



Wychavon Festival of Brass

Entertainment Contest Rules 2026

These rules replace all previous versions.
Amendments to Rules 9.3/10.3 & 10.4
Effective from Thursday 1st January 2026

Please read carefully as there are several additions, amendments, clarifications and a re-ordering of the information you will need.

Email queries to: contestsec@wychavonfestivalofbrass.org

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I Outline of Contest

- I.1 The Wychavon Festival of Brass contest will take place on:
Saturday 31st October 2026.
All sections will compete on the same day at De Montfort School (TDMS),
Four Pools Road, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 1DQ or at an alternative venue
to be decided and notified.
- I.2 The contest is **‘own choice, concert entertainment’**.
- I.3 Wychavon Festival of Brass (WFB) will apply, where appropriate, the National
Rules, which the Festival Management reserve the right to amend as deemed
necessary.
- I.4 Wychavon Festival of Brass Contest Entertainment Contest Management
Committee will be referred to throughout as the “Festival Management”.

2 Entry Fees, Payment Methods, Section Cancellations

- 2.1 **Entrance applications**, together with the appropriate entrance fee(s) payable at
time of entry. Last entries must be received by the WFB Contest Secretary on-
line **by 8.00p.m. on Friday 4th September 2026**. Once the appropriate fee
has been paid by bank transfer, entry will be confirmed.

Transfer details:

Account Name: Wychavon Festival of Brass

Account no: 50641668 **Sort Code:** 30-80-34

- 2.2 *Please note: WFB no longer accepts postal entries. In case of difficulties please contact
us: WFB Contest Secretary: contestsec@wychavonfestivalofbrass.org*
- 2.3 The entrance fee for Wychavon Festival of Brass Entertainment Contest will be as
per the schedule on the WFB website www.festivalofbrass.co.uk. Having entered
the Contest, should a band subsequently withdraw, fees will not be refunded.
- 2.4 However, fees will be refunded when:
- A band on a waiting list cannot be offered a place or
 - A section is unable to run due to low numbers or other circumstances.
- 2.5 The WFB Festival Management reserve the right to close any or all sections early
where the total numbers of entrants exceed the overall capacity of the contest
venue.
- 2.6 Should this happen, then the closure date for entries and for the payment of fees
will be adjusted accordingly. Waiting lists will be run for late entries.
- 2.7 The WFB Festival Management reserve the right to suspend/cancel any section
when entries are too low to be financially sustainable or because of withdrawals.
The Festival Management regard the cancellation of sections as a last resort and
will endeavour to run small sections whenever possible.

3 Entering a Higher Section

The following will apply:

- 3.1 Priority will always be given to bands performing within their own section.

e.g. in the Championship section, Championship bands are given preference over First section bands wanting to compete at the higher level.

- 3.2 However, if a band wishes to play in a higher section, the extra entrance fee will be roughly 70-75% of the full fee for the higher section. This must be paid at the same time as the main fee but will be refunded after the contest if a place for the higher section cannot be offered. (see entry fee's and prizes list on the WFB website)
- 3.3 If there are vacancies in a section on the closing date for entries, then these will be offered, at the Festival Management's discretion, to those bands that have signified their interest in playing in a higher section and have paid the appropriate fee.
- 3.4 Extra places will be offered in chronological order of receipt of the original application and fees.
- 3.5 A band intending to play in a higher section may offer a different programme of music if they wish but this is not obligatory.

4 Draw Dates

- 4.1 The contest draw, for playing position will take place within ten days of the close of entries. The provisional date for 2026 is Sunday 13th September 2026 though this may be adjusted if capacity is reached sooner.
- 4.2 No later than seven days after the draw, the WFB Contest Secretary will notify each Band Secretary / band representative, of the intended start time for each section, their band's playing position, the adjudicator for that section and the approximate time the band is due to perform.
- 4.3 Any changes to timings, e.g., due to other bands withdrawing from the Festival, will be communicated to the Secretary / representative of those bands affected by such changes as they occur and in good time.

