**Peak District Wind Band and Peak District Music Centres**

Notes for Applicants

See also our web site

**Peak District Wind Band**

The Peak District Wind Band (PDWB) is the senior wind ensemble of the Peak District Music Centres. Before the COVID-19 Pandemic forced rehearsals online, the band comprised about 40 players. We are aiming to get back to these numbers as soon as possible.

Previously known as the High Peak Wind Band, the band was formed some 30 years ago by its then director, David Taylor. At the first rehearsal there were just two players – and they were twins! After the demise of the county peripatetic team in the early 1990s, the ensemble became part of PDMC.

There are now two beginner wind groups, based in Buxton (BUBW) and Hope (HVBW). Players can then progress though the Intermediate Wind Band (PDIWB) (grade 2/3+), and then finally, at Grade 4/5+ to the Peak District Wind Band (PDWB). Ages of PDWB players can range from 11 to 18 years. Some Wind Band players also play in our Big Band; many also play in the Music Partnership’s City & County Youth Wind Band and several go on to study music at university or music college.

Following David Taylor’s retirement in 2007, Alex Williams took over as director. (David has continued actively to support PDMC, firstly as a trustee and latterly as its wind adviser.) Alex was followed in 2011 by Tom Jarvis, and then Gareth Widdowson in 2014. With each successive director, the band has achieved ever higher standards and steadily broadened its repertoire. In addition to regular concerts in the surrounding area, the band has regularly undertaken an overseas tour every two or three years. In recent years the band has made visits to the Netherlands (the most recent in 2017), Leipzig, Lake Garda, Austria, Italy, Spain, the Rhine and Mosel regions of Germany.

**Peak District Music Centres**

Peak District Music Centres (PDMC) is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation, first established in 1991 to support and promote music-making opportunities for young people in North West Derbyshire. The organisation was founded and developed by Ensemble Directors and parents in the area who wanted to ensure the continuation of a long tradition of live music-making for young people, previously provided by the local authority.

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Our principal activity is to bring young musicians together to experience playing in an ensemble at weekly term-time rehearsals and to provide performance opportunities. Motivated by talented ensemble directors, most of whom are also instrumental teachers accredited with the local music hub, our players are able to develop their musical skills and to make new musical friends. Over time they are able to progress to the highest levels of which they are capable. A number of our former players have pursued successful careers in music, and many others have taken with them a lifelong passion for music and music making.

We are committed to ensuring that no young person is denied the opportunity to join in any of our activities as a result of financial hardship and we operate a fund which enables us to offer free or discounted membership and, in some cases, also to contribute to the cost of instrumental lessons or tours.

With a current membership of some 200+ players, we have four wind and three string ensembles which range from beginners and early years through to accomplished players and school leaving age. We operate across an area roughly bounded by Buxton, Bakewell and the Hope Valley and have our satellite beginner wind groups based in Hope Valley and Buxton. Bakewell acts as our main wind centre, and Buxton as a centre for all our string ensembles. We also have a big band, which rehearses in Buxton.

There are regular opportunities to perform - both in informal settings in front of friends and family and at prestigious public venues such as the Octagon and the Devonshire Dome in Buxton. These performances often allow our younger players to learn from, and even play with, our senior players. Our most senior groups give top class concert performances and have performed in national venues such as the Royal Albert Hall and Symphony Hall in Birmingham as part of the Music for Youth project. In most years our senior groups also take turns to undertake a tour abroad – latterly interrupted, of course, by the pandemic.

As elsewhere, we have faced increasing difficulty in recruiting new players and over recent years our numbers have steadily decreased – a trend exacerbated but not caused by the pandemic. Now, with a Strategic Director of Music in place, we are engaged in major efforts to recruit and retain players, and to re-build and re-inspire our ensembles. We would expect our new Wind Band ED to play a significant part in these initiatives.

PDMC is part of the Derbyshire Music Education Hub, administered by the Derby and Derbyshire Music Partnership. The partnership passports an annual grant to us with money emanating from the Department of Education via the Arts Council. Our other income derives from membership subscriptions, profits from concerts and fund raising.

PDMC is governed by a Board of Trustees who have overall responsibility for its direction and finances. A part-time administrator provides the necessary organisational and administrative support and liaises with a small group of trustees routinely by email and at Trustee meetings once every two months. The quality of provision is monitored and supported by the North West Leader of Music Development (the Area Leader) from the Music Partnership.