



# Backworth Colliery Band - Onboarding Sheet

Details about the band for new members

Backworth Colliery Band was established in 1886 as a Mineworkers band, representing the pits of Backworth. The final Backworth pit closed in 1984 however the band continues to represent the area and the community. In 2001 the band renamed as “Five Rivers Brass” for sponsorship reasons, reverting back to Backworth Colliery Band a few years later. The band maintains strong links with the Mining community as a Colliery Band.

A Brass Band is a fixed musical formation consisting of 10 cornets, 1 flugelhorn, 3 tenor horns, 2 baritone horns, 2 euphoniums, 3 trombones, 4 basses (E and B-flat) and percussion as required. This has been the layout of a Brass Band for over 100 years and is required by the vast majority of music we play. The Band is led by a Musical Director (Conductor) at rehearsals, contests and concerts.

The band practises at Backworth Social Club, NE27 0AG in our own band room, at the top floor through the snooker room. We also have access to a storage cupboard. The band has been based there on and off for nearly 100 years. The band currently has no subscription fees but adult members are encouraged to become paid members of Backworth Club to help support the organisation that gives us free rehearsal facilities. Club members also benefit from having access to the club for free room hire, childrens parties and other pluses. Membership forms are available behind the bar. The club is open from 6PM each night, plus all day Friday/Saturday/Sunday.

The band is a self-supporting organisation with no external funding. Income is generated primarily from paid bookings. It is run with a committee of band members with a full constitution and welfare policy. The key officers as identified by our constitution are:

- **Chairman** - chair band meetings and oversee the band's general wellbeing
- **Secretary** - handle the general admin of the band, minutes, bookings and enquiries
- **Treasurer** - organise the finances of the band, report on financial matters

With other roles as required such as:

- **Musical Director** - take band rehearsals, organise programmes and music lists
- **Contest Secretary** - competition entries, registration cards, “on day” contest matters
- **Property Master** - band property lists, lending management, repairs, assets
- **Band Manager** - organise players and deputies for each booking
- **Safeguarding & Welfare** - legislation, checks on key officers, permissions/wellbeing
- **Librarian** - manage the band's library and individual folders/pads
- **Training Band Liaison** - communication between Colliery and Training Bands

The committee meet once a month, with full band AGMs held each year to appoint officers and discuss key matters. Any member is welcome to attend and view the minutes of each meeting and suggest points for discussion - to be made to the Secretary in the first instance.

**Membership** - players who are interested in joining the band are welcome to attend one or more practises before deciding on whether they'd like to join. If a member wishes to join and the member is deemed suitable by key members of the committee (mainly MD, Band Manager and Secretary) they are accepted after completing membership forms issued by the Safeguarding & Welfare officer. There are additional items to complete for under-18s with their parents/guardians. Members will also be asked to become registered members of the band with the National Brass Band Registry and will be required to supply 2 passport photographs.

**Practices** - the band practises every Tuesday and Thursday, 7:30pm to 9:30pm at Backworth Club. The band also occasionally has extra practices and rehearse in alternate venues to suit the demands of individual concerts or contests. We also undertake sectionals and one-to-one practices as required.

Players new to the band should introduce themselves at the bar and ask for directions to the band room, so Club staff become familiar with new members of the Band.

**Concerts and Contests** - the band partake in many competitions throughout the year. Our key contests are the Regional Qualification contest in March in Durham ("the Areas") and the Whit Fridays in May/June each year. We also attend many other contests as identified by the committee such as the DCBBA contest ("Durham League") and the Northumberland Brass Band Association Entertainments contest. The band are currently graded 3rd section Nationally which is based on a league system from the last 3 Area results.

We also play many concerts throughout the year in the North East - with a mix of indoor "sit down" concerts, outdoor concerts, marching jobs and concerts with other organisations. The band also performs different sets at Christmas and as an Oktoberfest Umpah band.

As a rule, the costs of attending concerts and contests are to be covered by members themselves. On occasions, expenses may be offered to players where long travel or on-site costs are anticipated and form part of the booking. Players who require financial assistance to attend concerts and other Band engagements can discuss the matter in private to the Secretary, Treasurer or other Committee Member.

