St Mary & St Giles Church: Stony Stratford
Hiring as a music venue information

St Mary & St Giles church and the Parish hall are available for hire by amateur, student and professional performers. Hiring is handled by **Music for All @ SMSG**, which is run by volunteers who are passionate about music, its importance in our daily lives, and its impact on well-being.
We have hosted choral societies, symphony orchestras, brass bands, folk groups and solo performers. We look forward to welcoming you.

Location

St Mary & St Giles is the parish church of Stony Stratford and is located in the middle of the busy, attractive High Street of this historic coaching town. The town has a wide range of good local restaurants, pubs, shops and interesting walks to explore. There is ample local free parking.
www.stonystratford.co.uk

Performance space

The church is light and bright, with a Strawberry Gothic interior, soaring slender columns and an unusual three-sided gallery surrounding the Nave which provides space for either audience or performers. Whilst recognising its primary purpose as a place of worship, there is flexibility in how seating can be arranged. Performers are usually positioned within the semi-circular Chancel or immediately in front of it in the Nave.

Seating style and capacity in the church

There is a maximum audience seating capacity of 226 using both the downstairs space and upstairs gallery:

Downstairs – 178 linked seats in the Nave.

Upstairs gallery – Wooden benches capable of seating a total of 48 people on the south and north sides (seating either side of the organ console in the west gallery is not always available for audience).

Access to the gallery is by steep stairs not suitable for people with impaired mobility. Children in the gallery must be supervised at all times by responsible adults. Food and drink should not be taken into the gallery.

Some seats will have a restricted view because of columns or chandeliers. Some seating capacity will be lost if there are many performers to be accommodated such as larger choirs or orchestras.

The church seats are not numbered which precludes pre-booking specific positions.

The Fr. Willis pipe organ

We have a recently restored, historic Father Willis three manual pipe organ, dating originally from 1882. A full specification can be found at www.musicforallsmsg.org

The Grand Piano

The modern 6-foot grand piano is by Reid-Sohn.
It is fitted with a humidity controller and is regularly tuned. The piano is normally locked in position by the pulpit but can be moved by prior arrangement.

Facilities for performers & audiences

There is **wheelchair access** via the Parish Hall side doors. There are **two toilets** in the lobby between the hall and church, and a **kitchen** in the west end of the church with cooker, hot water boiler, fridge, washing up facilities, dishwasher, crockery and cutlery which can be used for serving hot and cold refreshments.

The church has a **radiator heating system** and is suitably heated for rehearsal and performance during the colder months (the heating is not used in the summer months).

A **Public Address system** using **radio microphones and CD** is available for announcements. There is an adjustable **conductor's podium** (60cm x 90cm x 40cm high) with a step and a back safety rail. There is also a **conductor's stand with light** and three music stands.

An **alcoholic drinks licence** (Temporary Event Notice) can be arranged with 21 days' notice subject to local authority Licence regulations annual limit and SMSG's licence plans for the year.
A **refreshment service** for events can be provided if required.

The Parish Hall

The Parish Hall is accessed through the church or through entrances in Church Street. It can be hired independently of the church and is suitable for small events, meetings, rehearsals, presentations and private parties. It has its own kitchen facilities, under-floor heating, a ceiling mounted projector and screen and sound system for audio and DVDs. An electric piano is kept in the hall for small choir practices. The Parish hall seats up to 50 people in theatre style.

Attracting audiences/ticket sales

Music for All @ SMSG will advertise events on its website and on poster displays outside the church.

Groups hiring the venue must arrange their own publicity and ticketing and provide their own programmes. We ask that you promote Music for All @ SMSG on your publicity materials, using resources our Publicity Officer will provide.

Arrangements on the day for your event

A volunteer from **Music for All @ SMSG** will be nominated as the Event Leader who will be in attendance before, during and after an event. In liaison with our volunteer Bookings Co-ordinator, they will arrange for the church to be open at agreed times for rehearsing and the event, arrange for any furniture moving, familiarise you with lighting control and sound equipment, organise heating as appropriate and arrange any other requirements, for example refreshments, box office support or audience 'meet and greet'.

Booking charges

Music for All @ SMSG takes responsibility for the maintenance of the musical facilities in the church and also contributes to the Church's restoration projects, which together cost many thousands of pounds a year. Many of our music venue users choose to contribute all their event profits to support our work. For this generous act we waive the booking charges.

Alternatively, we make the venue available on the Tariff set out below, which combines a low hire charge plus an agreed profit-share. This enables us to share risks and benefits, so that for small-audience events users have a modest outlay, and where events are successful financially, we both benefit.

We can also arrange additional services on request:
Piano and organ tuning at cost;
Additional rehearsals on other days (hourly charge);
Refreshments (a very popular option provided by us at no cost to you, with all takings retained by us);
Photography of performers at concerts
Audio or video recording session space.

Booking conditions

We ask all hirers to confirm their acceptance of our 5 booking conditions and 3 safeguarding clauses (see booking form for safeguarding details):

1. All rehearsal and event booking times must be agreed with our Bookings Co-ordinator at the time of booking. Please note: all our front of house staff are unpaid volunteers. We request that each 'half' of an event does not exceed 45 minutes, and ask that a total event booking (excluding rehearsal time but including box office, performance, refreshments time, tidying up and leaving) does not exceed a maximum of three hours.
2. All event programme content must be approved in advance with our Bookings Co-ordinator as being suitable for performance in the church.
3. Performance space and all movement of furniture must be agreed in advance with our Bookings Co-ordinator. Anything moved must be returned to the correct positions at the end of the concert. You must ensure audiences and performers respect the facilities.
4. All presenters and speakers must use the microphone system provided, to ensure that our accessibility criteria are met and the audience can hear clearly wherever they are sitting in the building.
5. All fees agreed with the Bookings Co-ordinator must be paid within 30 days following the event.

Tariff

1. Minimum hire charge of £200*

This includes use of the Church and Parish Hall, both kitchens if required, use of the organ and/or piano, access on the day for rehearsal and performance, any utility charges (excluding heating).

2. Plus a profit-share agreed in advance

A share (30%) of the profits reported after the event based on all takings for admission to the event.

3. A Heating Charge of £10.00* per hour

In cold weather 5 hours of heating up time prior to the event is required for the church to reach a comfortable temperature.

* A higher hire fee may be charged if the church is booked for longer than 7 hours or if it is hired for making a commercial video or audio recording. The heating cost is subject to change should the church heating contract increase in price.

Making a booking

If you would like to hold a concert or recital in St Mary & St Giles church, please contact our Bookings Co-ordinator via email events@musicforallsmsg.org.

In seeking to build and maintain a music programme at SMSG showcasing the talents of a variety of different groups throughout the year, we prefer to have a gap of at least 6 months between concerts by the same group.