

West Dorset Singers - Musical Director Application

Contents

1. Welcome from our chair – Larah Cottle
2. Role Overview
3. West Dorset Singers – at a glance
4. Recruitment process
5. Our ambitions and future
6. Job description
7. Person specification – who are we looking for
8. Past Concert Repertoire



Welcome From Our Chair

Thank you for your interest in the role of Musical Director of West Dorset Singers.

West Dorset Singers is a friendly, ambitious and long-established choral group with a passion for singing and performing. As we look to the future, we are seeking a Musical Director who will help us continue to develop musically, inspire our members, and build on the strong foundations of the choir.

This pack introduces who we are, what we're looking for, and what the role involves. If this feels like the right opportunity for you, we would be delighted to hear from you — and warmly welcome you to one of our rehearsals.

Larah Cottle

Chair, West Dorset Singers

Role Overview

The Musical Director of West Dorset Singers plays a central role in shaping the musical direction, performance quality and overall experience of the choir. As the artistic leader, the Musical Director is responsible for guiding the choir's musical development, inspiring singers of all abilities, and ensuring that rehearsals and performances are engaging, enjoyable and of a high standard.

Working closely with our regular accompanist and committee, the Musical Director helps to select repertoire, plan musical activities and prepare the choir for concerts, community events and private occasions. This role is vital to maintaining the choir's welcoming, inclusive culture and supporting its ambition to grow, develop and continue bringing choral music to life for audiences across West Dorset.

West Dorset Singers At A Glance

- Founded in 1966, formerly known as The New Elizabethan Singers.
- Members – 70
- Rehearsal venue – Bridport United Church, East Street, Bridport, DT6 3LJ
- Rehearsal night – Tuesday 7.30 – 9.30pm
- Key performance schedule
 - 2 formal concerts throughout the year
 - Bridport's 'Light up a life'
 - Bridport Museum carols
- Website – <https://westdorsetsingers.org/>
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/westdorsetsingers/>

Recruitment Process

To apply

Please send your CV, a covering letter outlining your relevant experience and interest in the role, and the contact details of two referees to Sarah Stamford at secretary@westdorsetsingers.co.uk

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview and to direct part of a rehearsal with the choir as part of the selection process.

Recruitment timeline

- Application deadline – January 29th, 2027.
- Starting rehearsal date – September 2027 (specifics by arrangement)

Please direct any questions to: secretary@westdorsetsingers.co.uk

Job Description – Key Responsibilities

- Lead weekly rehearsals every Tuesday evening, 7.30pm to 9.30pm, September to May.
- Deliver engaging and inclusive rehearsals that:
 - boost confidence
 - encourage musical growth
 - engage and inspire our singers
 - foster enthusiasm and camaraderie
- Shape the musical direction of the choir by:
 - Selecting appropriate and varied repertoire
 - Developing and refining the choir's overall sound
- Select and book, in collaboration with the committee, orchestral players and soloists.
- Lead performances with choir and orchestra at concerts, community events, private occasions (including weddings, funerals and functions), and occasional weekend engagements.
- Support membership development through:
 - Organising audition procedures
 - Providing coaching and guidance to help recruit and retain members
 - Provide vocal guidance to develop healthy singing technique and musical confidence across the choir.
- Collaborate with the committee to plan, organise and coordinate events, and contribute to the strategic development of the choir.
- Attend committee meetings where appropriate, offering musical and organisational advice.



Person Specification - Who We Are Looking For

We're looking for an inspiring Musical Director who shares our passion for great singing and our belief that musical excellence, enjoyment and personal development go hand in hand.

We welcome applications from candidates with a range of musical backgrounds and levels of directing experience. Whether you are an established Musical Director or an emerging musical leader ready to take the next step, we'd encourage you to apply if you believe you can inspire our members and help shape the future of West Dorset Singers.

Musical Leadership

The successful candidate will:

- be an accomplished musician with excellent vocal and musicianship skills.
- have a keen musical ear for tuning, balance, blend and choral sound.
- demonstrate and coach healthy vocal technique in an engaging and supportive way.
- inspire singers of all abilities to achieve their full musical potential.
- deliver rehearsals that are well prepared, purposeful, challenging and enjoyable.
- lead memorable performances, enjoyable for singers and audience alike.

Leadership and Communication

The successful candidate will be an inspiring, approachable and positive leader who:

- creates an environment in which singers enjoy learning and performing together.
- builds confidence through encouragement, constructive feedback and clear musical direction.
- communicates effectively with choir members, audiences, the committee and other professionals (orchestra, soloists, accompanist).
- fosters a welcoming, inclusive and supportive culture where every member feels valued.

Vision and Development

We are looking for someone who:

- shares our ambition to help the choir sing better, perform better and have fun.
- recognises that a thriving choir depends on both musical excellence and growing its membership.
- will bring creativity, fresh ideas and engaging repertoire.

Organisation and Professionalism

The successful candidate will:

- be well organised, reliable and professional in planning and delivering rehearsals, performances and musical activities.
- be able to build a positive, collaborative relationship with the members and committee.

Essential Criteria

- Choral directing experience — proven experience leading a choir.
- Experience directing an orchestra in rehearsals and performances.
- Strong musicianship including confident score-reading and musical interpretation.
- Excellent vocal understanding and ability to coach healthy vocal technique.
- Ability to lead engaging, well-structured rehearsals that support musical growth.
- Strong communication skills with singers, accompanist, committee and external professionals.
- Ability to inspire and motivate singers of varied backgrounds and abilities.
- Reliable organisational skills for planning rehearsals, repertoire and performances.
- Availability for Tuesday evening rehearsals and scheduled concerts, community events and private functions.
- Commitment to WDS values of inclusivity, enjoyment, musical ambition and community engagement.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience delivering vocal workshops or sectional coaching.
- Knowledge of a broad range of choral repertoire, from Baroque to contemporary.
- Experience collaborating with professional soloists and orchestras.
- Experience supporting choir recruitment and retention.
- Confidence leading occasional weekend rehearsals or events.
- Ability to use digital tools for communication and rehearsal planning.
- A sense of humour, adaptability and a warm, encouraging leadership style.

Past Concert Repertoire

- **2026:** Coleridge – Breath of Life. Reynolds – Aldhelm’s Bridge. Rossini – Petite Messe Solenne. Brown: Hymn 150.
- **2025:** Orff – Carmina Burana. Mendelssohn – Hymn of Praise. Poulenc: Gloria. Parry – Blest Pair of Sirens.
- **2024:** Mozart – Requiem. Zelenka: Miserere. Vasks: Dona Nobis Pacem. Rutter – Magnificat. Carr – Stabat Mater. Coleridge – Stabat Mater.
- **2023:** Handel – Dettingen Te Deum. Lotti – Gloria. Wesley – Blessed be the God. Wood – Central Orb. Britten – St. Nicolas. Coleridge – Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis. Vaughan Williams – Five Mystical Songs.

If you believe you have the passion, skills and vision to inspire West Dorset Singers and help shape its future, we would be delighted to hear from you.

