

Hampshire County Youth Band Association – key info and links



Registered Charity number: 297707

Welcome to the Hampshire County Youth Bands!

When your child joins the Bands, you automatically become a member of the HCYB Association, the [charity](#) that supports the Bands' activities practically and financially. This factsheet includes some key actions and helpful links.

How it works:

- **Rehearsals** – Saturday morning at Barton Peveril, Eastleigh Youth Band – 9:30-12 Training/Junior Band/Endangered Species – 10-12
- **Refreshments** available at the mid-way break each week (on-site machines and café run by college).
- **Concerts** – 3 per year (ie end of term), plus aim for 1 extra performance for each Band each year
- **What if you can't make a date** – if you are unavoidably able to attend email clare.burton@hants.gov.uk, copying in the relevant Band conductor.
If an emergency, you can message Matt Watling on 07796 912 499

Actions for new members:

- **Band uniform** – uniform and other items are available from our online shops at [HCYBA store](#) (County/Training band) and [Skoolkit](#) (Junior band & hoodies)
- **Contact details** - join the Association mailing list so we can keep you up to date: [Hampshire County Youth Bands Association \(HCYBA\)](#)
- **Link for donations** – if families can afford to do so, we ask for a donation of £60 per year per family to help us to keep supporting the Bands – bank details and a gift aid form are here: [Members and parents – Hampshire County Youth Bands](#)
- **Follow/join our social media** – details below

Where to find more information:

HMS sends out all relevant information about official band activities. There are also parent WhatsApp Groups – please ask your conductor to join.

You can also find information online:

Website: <https://hcyb.hmsensembles.org.uk/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HampshireCountyYouthBand>

Facebook parent group (private): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hcybparents>

Email address: chairmanhcyba@gmail.com

Also, check out the YouTube channel for recordings of performances: [\(16\) Hampshire County Youth Band Association - YouTube](#)

Hampshire County Youth Band : 2026/27 news

Dates for 2026/27

See link to latest calendar [Calendar - Hampshire Music Education Hub](#)

Rehearsals - Autumn 2026

- 5, 12, 19 Sept
- Fairthorne residential 25-27 Sept
- 3, 10, 17 Oct
- 7, 14, 21, 28 Nov

Youth Brass in Concert 14/15 Nov (CB only)

- 6, 12 (CB only) Dec

Chairman's concert 10 Dec (CB only)

Christmas concert 13 Dec

Busking in Winchester

- Training & Junior Band – 12 Dec
- County Band – 19 Dec
- County Band & alumni – 24 Dec

Rehearsals – Spring 2027

- 9, 16, 23, 30 Jan
- 6, 27 Feb
- 6, 13, 20 Mar

Spring concert 21 Mar

- Possible: 27 Mar, 11, 16 Apr (CB only - tbc)

National Youth Brass Band

Championships (County Band only) 17 Apr

Rehearsals – Summer 2027

- 17 (TB & JB only), 24 Apr
- 1, 8 (CB & TB only), 15, 22 May
- 12, 19, 26 Jun
- 3, 10, 17 Jul

Junior Band at Paulton's Park 8 May

End of year concert 11 Jul

HCYB summer sizzler (all bands) 18 Jul

HCYB tour (23-29 Jul tbc)

2027 plans in progress

- We are excited that County Band have been invited to participate in the prestigious **Youth Brass in Concert in November**, at the Glasshouse International Centre for Music in Gateshead.
- After the successful gold award and 3rd place finish in 2026, County Band will be looking to compete at the **National Youth Brass Band Championships** in April 2027.
- For the **Spring Concert** we are potentially looking at doing a **Brass Day** including all musicians - more details will be shared as plans come together.
- **Junior Band** have been invited back to perform at **Paulton's Park in May**
- We are aiming for **County Band to potentially go on tour 23-29 July**– details to follow as confirmed.

HCYB Association – could you help?

The work of the HCYBA is vital to support the Bands, but we need some new people to join our volunteer team.

In particular the committee is looking for people to help with fundraising and join the committee to get experience, as several of the team only have one more year before their children leave the Bands. Please email

chairmanhcyba@gmail.com for more details.

Contact details for 2025/26

- **Matt Watling** - Director & County Band matt.watling@hms.hants.gov.uk
- **Ed March** – Training Band ed.march@hms.hants.gov.uk
- **Kiri MacDonald-Jones** – Junior Band kiri.macdonald-jones@hms.hants.gov.uk
- **Georgina Boyles** – Endangered Species georgina.boyles@hms.hants.gov.uk
- HMS support - clare.burton@hants.gov.uk

If an emergency (eg short notice of unplanned absence on Friday evening/Saturday morning), you can message Matt Watling on 07796 912 499. Note this is a personal number and not a work mobile.