5 Eligibility of Bands and Players

- 5.1 The contest is open to any brass band which is registered with the accredited registries of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For the purposes of the Wychavon Festival of Brass Entertainment Contest, National Grading will apply.
- 5.2 **Overseas Bands, Youth Bands and Non-Registered Bands:**
Wychavon Festival of Brass actively encourages the participation of these groups for which separate arrangements regarding the registration of players will be offered. Please contact the WFB Contest Secretary for more information.
- 5.3 **In all cases:**
 - a The playing band shall consist of the widely recognised brass band composition, comprising 25 brass instrumentalists and a maximum of four percussionists and one Musical Director. *This number of players/personnel will apply to ALL bands entering the competition.*
 - b Players of Registered Bands must be registered with the appropriate registry (except for the permitted number of non-registered players), prior to the 2026 contest. Hence:

- 5.4 New registrations:
Need to be received at the relevant Registry by Friday 23rd October 2026.
- a Transfer applications will need to be received at the appropriate Registry by Friday 16th October 2026 at the latest so that the player's registration with the new band comes in to effect on Friday 23rd October 2026.
 - b In both cases, transfers and new registrations, the player's card must show the date from which the new registration takes effect.
- 5.5 In addition: all bands may choose to use ONE extra NON-PLAYING person to act as a compere and/or Audio-Visual operative (see 9.4 regarding ticketing).

6 Borrowing Players

6.1 Registered Bands: Borrowed Registered Players:

- 6.2 A registered band may borrow up to FOUR registered players and TWO non-registered players (SIX borrowed players in total).
- 6.3 A borrowed registered player must be from a band that is nationally graded in the same section or lower than the borrowing band. If the borrowing band is graded in the Fourth Section or is Unregistered, it may borrow TWO of the permitted FOUR registered players from the Third Section.

6.4 Borrowed registered players:

On the day of the contest, the Band Secretary / band representative will provide confirmation from the borrowed player's home band, signifying the home band's agreement to lend the player and confirming the section in which the lending band plays. To facilitate this, a pro-forma may be downloaded from the WFB website. The completed pro-forma, together with the registration card for the borrowed player, must be presented at registration.

6.5 Registered Bands using non-registered players:

On the day of the contest, non-registered players must present a signed letter to the Contest Registrar confirming they are not affiliated to any other registered brass band. To facilitate this, a pro-forma may be downloaded from the WFB website.

- 6.6 If the band intends to play in more than one section, Band Secretaries / band representatives are asked to bring duplicate documents for borrowed players (both registered and unregistered); photocopies will suffice.
- 6.7 Borrowed and unregistered players are permitted to play for a maximum of TWO bands. A player performing with their own band at WFB may play for their own band and one other.
- 6.8 It is the responsibility of the Band Secretary / band representative of the borrowing band, to ensure that ALL borrowed and unregistered player documentation, submitted to the registrar on the day of the contest, is correct and accurate. If documentation is incorrect, especially if it is shown to be false, the organisers may impose a points penalty, or disqualify the band, as they see fit.

6.9 Unregistered Community Bands:

- a The WFB Management expects unregistered community bands to respect the good-natured competition and integrity that the Wychavon Contest offers bands. In this regard we anticipate that such entrants will truly reflect

their local communities and play at a level that accords with formally registered bands entering the Fourth Section.

- b An unregistered band has the same borrowing rights as other bands entering the Fourth Section and may borrow FOUR registered players. TWO of these players may be drawn from the Third Section.
- c Unregistered bands' other players should be drawn from their regular pool of players that perform at concerts and events local to them.
- d Unregistered bands play in the Fourth Section and may, at the discretion of the WFB Management Committee, enter the Third Section if space is available.

7 Registration

On the day of the contest and prior to their performance:

- 7.1 The Band should be available in the band reception area an hour before their anticipated playing time, from where they will be taken to their changing area by a steward.
- 7.2 A steward will collect each band from the allocated changing area approximately fifteen minutes before their performance slot and escort the Band to Registration.
- 7.3 Band Secretaries must ensure that every player has their registration card to hand, together with the appropriate supporting documentation for borrowed players and non-registered players as required by the WFB Contest Secretary, when reporting to the band registration desk.
- 7.4 Registered players must present their registration cards to the nominated WFB registrar for validation and stamping.
- 7.5 Unregistered bands will receive separate instructions regarding the naming of their players before the contest and subsequent registration on contest day.
- 7.6 The one additional non-playing Compere/AV operative, when used, should accompany their band through Registration. (See 8.4 and 9.4).
- 7.7 Changing rooms must be vacated fifteen minutes after a band has finished its performance.

