**Canterbury Festival Volunteers’ Information 2024**

***Introduction***

*Canterbury Festival Volunteers work with the Festival Team to ensure a thoroughly enjoyable and safe experience for our audiences and themselves. We really value the support of our Volunteers who are a vital part of the Festival and other events throughout the year.*

*New Volunteers are welcome and we value the skills and experience they bring. If you are not yet a Volunteer but are interested in applying to join us, here are some notes to help you understand what you will be asked to do generally and at various venues, and the qualities that will help us most. If you are already a Volunteer, these notes contain any venue and/or procedural updates.*

We ask that you are:

* At least 18 years old
* Able to arrange and fund your own travel to and from Festival or other events (including parking costs)
* A team person and communicator with good common sense
* Reliable, punctual, flexible, outgoing and proactive, able to learn quickly
* Prepared to commit to events held in various venues at different times of day, including longer shifts
* Committed to steward the entire shift including any necessary jobs to be done before and following the event

In return you will:

* Support the Festival
* Meet new people, make new friends, and enjoy being part of our friendly Festival family
* Have a real sense of achievement and enjoyment
* Gain experience of customer care and events management
* Support the arts in Canterbury
* Usually have the opportunity to watch the event you are stewarding
* Be invited to a Thank You party after the Festival

*Soon after the brochure is issued Volunteers will be sent a rota and asked to indicate which events they would like to steward though, as* *many will be oversubscribed, your requests cannot be guaranteed. If there are events you would especially like to attend, we recommend that you purchase tickets for these. Appeals for understaffed events will be issued with the allocations of duties, please consider volunteering for these if you are available. Please note that if a venue is full, you might not be able to see the show whilst stewarding.*

*A Volunteers’ briefing is held shortly before the Festival where you will meet the Team and other volunteers, and be advised of any updated details or instructions. We, therefore, request that you attend if at all possible.*

*The Festival also organises or manages a number of events throughout the year. If you would be happy to volunteer to help with events outside of the main Festival, please let Tina know.*

***First Aid***

*Some of our Volunteers are First Aid qualified and provide cover at a number of our events. If you are qualified as a First Aider, please let Tina know.*

If you have any questions about anything, please contact Tina at the Festival Office.

***Information about general stewarding duties and at specific venues or events***

**All Venues**

* Arrive at the designated time, usually 1 hour before the start of the event.
* Wear a name badge and lanyard which will be provided.
* Please wear black or dark clothing.
* Familiarise yourself with the details of the event- when it will finish, whether there will be an interval, etc. The Front of House Manager will brief you.
* Familiarise yourself with the venue – location of the fire exits, loos, bar, etc. Again, you will be briefed.
* Assist the Front of House Manager in whatever capacity needed. This may involve light physical or outdoor work.
* Greet the audience, assist with car-parking, selling or checking tickets, seating, selling programmes and/or merchandise.
* Assist any audience members with mobility difficulties as required.
* In sold out venues with unnumbered seats ensure the audience fills the rows with no gaps
* Ensure the whole audience is seated before you sit down and give up your seat to latecomers if required.
* Maintain a visible presence.
* Be vigilant and immediately report any inappropriate behaviour to the Front of House Manager, especially at events involving children.
* Respond quickly and calmly to any emergency instructions.
* See the audience safely away.
* Check the venue for lost property and assist in clearing or rearranging the venue as necessary.
* Take responsibility for your own belongings.
* Please bring coats and umbrellas for outside duties. Also, a torch is useful if you have one.
* Do not leave until you are released by the Front of House Manager.
* If a customer has a complaint please take the details, politely advise you will report the matter and immediately find the Front of House Manager. Please do not try and deal with the problem yourself.

***Notes for Specific Venues***

**Cathedral Lodge**

*Within the Cathedral Precincts, Talks are held in the Lodge’s Claggett Auditorium at 5.45pm and 8pm. The Lodge runs a small bar in the foyer which is usually open before each event.*

* There are sometimes technical difficulties or delays before doors open. If so, please explain to the audience waiting to go in.
* Latecomers may be quietly admitted to seats at the back or upstairs.
* For the Question-and-Answer sessions stewards are required to pass handheld mics to audience members.
* Books are usually sold after the Talks at a stall run by the Christ Church University Bookshop. If the speaker is signing books, please assist the queuing for this and ensure the rest of the audience departs efficiently.