**Instruments and Insurance** - members will be supplied with a band instrument wherever possible. Members are also more than welcome to use their own instrument providing it meets the requirements laid out by the National Brass Band Registry (i.e. trumpets and valve trombones are not allowed) and is of the required standard as identified by the Musical Director. The Property Manager will sign out instruments to band members and also assist with help on ancillaries such as percussion, mouthpieces, lyres, straps and mutes.

Band members are expected to relinquish band-owned instruments on a temporary basis if they are unable to attend concerts or contests to help the band engage suitable deputies.

The band's insurance covers both band instruments and players own instruments when engaged in band activity and travel to and from concerts. Queries regarding insurance should be made to the band secretary. The band also has Public Liability cover.

**Uniform** - the band has two uniforms. Purple mess jackets with purple bow ties and black trousers/skirts and "Walking Outs" with a black jacket, black straight tie and black trousers. Both are worn with a white shirt/blouse buttoned up, black socks/tights and black formal shoes. Percussionist may wear a suitable alternative i.e. plain black shirt/blouse. Additional clothing accessories should be kept within the spirit of the band's functions and not distract from the overall appearance of the band.

The band also accepts additional clothing may be required for cold or wet jobs such as winter coats, scarves, hats, gloves etc. Any queries should be addressed to the Band Manager or Secretary.

The Band Manager or Secretary will let members know which uniform is to be used - as a general rule outdoor jobs tend to use the Walking Outs and indoor jobs and contests use the Mess Jackets. On occasions we are required to wear something different to either.

The band committee is aware that due to wear and tear and the changing membership profile of the band, we do not have a full set of either uniforms. Whilst every endeavour will be made to supply new members with both uniforms, it will not always be possible and alternatives may be suggested. This matter is a key review point for the next 12 months.

Band members unable to attend concerts/contests may be required to give up their uniforms on a temporary basis to help us supply others.

**Personal Responsibility** - it's the responsibility of band members to:

- Attend concerts, contests and rehearsals in a prompt and regular manner
- Communicate with the officers of the band with any issues
- Devote personal time to practise their instrument to maintain and develop their technique, plus parts assigned to them within the band
- Represent the band at public events to the best of their abilities
- Encourage other members of the band to improve and enjoy music making and provide a positive environment for members, guests of the band, new players and other visitors
- Take care of music and band property - reporting any issues to the relevant committee member as soon as possible
- To not defame nor overly criticise the band or its members in public, to other bandspeople, on social media or other areas of public consumption
- To be a good bandsperson in all that entails

- To support the organisation of the band, be constructive and proactive with any suggestions
- To help the band and its partners to continue providing a musical outlet for many years to come

**Communication** - the band has a website (<http://backworthcollieryband.org.uk/>) and a facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/backworth/>) for the general public and band members. The website is the main resource for members to find out about engagements and rehearsals. We also have a private members group on Facebook for in-band discussions and we strongly suggest new members and parents/guardians of under-18 members to join the group. Alternatives are made for those without access to Facebook.

General band matters will be discussed at rehearsals - however as not every member can make every practice, members should always check the website/facebook regularly.

It is assumed that members are able to attend all band functions unless otherwise informed. If members are unable to attend band activities, they should contact the following people in good time:

- Concerts - Band Manager
- Contests - Contest Secretary
- Rehearsals and General Attendance - Secretary

If members are unable to attend a concert or contest at the last minute, it is vital they contact the Secretary by phone or text to let them know.

**Backworth Training Band** - members of the band formed the Backworth Training Band in 2001 to provide musical training and support to players wishing to learn brass and percussion. The band meets every other Friday night, with a beginners class from 6pm and main training band from 6:30pm to 8pm. The sessions are held at Backworth Social Club. Players of any age and ability are welcome to join the Training Band.

The Colliery Band and Training Band have strong ties and share several resources - however they are independent organisations. Members of the Colliery Band are encouraged to attend Training Band rehearsals to help with tuition of learner players and are welcome to help with the running of the band.

More information is via Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/backworthtrainingband/>

**Last Updated: 31/07/2017**