Cold Ash Brass – Essential Information for Members

Cold Ash Brass was founded in April 2003 by a small group of local Brass players determined to put the fun back into their Brass Banding. The Band quickly grew to 18 members, and made its debut public performance at the Cold Ash Show in August 2003.

The Band has grown steadily since then and we now have a very healthy membership, ranging in age from our teenage contingent to at least one who admits to being over 60!
We have a varied programme of events throughout the year, from our main concerts to village fetes, marching in the Thatcham Remembrance Day parade to the local pubs at Christmas! We aim to enter at least 1 competition annually. From 2018, the band was been promoted to the second section, something we are very keen to repeat in 2025 and beyond!

Membership

Membership of the Band is open to all brass and percussion players playing to a standard of Grade 6 and above. We use standard Brass Band instrumentation of Cornet and Soprano Cornet, Flugel Horn, Tenor and Baritone Horns, Tenor and Bass Trombones, Euphonium, EEb and BBb Bass and Percussion.

At competitions where the number of players is limited, members will be selected by the Musical Director in discussion with section leaders. Current vacancies are published on the Band's website and through Social Media. New members will be invited to become full paying members after their first major engagement.

Management

The band is run by an elected Committee. The Committee determines the roles required to run the band and these are advertised in advance of the Annual General Meeting. The current Committee consists of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, Contest Secretary, Safeguarding Officer, Publicity Manager, Website Administrator and Player Representative(s)

The Musical Director is appointed by the Committee and is paid expenses for attending rehearsals at rates agreed by the committee. The MD is not a member of the committee but is invited to attend and participate in meetings as their input is valued.

At General Meetings, decisions are taken by a show of hands, but a closed ballot may be held by the Chairman on sensitive issues.

Subscriptions

Members are expected to pay by Standing Order a subscription of:

£15 per month per adult player,

£12 per month for those in full time education

Reduced family subscriptions are available at a 50% discount for each additional family member

It is each member's responsibility to ensure subs are paid by the last day of each month. Any members struggling to make this commitment should speak to the Treasurer in confidence.

Any changes to Subscriptions are proposed by the Committee and will be voted upon at the next General Meeting, requiring a majority before being changed.

The Band's accounts are available for Members to review at General Meetings.

Uniforms and Band Property

The Band has two uniforms, one primarily used for indoor formal concerts and contests and one used for warm outdoor performances. The Secretary will always confirm in advance which uniform is to be worn.

Indoor: Gentlemen and Ladies to wear black, long sleeved collared shirts, black trousers and clean, smart black shoes. The band provides each member with a band tie and a pair of purple socks.

Outdoor: Gentlemen and Ladies to wear black trousers and smart black shoes. The band provides each member with a purple polo shirt and purple socks

Members are also given a black band soft shell jacket. These are worn at cold or wet outdoor events and serve as our "walking out" uniform to be worn arriving and attending competitions and major concerts. A £20 refundable deposit will be taken when issuing the jacket. Ladies may wear discreet pop socks if better suited to their shoes.

Members who are issued with band property, including but not limited to items of uniform, instruments, sheet music and mutes will be recorded on the appropriate property register on issue of the property. The register will also be updated when the item is returned to the band. Any property, including Instruments, uniform and sheet music should be kept securely and in good order. Any damage or concerns about instruments or other equipment should be reported to the Treasurer as soon as possible.

Rehearsals

The Band meets once each week, on a Thursday night between 7.30 and 9.30pm. at the Parish Hall in Thatcham. In advance of important engagements, additional and sectional rehearsals will be organised and notice given by email and in rehearsals from the Secretary.

Members are expected to be well prepared for rehearsals so please do practice between them, it makes all the difference! Bring your own music, a pencil and music stand if you own one. The Band has some stands to lend out if required.

On occasions where they are not available, Members should give as much notice as possible via email, text or phone call to the MD or to the Secretary and ensure that music pads are left at the previous rehearsal or forwarded on to the rehearsal so that we may ask a dep to step in. Band members are expected to assist with the setting up and packing away of chairs, stands and percussion at rehearsals.

Engagements

Engagements are communicated to the Band via the Events page published on the band's website, which is updated regularly to show the following 12 months' engagements.

Members are expected to make their availability known for all events through communication directly with the Secretary, this is facilitated by use of a "Google Form" which is updated regularly and published on the player availability page on the website. The password for this page is "cornet"

Full details for engagements will be forwarded out at least 1 week in advance by the Secretary. This will include arrangements for timings, uniform, directions to the venue, parking etc.

On occasions where they become unavailable at short notice, Members should give as much notice as possible via email, text or phone call to the MD or to the Secretary. In this situation, players are requested to assist the MD and Secretary in finding a deputy player and ensure that music pads are forwarded on. Deputies must be approved by the MD.

Band members are expected to assist with the setting up and packing away of chairs, stands, stand banners, music and percussion at engagements. If we all help, the job goes much faster.

Safeguarding

All Band members have a responsibility for safeguarding and as such have a duty of care for each other. Inappropriate behaviour and language will not be accepted.

Members should conduct themselves in an acceptable manner and with consideration for other members and the general public. Inappropriate behaviour and language will not be accepted at rehearsals, or at engagements.

Members will adhere to the band's policies as set out in the Constitution, this letter, and the Safeguarding and Health and Safety document. All of the above documents can be found on the Band's website.

If any Member has cause for concern regarding the conduct or welfare of another Member, this should be raised in a timely manner to the Safeguarding officer or to the Chair. Any comments or complaints will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

Safeguarding Policy

Working Together to Safeguard Children, March 2015 states that 'Safeguarding children and protecting them from harm' is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children, young people and adults with care and support needs who are members of the band or connected with the band in some other way.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

Cold Ash Brass believes that a child, young person or adult with care and support needs should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

The full safeguarding policy and other documents can be found on the Band's website.

Breaching of the Band's policies.

In the event of a Member of the Band not adhering to this Safeguarding Statement or any other Band Policy as set out in the constitution and in this letter, the Band have a right to investigate and take necessary action to protect the integrity of the Band and its Members.

The investigation will allow the Committee to gain the necessary information relating to the breach. A meeting will then take place between a selected panel from the Committee and the Member involved in the breach of policy. During this meeting the member will be given full opportunity to put across their case. They will also be entitled to representation from either another Member of the Band or other suitable representative.

Based on the information given the committee will notify the Member involved, in writing, of their decision and any sanctions that are required to protect the integrity of the Band and Band Members.

The Member involved has the right to appeal a committee decision. This appeal should be made in writing to the committee within 14 days of being informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Any breaches of the Band's Policies and any resultant appeals will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.