

JUNIOR CHOIR DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (CHURCH AND COMMUNITY)

***Summary:** You will be a key team member in two historic churches which, together, aim to revive their musical tradition and seek to be welcoming spaces for their communities. You will work with the Vicar and Music Directors, with community bodies (e.g. the school), and will seek to establish and develop a Junior Church and Community Choir.*

ABOUT US

St Mary, Chalgrove and St Helen, Berrick Salome

We comprise two parishes, two miles apart, and for the last millennium we have been together. Chalgrove is the larger village, with shops and a primary school, and its historic church with medieval wall paintings. Berrick Salome is a small rural village, and its ancient little church of St Helen was built as a chapelry of St Mary's in Chalgrove. We are closely linked in several important social and mutually-supportive ways, such as bell-ringing, joint social events, and fundraising.

Where we are currently

The larger of our two churches, St Mary's Chalgrove, has a choir. Previously, it has been very large and active, and this has been an important way for children to contribute to the life and worship of the church. Junior membership declined as children grew up and moved away, and senior membership suffered during the Covid pandemic. This mirrors trends in organised public musical participation elsewhere in the community: e.g. the Chalgrove Brass Band wound up after the pandemic. We should like to respond creatively to this trend.

Both parishes are committed to communicating the Gospel to all. Our best attended services are our monthly 'Messy'-style acts of worship in each parish at which children occasionally provide the musical accompaniment. We have a Community Primary school in the patch, with whom we have friendly relationships. We are also delighted to serve as a venue for one of the local music tutors, who holds a twice-yearly 'Student Showcase' concert in the Church, at which the performers are children in the benefice. These free concerts are among our best attended events and are an excellent way of making social connections within the community via music.

The Church and Community Choir Development project

Developing a Junior Choir will help us to build on what we currently do and to respond to local needs. We know from experience that music performed by local children engages them and their families. We know we want to develop our existing pattern of worship, so that children are more involved, not only in creative liturgical activities such as Messy Church, but also in more traditional services in which the presence of a choir adds beauty and depth to the worship. And we believe that the development of a Church and Community Choir would enable us to play our part in renewing not just the musical traditions of our churches but also of the community.

Funding of the Post

We are extremely grateful to local and congregational donors, and to the Diocese of Oxford Development Fund which has provided a grant to support the existence of this post. Funding is currently in place for the next three years. We are actively seeking funding with a view to making the post permanent.

ABOUT THE POST

The Role:

The primary role is a part-time one in Choir Development, and the successful applicant will be recruited for three years in the first instance (with a view to our securing permanent funding).

The position is managed by the Vicar and the Directors of Music.

Key duties include:

- Working with the Vicar and Directors of Music, to develop a Church and Community Choir.
- Attending termly meetings concerning music and liturgy preparation.
- Junior choir recruitment: creating advertisements for local school newsletters and organising recruitment workshops in schools.
- Junior choir tuition, preparation, and direction: Scheduling and directing musical rehearsals, concerts and when applicable, services.
- Public engagement: Concert management and programming. Being pro-active in creating opportunities for external visits such as concerts and performances away from the Church, both locally and potentially further afield (e.g. in care homes, in concert venues, public carol singing, village events etc.)
- Keeping appropriate safeguarding credentials updated as directed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer; and collaborate with the Vicar, Directors of Music and Parish Safeguarding Officer in all matters related to safeguarding.

HOURS OF WORK, EMPLOYMENT STATUS, & REMUNERATION

This is a **part-time, term-time only position**, typically aligned with an 11-week term. The role involves the following indicative time commitments:

- **Rehearsal and Session Planning:** Approximately 16.5 hours per term (1.5 hours per week), including session planning, preparation and delivery of weekly rehearsals.
- **Choir Development, Outreach, and Administration:** Approximately 33 hours per term (3 hours per week), supporting the growth and visibility of the choir.
- **Performance Direction and Accompaniment:** Hours to be agreed in advance on a case-by-case basis, depending on performance schedules and requirements.

The **employment status** of this role is negotiable and, given the circumstances of the successful candidate, may be offered either:

- **As an employee**, with standard statutory terms and conditions. The salary will be commensurate with the indicative hourly rates outlined below, adjusted to reflect employer contributions and entitlements.

- **As a self-employed contractor**, which offers greater autonomy over working arrangements. Contractors are responsible for managing their own contributions and entitlements (tax, National Insurance, etc). Indicative hourly rates for contractors are:
 - £50 per hour for rehearsal and session planning
 - £25 per hour for development, outreach, and administration

The final terms, including hours and remuneration, will be confirmed upon appointment and tailored to the agreed working arrangement.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Essential

- A good understanding of and sympathy with the aims and ethos of the Church of England (and other Christian traditions).
- A willingness to encourage children's participation across the breadth of Church music both old and new.
- A commitment to community musical participation as a public good, and the ability to work with children across a range of musical forms and styles.
- A level of experience directing children's singing that represents excellence commensurate with career stage.
- Demonstrated aptitude as a choir trainer, particularly of children.
- The capacity to recruit, inspire, organise, and lead a group of children and teenagers of mixed ability.
- Sufficient instrumental skills to lead and accompany choir rehearsals unaided.
- Communication and team working skills with people of different ages, with the potential to be an excellent mentor for young people.
- A genuine interest in working as a member of a team to produce inspiring music which is suitable for the setting (whether in worship or in community settings).

Desirable

- Qualifications in music and/or education.
- Experience in child safeguarding.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please submit a full CV, a covering letter, and the names, addresses, and email of three referees (one of whom should be a current employer/supervisor), to reach us by **5pm on Monday 15th September 2025** to:

Fr Michael J. Lakey, The Vicar: revmichaellakey@gmail.com

(Email applications preferred, but postal applications accepted):

Fr Michael J. Lakey
Vicar of Chalgrove and Berrick Salome
58 Brinkinfield Road,
Chalgrove,
Oxfordshire.
OX44 7QX

Interviews will be held in the week beginning **Monday 29th September 2025**, with a preference for the appointee starting as soon as possible after 1st November 2025.

St Mary's and St Helen's Churches are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This appointment will be subject to enhanced DBS disclosure and proof of the right to work in the UK.