8 Tickets / Wristbands

- 8.1 A maximum of 30 free tickets (wristbands) will be provided for each competing band, one for each of the 25 brass players and four percussionists, and one for the Musical Director.
- 8.2 No further tickets will be issued (except in the case of a disabled or injured player who may require the assistance of an enabler; band secretaries are asked to contact the WFB Contest Secretary in good time if this is required).
- 8.3 **Wristbands must be worn at all times:**
To give access to all performance halls throughout the day and to the changing rooms and registration areas prior to competing in their own section.
- 8.4 **Compere/Audio-Visual operator:**
A band may use ONE extra non-playing person to act as compere and/or Audio-Visual operative. If the 30 tickets per band are already allocated, then the compere/AV Operative will need to purchase an extra ticket.

- 8.5 Bands using non-playing chaperones or responsible persons:**
When playing children aged 16 or under will need to acquire additional tickets if all the tickets provided are being used already.
- 8.6 Advance bookings for supporters'**
Tickets at a reduced rate will be made available to competing bands following the draw. ***These specific orders are to be enclosed with scores and paid for by cheque by Friday 23rd October 2026 using the proforma provided by WFB.*** Online tickets will also be available until nearer the date of the contest.

9 Performance Content, Comperes and Audio-Visual Operators

- 9.1** Each band must play a programme to include a stand-up solo brass or percussion item which must be played by a registered player of that band. The solo item may not be played by an unregistered or borrowed player. Other combinations may be included in a band's programme (duets, quartets etc.) but these will not be eligible for the solo award.
- 9.2** Any enhanced entertainment or choreography must be performed by the band's stage party of instrumentalists (*the band's own players, borrowed registered players or unregistered players*).
- 9.3** Bands wishing to make a visual presentation either to accompany choreography etc. or as free-standing entertainment must ensure that no commercially made films, or excerpts from films or stills, are used*. Such use will infringe copyright regulations and put WFB at severe financial risk. Any band found using copyrighted commercial material will face automatic disqualification. (**this includes both license free items and items for which a license fee has been paid by a band. Reason: It is impossible for WFB to monitor and check the validity of claims by any band that it has made legitimate payment for commercially produced graphic and cinematic work given the time available and the work this would incur. It is safer all round for bands to produce their own, original work - using AI if necessary.*)
- 9.4** A band may choose to use ONE only NON-PLAYING person as compere and/or an Audio-Visual operator.
If all the 30 band tickets/wristbands are used up by playing members of the band then the compere/AV operator, will need to purchase a public ticket in advance of the band's performance. The WFB Contest Secretary should be notified beforehand if a compere and/or Audio-visual operator is to be used. *Please note: WFB does not provide a compere.*

Whilst WFB actively encourages and fully supports all bands to showcase and maximise other talents within the Band and will look to facilitate this the best it can, any breach of these rules, at the discretion of the Festival Management, may incur a points penalty or, in extreme cases, disqualification.

10 Performance Timings

- 10.1** No member of the band is allowed access the performance area in advance of their scheduled time (usually on the hour or half hour). The fact that the previous band may have finished sooner than anticipated is irrelevant.

- 10.2 30 minutes per band are scheduled, to include setting up time, the band's performance and dismantling time which will commence as per the published programme. Any band exceeding this time limit risks, at the discretion of the WFB Committee, points deduction and/or disqualification.
- 10.3 The performance shall last no longer than 20 minutes from the first to the last note sounded*. Hence:
1. Spoken narrative made before any music starts is exempted.
 2. Once the performance commences the timing is continuous and therefore will include all subsequent spoken words/applause and played music etc. (but will not include the applause at the end of the programme).
(*sounded' will include any singing/humming /played instrument/percussion etc)
- 10.4 One point will be deducted for every minute or part-minute played beyond the 20 minutes allowed.
(A small concession on timing may be permitted by the adjudicator in the case of excessive applause for an outstanding performance or to accommodate the untoward - such as a music stand falling over or laptop failure. Bands are, however, advised to ensure that their programme is scheduled to last no more than 20 minutes - any generosity over timing is entirely at the discretion of the adjudicator in the light of prevailing circumstances and is not guaranteed).
- 10.5 It is expected that a band's performance should be no less than 17 minutes long (including applause). Points may be deducted, at the Adjudicator's discretion, where a band's performance is overly brief.
- 10.6 Where a band has a disabled or injured player that may need extra time and consideration, the WFB Contest Secretary should be informed so that appropriate arrangements can be made, particularly regarding Registration arrangements and performance area access.

