



President: Mayor of Test Valley Borough

# Test Valley Brass

[www.testvalleybrass.co.uk](http://www.testvalleybrass.co.uk)

*Welcomes you!*



# Welcome to the Test Valley Brass Family.

In this welcome booklet we'd like to introduce you to our organisation.

There are four bands in the Test Valley Brass family. These are 'Test Valley Brass Senior Band', 'Test Valley Brass Youth Band', 'Frosty's Band' and the 'Test Valley Brass Contest Band'.

The Youth Band and Frosty's Band rehearse once a week on a Thursday, from 6.30pm until 8.00pm during term time, with a break in the middle for socialising and buying snacks from the tuck shop. Alongside this runs the Education Programme which includes our very own Musicianship Award Scheme. This helps improve individual musical ability and also teaches complete beginners.

The Senior Band rehearses once a week on a Monday, from 8.00pm until 9.45pm.

The Contest Band is made up from players from both the Senior Band and Youth Band and rehearses in preparation for its contests as required. This is generally on a Tuesday.

Frosty's Band is the beginners band which introduces learners to the art of playing in an ensemble before 'graduating' to the Youth Band, Senior Band and Contest Band.

Rehearsals take place in Test Valley Brass's very own band room which is located at John Hanson School, on Floral Way in Andover.

Please read through this booklet – we hope you will find it interesting and informative. If you do have any questions at any time please do not hesitate to ask!

We do hope that you enjoy being part of Test Valley Brass and we look forward to seeing you.

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## Contacts

Web Site: [www.testvalleybrass.co.uk](http://www.testvalleybrass.co.uk)

Bandmanger: [bandmanger@testvalleybrass.co.uk](mailto:bandmanger@testvalleybrass.co.uk)

Senior Band: [seniorband@testvalleybrass.co.uk](mailto:seniorband@testvalleybrass.co.uk)

Youth Band: [youthband@testvalleybrass.co.uk](mailto:youthband@testvalleybrass.co.uk)

Secretary: [secretary@testvalleybrass.co.uk](mailto:secretary@testvalleybrass.co.uk)

*Alternatively, please feel free just to pop along to a rehearsal at the band room (John Hanson School) and introduce yourself.*

*We are a very friendly bunch and will always be pleased to see you.*

# The Test Valley Brass Family.



## *Test Valley Brass Senior Band*

**Test Valley Brass Senior Band** – the original town band formed in 1970 and is now recognised as one of the leading Brass Bands in the South of England. They have won National contests, toured parts of the UK and Europe, broadcasted on local and national television, played on the QEII out on voyage, released a CD and raised money for charity. They regularly perform highly entertaining concerts at The Lights Theatre (including a very popular Christmas concert, where the unexpected seasonal surprise usually occurs!), and can be seen at fetes, craft fairs, Christmas carolling etc. in the area. They play all styles of music, from classical to pop, jazz to film and modern to old.



## *Test Valley Brass Youth Band*

**Test Valley Brass Youth Band** - was formed as a training band in 1990 to encourage local young people to learn to play a brass instrument. The band grew in terms of numbers and ability and was renamed from the 'training band' to 'Test Valley Brass Youth Band' in 2002. For several years now, the TVB Youth Band has played a small selection of pieces at The Lights Theatre Concerts, appearing alongside the Senior Band. The band now plays at local fetes and performs concerts in the area, and is recognised as an important part of the local community. In 1999, TVB introduced an exciting new education and musicianship scheme which allows complete beginners to enjoy the benefits of being able to play a Brass Instrument. The Youth Band emphasises the enjoyment and fun within the Brass Band environment and organises non musical activities throughout the year to promote teambuilding and communication between the young people and within the organisation.



## *Frosty's Band*

**Frosty's Band** – Was formed in 2002 for the beginners and is really part of the Youth Band; to help them grasp the basics before being able to take part in the Youth Band full time. Frosty's supports players as they go through the difficulties of first learning to play an instrument and within an ensemble. Members have the opportunity to play in a smaller group and some easier music prior to moving up to the Youth Band. The education program helps guide the young people through the necessary steps and requirements to move up as a Yellow pin will take you from a Pre-Lim into Frosty's Band. A Green pin takes you to a cross-over where you have half a rehearsal with Frosty's and half with the Youth Band and a Red pin moves you up to the Youth Band full time.



