised leave for a month or more, the Church would not wish to see any student financially penalised over a sustained period through no fault of their own, and so, at the discretion of the PCC, a retainer payment may be sustained throughout an agreed authorised period of leave.

Declaration

I have read, understood and agree to the information detailed above, and am clear about the expectations and privileges of holding a Choral Scholarship at St Oswald's. I recognise that the expectation is that I will attend as described above and will maintain a good level of attendance across the term of the scholarship.

Signed.....

Date.....