**Shirley Hall**

*This is an idiosyncratic venue, part of King’s School with access via the Mint Yard Gate.*

* Duties include guiding the audience from the Mint Yard Gate (in all weathers)
* The loos are situated beneath the hall and can only be accessed down the spiral staircases or from the exterior of the building.
* If the balcony is used this is accessed by narrow spiral staircases.
* Seats are sometimes numbered, please familiarise yourself with them and make sure they are clearly marked both before and after the event.
* Only soft drinks in plastic bottles may be taken into the auditorium.
* Entry to the hall is up several steps. There is a lift operated by school staff and a ramp to the front door for wheelchairs and those with mobility difficulties.

**Canterbury Cathedral**

*The most iconic building in Canterbury, a World Heritage Site and Place of Worship. Events may be held in the Nave or Crypt.*

* Seats in the Nave (and sometimes the Crypt) are numbered, please check that they are clearly marked before the event.
* For concerts in the Nave the Cathedral’s Vergers and Guides will show the audience to their seats.
* Duties include selling Festival Concert Programmes and possibly merchandise.
* Maintain a visible presence, most notably during the interval to ensure the audience returns in good time.
* After the event the seat numbers will need to be removed. You may also be asked to move the chairs as guided by the Cathedral staff.

**The Great Hall, Kent College**

*A new theatre which can be adapted for smaller or larger audiences. It has a balcony so double the number of stewards may be required.*

* The School car park is beyond the playing fields with a path to the theatre. Duties may include directing customers to and within the car park, and along the path to the Great Hall (in all weathers).
* For busy events there is an overflow car park in Giles Lane opposite the school which will require extra stewarding (in all weathers).
* Blue Badge holders may park in front of the Great Hall so a steward will be posted to activate the barrier to allow them in (again in all weathers).
* For larger events car parking stewards may be allocated to pre-show parking only and then are free to go or watch the show.
* Walkie-Talkies are issued to car park and barrier stewards to communicate with each other and Front of House.
* Some events are allocated seating and other not; you will be briefed by the Front of House Manager.
* The School runs a bar upstairs outside the balcony doors and, for busy events, two bars downstairs, one in the colonnade and one at the reception desk.
* Some sponsors hold receptions at the school and assistance in serving canapes and/or drinks may be needed.

**The Malthouse**

*A new Theatre owned by Kings School in St Stephen’s Road. The space includes a balcony so double the number of stewards may be required.*

* Toilets are located on the ground floor and customers are encouraged to use these before entering the auditorium.
* The bar is located on the ground floor and run by the Malthouse staff.
* The theatre staff will show guests to their seats aided by Festival stewards as needed.

**Westgate Hall**

*A repurposed WW1 drillhall in which we construct a stage with full technical support.*

* Parking is in the Pound Lane car park within which the Hall sits. Please note there is a charge for parking here except for Blue Badge holders.
* Duties may include being a visible presence outside the Hall and directing customer inside.
* When entering the Hall the bar is on the right, run by the Hall staff, and the loos are on the left.
* Some events have allocated seats for sponsors; you will be briefed by the Front of House Manager.

**Augustine Hall**

*A large performance space within Christ Church University’s Augustine House.*

* The Hall is at the far end of the building so duties include directing customers from the front door.
* The Hall doors close automatically so may need holding/wedging open.
* There is a café in the foyer where drinks and snacks may be purchased but this closes around 6pm.
* For Question-and-Answer sessions stewards are required to pass handheld mics to audience members.
* No onsite parking is available.

**Opening Day: Beautiful Noise**

*A Community Music Celebration taking place in various venues around the city.*

* Beautiful Noise events are free so no tickets to sell or check.
* Venues are both inside and outside including St Peter’s Methodist Church and Hall, Westgate Hall, Dane John Gardens, St George’s and Whitefriars.
* Duties include giving out leaflets and/or brochures.
* Stewarding shifts are usually divided into morning and afternoon.

**Other Venues**

*Other venues within the city are sometimes used by the Festival and you will be given specific instructions regarding these.*

*If you need any more information regarding any of the venues or duties, please contact the Festival Office.*