## *Test Valley Brass Contest Band*

**Test Valley Brass Contest Band** - Came into being in 2009 to build on the success of previous Test Valley Brass contesting bands and to ensure it met the needs of the Test Valley Brass Members. This was achieved by simply being created and forming as and when required from the players within the existing Senior Band and Youth Band. This gives the opportunity for everyone within Test Valley Brass to go contesting if they so wish, and alternatively not to contest if this is what they prefer. Contests also give the opportunity to assess the standard of the band while pushing members to achieve their very best potential. Not to mention some fun weekends away, at contests.

## The Aims of Test Valley Brass

The members of Test Valley Brass have set the organisation some aims, this is to help improve the organisation and have it structured more towards the needs and wants of it's members. These Aims are:-

### *Continuous personal/ band development*

**Aim:** Commitment from players to develop themselves. Personal practice and improvement needed to keep pace with the developing band.

**Measure:** Contest band have better results in regional or regular contests. The conductor to periodically provide feedback to players

### *Player attendance to all jobs*

**Aim:** Average attendance at all band rehearsals and engagements is high for all players

**Measure:** Every seat filled at every rehearsal and engagements (Minimum aim 75% attendance)

### *All members support the running of the band*

**Aim:** As many members as possible to take an active part in running the band

**Measure:** No problem getting volunteers for various roles. Workload is spread amongst members, friends and family of TVB.

### *Playing to the best of our ability*

**Aim:** Focused/ Concentration on conductor during music playing. The program of music is varied in ability.

**Measure:** After playing the band comes out of band practice/ off stage feeling happy

### *Enjoying playing music*

**Aim:** Music is varied and players have more positive attitude to the music being played (even if the players don't like it)

**Measure:** The band is observed positively playing the music.

### *Have open/ good communications*

**Aim:** Working and planning together as a group

**Measure:** The TVB family is working together (no surprises) and supporting each other.

### *Provide environment to socialise and make guests welcome*

**Aim:** Members talk to new players joining, encourage awareness of social activities

**Measure:** Spontaneous socializing activities occur (not just organized events)

### *TVB have players that are flexible in where they are required to play*

**Aim:** Playing positions/ instruments for the good of the band

**Measure:** Players willing to consider moving to other parts and instruments.

### *The bands play at a variety of jobs*

**Aim:** Have a variety of engagements for the band to play at. Band players willing to travel to various venues and integrate with different groups

**Measure:** Consensus of band members together with a balanced engagement list with variety and sensible/ equitable events.



## Test Valley Brass – What we have to Offer

- As a group Test Valley Brass offers many, many things. To the wider community we offer the enjoyment of listening to brass band music, attending concerts and supporting very worthwhile charities. To individuals we offer fun, friendship, education and enjoyment.
- **Tuition** - As well as the opportunity to play in a brass band, Test Valley Brass also offers individual tuition and small group work for the beginner.
- **Achievement** - As part of the Education Programme and Musicianship Scheme we make awards to reward the hard work that the members put in. We'd like them to be proud of their achievements and feel recognised by their peers.
- **Progression** – As players get better, they will find themselves 'moving up the ranks' to more challenging parts within the bands. Eventually we'd like to see players move up to Test Valley Brass Senior Band and the Contest Band, where members could experience the thrill of the national or international stage.
- **Opportunity** - Being in a brass band can offer so many opportunities – travel, performance, socialising, team spirit, meeting new people, musical skills, master classes with professional musicians, rewards for success and achievement and much more; we believe it's a good fun way of self improvement and staying out of trouble!



## Test Valley Brass Musicianship Award Scheme

The **Test Valley Brass Musicianship Award Scheme** challenges members to become true 'bands people' in both a musical sense and through the wider aspects of being part of a band. This is based on the requirements of a Brass Band but is flexible enough to ensure the individual emphasises their individual preference and reason for being part of a Brass Band.