11 Music Scores

Permitted¹ full scores, or conductor copies of the chosen music, must be forwarded by Friday 23rd October 2026 at the latest, to the postal address supplied by the WFB Contest Secretary. Failure to comply will lead to automatic disqualification.

Scores do occasionally go astray, so WFB recommends that proof of postage/dispatch is retained by the band.

All scores **MUST** be legible, properly assembled and in playing order. If this is not the case, points may be deducted at the Adjudicator's discretion.

- 11.1 A cover sheet must also be included in the pack to confirm the running order of the pieces to be played, together with the name of the soloist and the instrument they will play. A standard form can be downloaded from WFB website.
This form is also used to inform the PRS of your programme so that we conform to their licensing rules.

¹ WFB assumes that bands seek the publisher's permission to copy music for competition purposes.

- 11.2 Scores can be collected, along with the Adjudicator's remarks, after the prize giving ceremony at the end of each section. Uncollected copied scores will be destroyed.

12 Music Stands and Percussion

- 12.1 Thirty music stands together with specified percussion instruments advised to bands beforehand, will be provided by the Festival Management. Any more music stands required must be provided by bands themselves.
- 12.2 A plan of the layout of the percussion instruments will be made available on the WFB website well in advance of the contest. Only in exceptional circumstances will a band be permitted to move percussion (for example when offering a percussion solo as a main item) and the WFB Contest Secretary must be notified by Friday 23rd October 2026 .
- 12.3 Percussion will be checked for damage between performances. The cost of any repairs required will be charged to the offending band.
- 12.4 Bands and Musical Directors are reminded that whilst this is an 'entertainment contest', they should consider very carefully the level of percussion that can be practicably managed given the limited time available to enter and leave the stage area.
- 12.5 Any band may bring extra percussion instruments as they wish—but please inform the WFB Contest Secretary of any large items by Friday 23rd October 2026 so any necessary access arrangements can be made.
- 12.6 WFB music stand banners will be provided. Bands' own stand banners are not permitted.

13 Adjudications

- 13.1 Adjudication is 'open'. The adjudicator will receive a copy of these rules, together with Adjudicator's Guidance Notes.
- 13.2 The Adjudicator's interpretation of the Rules and Guidance Notes will be final. The notes made during the performance by the adjudicator will be returned to each competing band with their scores, at the end of prize giving.
- 13.3 The Adjudicator's Assistant will assess the visual presentation of the band for the Entertainment Award'; they will also time the performance and the overall time allowed.
- 13.4 Any notes made by the Adjudicator's Assistant are not formal adjudications and will serve only to help the assistant and will not be released.

14 The Awarding of Prizes

- 14.1 First, Second and Third place prizes will be awarded in all sections – except:
- 14.2 At the discretion of the Festival Management if, on the date of the draw or as the contest approaches, the number of entries for a section is four bands or less (including any bands from a lower section that have indicated their intention to compete in the higher section and especially where the number of lower section bands is disproportionately high relative to the number of remaining bands overall) the contest in that section will not be held.

- 14.3 At the discretion of the Festival Management, only two prizes will be awarded in any section if, on the date of the draw or subsequently, there are six bands or less in a section.
- 14.4 All named trophies will be kept in good condition by the winning bands and then returned to the Festival Management in time for the following year's contest.
- 14.5 Where a returnable trophy is lost or damaged, in the possession of the band, the WFB Contest Secretary must be informed as early as possible, and arrangements made for the trophy to be replaced or repaired at the band's expense.
- 14.6 Each band secretary will be required to sign a form (on the day of the contest) agreeing to take responsibility, on behalf of their band, for the receipt and maintenance of trophies, and to pay for any repairs or replacements that are deemed necessary by the Festival Management if loss or damage occurs to Festival trophies held by the band.
- 14.7 Awards will be presented at the end of each section to band representatives. Please try to ensure that someone is there to represent your band and to join the stage party.
- 14.8 Prize money will be as per the attached schedule / as shown on the WFB website and will be remitted by BACS during the week after the Contest.
- 14.9 The trophies awarded for first place, second, third places and for the youngest player(s) must be returned to the Wychavon Festival of Brass at a suitable date prior to the next contest. Bands will be informed of where and when to return these trophies.
- 14.10 The certificates, awarded at the same time as the trophies, are retained by the band to commemorate their success.
- 14.11 Additional trophies (non-returnable) will be given for other categories, such as the Best Soloist, Percussion, Most Entertaining Band etc. These prizes are awarded at the discretion of the Festival Management.