Hampshire County Youth Band : important information

The Hampshire County Youth Bands (HCYBs) include:

- County Band (HCYB)
- Training Band (HCTB)
- Junior Band (HCJB)
- Endangered Species

The HCYBs are part of a network of ensembles within Hampshire Music Service.

All our staff are DBS checked and safeguarding trained, as well as being highly experienced conductors and teachers.

Matthew Watling is the HCYB Director and conductor of County Band.

He is supported by **Ed March** (conductor of Training Band), **Kiri MacDonald-Jones** (conductor of Junior Band), **Mark Streather** (percussion tutor) and **Georgina Boyles** (Endangered Species tutor).

Clare Burton from Hampshire Music Service (clare.burton@hants.gov.uk) provides administrative support for the groups.

We require and expect loyalty and commitment from each and every band member because it really makes a difference to the whole group when one player doesn't attend a concert or misses several rehearsals.

The HCYBs uphold an excellent reputation both nationally and abroad as a result of this full commitment to all rehearsals and concerts from our members. The HCYB staff demonstrate the same commitment to every rehearsal and concert throughout the year.

If you are unable for a legitimate and unavoidable reason to attend a rehearsal or concert, please contact clare.burton@hants.gov.uk copying in the relevant conductor.

Being given late notice of an absence that morning for a pre-known reason is, as you can imagine, frustrating for staff who have planned for each rehearsal based on the players. Any last-minute changes do have a detrimental impact on our plans for the whole group.

When in rehearsals and at concerts, we not only hold ourselves to the highest musical standards but also to the **highest behavioural standards**.

- This includes having a brilliant focus and determination in rehearsals but also **treating your peers with respect and displaying a sense of teamwork**. We are all in this to play to the highest standards and this only happens when we have a team working in harmony.
- You will be given a black HCYB folder to store your sheet music in. The **music we provide is original copies and expensive to replace**; please do not lose them!
- Please arrive in good time so you are **set up and ready to play at your start time**. Also please be prepared to help pack away afterwards. Many hands make light work!

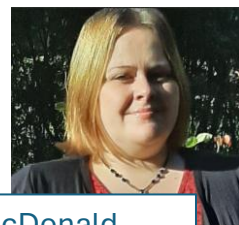


Matt Watling : Director & County Band

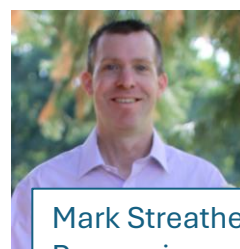
Ed March : Training Band



Kiri MacDonald-Jones: Junior Band



Georgina Boyles: Endangered Species



Mark Streather: Percussion

Hampshire County Youth Band : general information

Typical year in the bands

- Rehearsals on Saturday morning in term time at Barton Peveril, Eastleigh with 2 weeks break over half-term.
- Residential for County, Training and Junior Band in September. Held at Fairthorne in recent years.
- Minimum 3 concerts for each band, plus aim for at least one extra performance for each band during the year (for which we will provide plenty of notice).
- Christmas busking in Winchester on December weekends for Junior/Training band, County band and County band plus alumni (Christmas eve).
- European tour once per year – alternating between County and Training Bands.

What to expect

- Music and folder for storage provided. As well as music stands for all rehearsals.
- Initial seating plans will be drawn up for the first rehearsal of the year and are finalised by the end of our residential weekend. All decisions are made by the conductor of that ensemble after discussion with the whole staff team.
- Auditions for the following academic year for Training/County band take place in the summer term, with results announced during the holidays. Details of this are sent to individuals who it applies to.

Uniform

Concert uniform: black trousers/skirt, black socks/tights, black shoes, and Band specific top as below

- County Band – HCYB branded black shirt
- Training Band – HCTB branded white shirt
- Junior Band – HCJB branded blue polo shirt

Branded items are available from the HCYB Association. There are also optional hoodies and hats available.

Casual clothes are worn for rehearsals (similar to non-uniform day at school).



Supporting the Bands – Hampshire County Band Association (HCYBA)

The HCYBA are an integral part of the HCYBs and provide much needed logistical and financial assistance to the groups. We rely on the goodwill of parent volunteers to continue to function and provide great opportunities to your children.

Please email chairmanhcyba@gmail.com if you can help.

- **Regular support** – volunteers needed with the music library and instrument maintenance team. We also welcome anyone keen to join the trustee committee (typically 1-2 meetings per term)
- **Concert logistics** – if you can drive a van, help with the raffle, unload equipment, sell refreshments then we'd love to hear from you. Watch out for the sign-up form ahead of each concert.
- **Financial support** – HCYBA provides a range of financial support to the Bands, so asks families who can afford it for a donation. (This is in addition to the termly fees to HMS for the tuition). We suggest £60 a year or £5 per month. Bank details and Gift Aid form are here: [HCYBA donations](#)

Hampshire County Youth Band : a brief history

Founded in 1963 by John Knight as the Mid Hants Schools' Brass Band, the HCYB began with few resources but quickly gained recognition, becoming Champion Youth Brass Band of Great Britain by 1968. Under John's leadership, the band evolved into the Hampshire Youth Concert Band and gained national acclaim, recording with Decca and expanding to include Training and Junior Bands.