Starting at a basic level of learning to put up a stand and how to hold your instrument, members can move up through the levels and learn about how the committee works in its different tasks such as PR, fundraising, logistics and organisation, the brass band repertoire and structure, performing solos with the band and finally at gold level spending a week's residential at a brass band summer school.

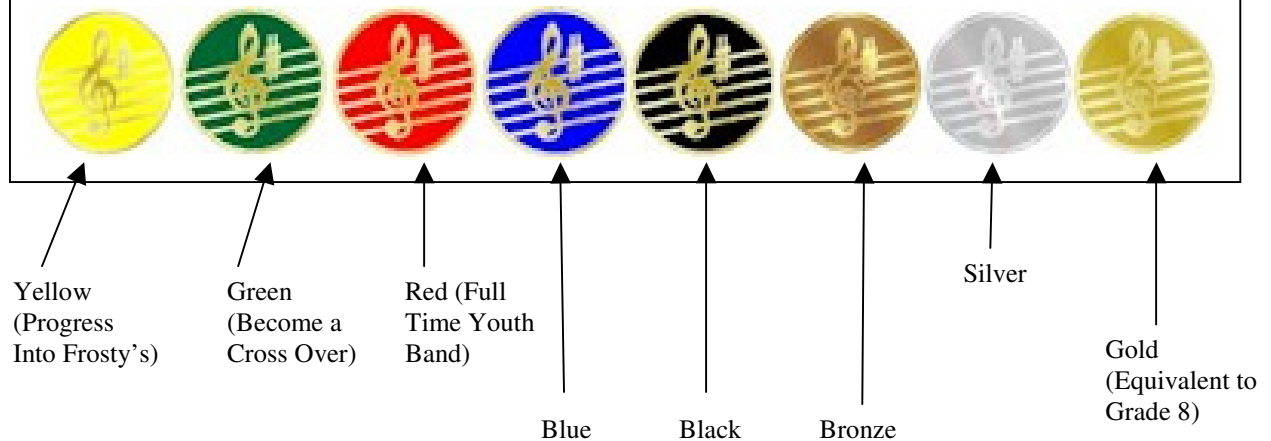
If you choose to sign up for the award scheme you will be given a study book and scales book. You work towards tasks at a level of your choice and when a level is completed you receive a badge for your uniform and a certificate. For those over the age of 14, these awards qualify as part of a Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The Scheme is optional but we do like to encourage individuals to take up the challenge if possible as it is a good method of continual improvement. Members can work towards which ever level they wish, achieving tasks at their own pace. The music gets harder the further up the levels you go!

What you will receive in your award scheme membership pack:

- A Personal Record book – this contains all the tasks for all the levels of the award scheme.
  - The first level is '**Prelim**' in which enough skills are learnt for the beginner to join 'Frosty's' beginner band. There is no badge for this although there is a certificate.
  - Once in 'Frosty's Band' the levels to complete are **Yellow**, **Green** and **Red**. When working on the red level, members are encouraged to go along to rehearsals for the main Test Valley Brass Youth Band.
  - Following red, the next levels are **Blue** and **Black**, with black being about ABRSM grade 5 standard.
  - On from this are the final 3 levels, **Bronze**, **Silver** and **Gold**, with gold representing ABRSM grade 8 standards.
- Set studies / scales – all the studies and scales are laid out in a separate book for members to work through. Members may also choose to play alternative pieces from set works from any of the recognised exam boards (ABRSM, Guildhall etc) and any passed grades will automatically qualify for that badge.

## Badges of The Test Valley Brass Musicianship Award Scheme.



### Welfare

At Test Valley Brass we take the welfare of our members very seriously indeed. We have a Welfare Policy which can be viewed on our Website.

- All our Tutors and helpers who assist with the young people are CRB checked.
- We have a Welfare team made up of individuals connected with all areas of the organisation. Again these individuals are listed on our Website ([www.testvalleybrass.co.uk](http://www.testvalleybrass.co.uk))

If at any time individuals young or old feel they have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Welfare Team.