15 Venues

- 15.1 Smoking is NOT allowed within the buildings or grounds of the venue except where special provision has been made.
- 15.2 Bottled water or soft drinks only, shall be permitted in the changing rooms and performance halls. Alcoholic drinks must not be taken away from the bar area.
- 15.3 No action by a band player or supporter shall be permitted which shall have the effect of spoiling the enjoyment of the contest for other people. The Festival Management reserves the right to take whatever action it sees fit in this regard, up to and including disqualification from the contest.
- 15.4 The cost of repair or replacement for any damage will be charged to the individual or band responsible for that damage.
- 15.5 The Band Secretary / band representative shall be responsible for bringing these rules to the notice of the band's players and supporters and shall be responsible for their conduct at the contest.

16 Safeguarding and Child Performance Licensing

The WFB Contests has Body of Persons Approval using the Brass Bands England scheme.

This means that all children aged 16 or under are eligible to play at the contest in 2026 without the need for individual performance licenses. However, it is essential that bands provide the proper supervision for their child players and any other vulnerable persons within their band.

Hence:

- 16.1 All bands must provide the name of their Safeguarding Lead to the contest organisers by Friday 23rd October 2026.
- 16.2 Any child aged 16 or under on the day of the contest must be supervised throughout the day by either:
 - a A playing parent who is in full view of their child or
 - b Another playing, responsible adult with enhanced DBS status who is in full view of the child or
- 16.3 A non-playing, responsible adult with enhanced DBS status who will be allowed to accompany the child through registration and into the performance area.
- 16.4 All approved responsible adults may supervise up to twelve children at any one time so the minimum of supervisors for each band is anticipated.
- 16.5 Any non-playing chaperones or responsible person will need to purchase a ticket if the allocation of 30 tickets given to the band has been used up.

This is a complex area and is more comprehensively dealt with in the Safeguarding Policy available on the WFB website www.festivalofbrass.co.uk

Failure to abide by these safeguarding regulations jeopardises the WFB Contest and as such bands are kindly asked to pay strict attention to our requirements. If contravened, WFB Management team will have no option but to disqualify (reluctantly) the offending band.

17 General Information

- 17.1 The Festival Management may photograph a band's performance, without the use of flash photography, unless the band specifically informs the WFB Contest Secretary by Friday 23rd October 2026 that they do not wish to be photographed.
- 17.2 At the Festival Management's discretion, breaches of these rules may lead to the disqualification of a band.
- 17.3 All protests, complaints, or matters arising under these rules shall be submitted (by Band Secretaries) to the WFB Contest Secretary in writing following the contest. Due consideration will be made, and any outcomes will be communicated to the Band Secretary of the complaining parties as soon as possible. The Festival Management's decision shall be final. Only serious and urgent matters will be dealt with on the day of the contest by the Contest Secretary and Chair (or at least one other committee member).
- 17.4 The Festival Management or officials cannot be held responsible for damage to, or loss of instruments, music stands, equipment or property of any kind. All venues used will carry insurance to comply with statutory requirements.

- 17.5 The Festival Management reserve the right to vary or add to these rules from time to time and to accept or decline an entry.
- 17.6 The Festival Management reserves the right to cancel the contest if it deems it necessary to do so at any time. All entry fees etc. would be returned.

WFB Festival Management Committee

Amended: 22nd December 2025

Wychavon Festival of Brass

Contest Secretary email: contestsec@wychavonfestivalofbrass.org

Registered charity number: 1167590

www.festivalofbrass.co.uk