In 1983, Maurice Arnold led the band to another national title. Leighton Rich took over in 1987, ushering in a new era marked by high-profile commissions and international tours, including trips to Canada, the USA, and performances at major events such as the Sydney Olympics and the Council of Europe's 50th Anniversary.

Jock McKenzie became Director in 2004, introducing innovative initiatives like the Endangered Species scheme and forming strong partnerships with professional artists and ensembles. His tenure also featured milestone celebrations and annual international tours.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, rehearsals moved online, and virtual performances kept the band connected. Jock stepped down in 2021, and Jon Cranston led a successful post-COVID rebuild, expanding membership and returning to international touring. Highlights included a performance at the Royal Albert Hall and the 2023 60th Anniversary celebrations.

With Jon stepping down in 2025, Matthew Watling took over as Director. His busy first year included a move to a new rehearsal venue at Barton Peveril, a 3rd place in the National Youth Brass Band Championships for County Band, Junior Band playing at Paulton's Park and a Training Band tour to France.

As the HCYB moves into a new chapter, it continues to champion youth music-making across Hampshire—committed to excellence, creativity, and opportunity.

The future is bright, with fresh leadership, strong foundations, and a new generation of young musicians ready to shape the next exciting era of the Hampshire County Youth Bands.



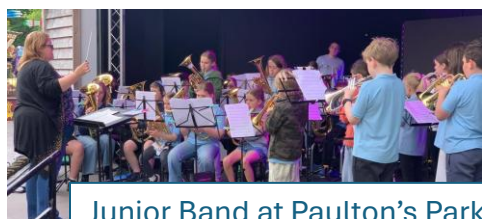
Training Band at the Summer Sizzler



County Band at Royal Albert Hall



County Band with their 3rd place award at the National Youth Championships in 2026



Junior Band at Paulton's Park



Endangered Species in concert

Hampshire County Youth Band : Testimonials

“HCYB was an important part of my Saturday mornings for 10 years. Progressing through the Junior and Training band (and then moving onto the main band) developed and excelled my playing to an incredible standard, due to the expert direction from conductors as well as sitting amongst other children who had the same passion and talent for music.

Being in HCYB also left me with lifelong friends, who I am still in contact with years after we left the organisation. The various tours I got to go on (Germany, Italy, Austria, 60th anniversary tour to Italy, Switzerland and Germany, and Belgium!) during my time in HCYB were definitely one of the highlights. Friendships were solidified, as well as cultural enrichment and getting to play concerts some amazing places!

The annual Fairthorne residential in September was another great place to solidify friendships, not only when I first joined the Junior band, but also making new friends who joined every year. Playing in Birmingham Symphony Hall as a part of the Music For Youth Festival was another highlight, my first time playing in a venue this big and some great pieces too!

Overall, HCYB had a positive impact on my life, and the joy that banding gave me even had some inspiration in my university choices/ higher education.”

Lucy C – player

“When our children first joined the Hampshire County Youth Band, we honestly had no idea what to expect. As parents who hadn’t grown up in the world of music, we didn’t realize just how much this experience would shape our family—and not just for our children. Now, 15 years later, we can say that being part of the band has been one of the most rewarding experiences of our lives, and it’s had a positive impact on us in ways we never anticipated.

One of the most unexpected outcomes of our children being part of HCYB was the incredible friendships we made along the way. Through the years, we have met so many wonderful people—other parents, band members, and inspirational conductors. Looking back, we find ourselves reminiscing about the rehearsals on a Saturday morning and the amazing concerts.

Being part of the Hampshire County Youth Band has had a lasting impact on our family, and we can’t imagine our lives without it. We’ve made lifelong friends, created unforgettable memories, and seen the positive impact being part of the HCYB has had on our children - they wouldn’t be where they are today without the opportunities being part of HCYB has given them.

So, to all the new parents starting this journey—get ready! The band experience will not only shape your child’s musical future, but it will also enrich your family life in ways you can’t fully anticipate. We’re excited for what’s ahead for you, and we can’t wait for you to experience the magic of the HCYB community. Welcome to the band—your adventure starts now!”

Gwen - parent

“Joining HCYB when I was 10 was one of the best decisions I ever made. I spent eight years there and grew up with band friends that I still see regularly, having made lifelong memories both in the UK and on four international tours. I never wanted to pursue music as a career, and yet HCYB was the perfect place where I could still improve my playing every week while also enjoying myself. HCYB is a brilliant place to improve as a young person and as a player and I’d recommend it to anyone.”

Martin L – Player