### Important Information

- **Band practice** – The Senior Band practices on a Monday from 8.00pm to 9.45pm. The Youth Band practices on a Thursday from 6.30 – 8.00 pm and the Contest band form and practice on a Tuesday as required.
- **Concerts / engagements** – The Test Valley Brass Bands undertake many engagements and concerts throughout the year, sometimes all together. These could be a formal Saturday evening concert, playing at a fete in the summer, an annual Masterclass, Christmas carolling, or even on stage at a Theme Park or Theatre. It is very important that all members try their hardest to attend all engagements and be punctual – a band is a team effort and without everyone there parts are missed. Parents please help as much as you can in this area.
- **Uniform / Deportment** – The Bands have both Formal and Less Formal uniforms. Please ensure that all members have correct uniform for the job – it is up to members to ensure they are smart, polite and well presented whilst wearing it. In uniform you represent the excellent reputation of the Test Valley Brass family. When on stage all eyes are on you.
- **Instruments / care / music** – You may be lent an instrument. This must be booked out when you receive it and booked back in when you return it. It is very important that you take good care of it, it is yours to take home and use for practice and band engagements. They are very expensive and easy to damage – we will show you how to look after it and would ask that you take great care of it at all times. You will also be responsible for getting your music to band practice and to engagements – even if you aren't there yourself as someone else may need it.

## *Important Information Continued.*

- **Socials** - We enjoy social events for players and their families, and welcome ideas for these occasions.
- **Parental support** We welcome support from parents and hope they can support their children and the band in any way they feel able – from hearing them practice, to attending concerts, to helping with fundraising or joining in with any social events. All help is very gratefully received no matter how small.
- **Subs** – Unfortunately all organisations have running costs. Test Valley Brass is no different. We do ask for a small subscription which is set at the AGM each year.
- **Tuck shop** – During the break at Youth Band practice you can buy drinks and crisps.
- **AGM** – The Annual General meeting is held each year which parents are strongly encouraged to attend. This is everyone's chance to have their say and influence the structure and growth of Test Valley Brass.

## *Support and Sponsorship.*

Running a Brass Band is very expensive. A complete set of instruments costs many tens of thousands of pounds and music runs into hundreds. Not to mention uniforms, stands, renting a band room to mention just a few. Please remember Test Valley has four bands so this is multiplied several times.

At Test Valley Brass we are always very grateful for any donations which are made to help towards improving the band for the young people and its members.

Also to help with these costs we have developed a sponsorship model for individuals and companies alike to help support this fantastic organisation. This ranges from just a few pounds to help with a concert or event to many thousands of pounds to have the band promote your company name. Such as Test Valley **Sponsor** Brass for example.

If you would like to find out more or feel the organisation you work for may be able to help support us please contact the Band Manager on:- [bandmanger@testvalleybrass.co.uk](mailto:bandmanger@testvalleybrass.co.uk) and they will gladly forward a sponsorship pack.

## *Friends of the Band.*

Test Valley Brass is a voluntary subscription family of bands, which means that each playing member pays a monthly subscription to belong to, and help with the running costs of the bands.

We are always pleased to add more people to our list of 'Friends of Test Valley Brass' and any donation, however large or small is gratefully accepted.

If you would like to support TVB and become a friend, you will enjoy the benefits of early notice of concerts, offers of discounted tickets and receipt of a newsletter, and most importantly you will be helping this successful group to grow.

Interested? e-mail: [Friends@testvalleybrass.co.uk](mailto:Friends@testvalleybrass.co.uk)

## *Lending a helping hand.*

As already mentioned running a Brass Band, especially a family of bands as we have at Test Valley is very difficult and takes a lot of work. If you are a parent, husband, wife, partner or friend and are able to lend a hand no matter how small it would be very much appreciated.

Either on a band night:- sorting music, helping set up, running the tuck shop, organising or just generally helping or at concerts when instruments need transporting, young people need supervising, setting up, taking pictures, advertising or marketing and generally supporting; your help is needed and very much appreciated.

You do not need to be musical, though if you are great. Many hands make light work and if you are able to offer just a few minutes here and there it would be great! Please introduce yourself to anyone of our friendly members or helpers and we will be glad to have you as part of the team.