



Show Information Pack

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for our production of "Calendar Girls", which will be performed at the Barn Theatre in June 2026. The following information explains more about this production, the characters, your rehearsal commitments and performance requirements. A detailed rehearsal schedule is available on the downloadable 'audition form' on the SMT website.

Cast	15 roles (9 Female, 6 Male) plus Ensemble
Director & Producer	Emma Edwards
Musical Director	Ben Knowles
Choreographer	Jessica Harman
Assistant to the Director	Erica Thornton
Lighting Designer	Beverley Grover
Sound & Lighting Operator	James Nolan
Costume Designer	Hilary Ryan
Set Design	Emma Edwards
Props & DSM	Monique Loosemore

♥ Official Overview

When Annie's husband John dies of leukaemia, she and best friend Chris resolve to raise money for a new settee in the local hospital waiting room. Blasting away all preconceptions of what it is to be in the Women's Institute, they manage to persuade a group of ordinary women in a small Yorkshire town WI to do an extraordinary thing and to make an artistic nude calendar to raise money for charity.

The news of the women's charitable venture spreads like wildfire, and hordes of press soon descend on the small village of Knapeley in the Yorkshire Dales. The calendar is a success, but up turning preconceptions is a dangerous business and none of them expect the emotional and personal ramifications that follow but, gradually, the making of the fabulous and funny calendar causes each of the women to unexpectedly blossom.

Based on the true story of eleven WI members who posed nude for a calendar to raise money for the Leukaemia Research Fund, Calendar Girls opened at the Chichester Festival theatre and has since become the fastest selling play in British theatre history. The true story of the Calendar Girls launched a global phenomenon, a million copycat calendars, a record-breaking movie, a stage play and a musical. Calendar Girls opened at the Chichester Festival theatre and has since become the fastest selling play in British theatre history.

♥ The True Story

The story of the Calendar Girls began in 1998 when John Baker, husband of Angela Baker, was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a type of blood cancer. John sadly passed away after just a few months of treatment, but in the months following their loss, Angela and her friends set about creating the now infamous calendar as something for Angela to focus on and, also, to prove John wrong – he had said they'd never do it!

Through the sale of their calendars, the group aimed to raise enough money to buy a new sofa for the hospital where John had been treated and were amazed when the calendar attracted international press attention. So far, they've raised millions for 'Bloodwise' (formerly Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research), the blood cancer charity they have been long associated with.

♥ Director's Vision

Welcome to Calendar Girls!

This is a story many of us already know and, for many, one we feel personally connected to through the impact of cancer. It is a true British story that Tim Firth has developed into a heartfelt, funny and deeply moving piece of theatre. While it is full of warmth and humour, it is also a story that stays with you long after the curtain falls.

For me, this show is special because it asks for honesty, courage and connection. It will touch you - and it should. At the heart of Calendar Girls is community: a group of people coming together, supporting one another, and finding strength in unexpected places. Our job is to find that truth and take the audience on the journey as it unfolds.

I am keen to gather a company of actors who are willing to take risks, build strong relationships, and really dig deep into who their characters are. Every role matters - no part is too big or too small - and everyone will play a vital role in creating the community of the fictional town of Knapely. This is not about divisions between principals and ensemble, but about building a company that works together to tell this story with honesty and care.

As you prepare, read the words closely. Make clear choices, trust your instincts, and look beyond what is on the page to discover who these people are, how they relate to one another, and how they grow over the course of the story. Calendar Girls is ultimately a play with music, so focus first on character, truth and storytelling.

We look forward to meeting you at the auditions and beginning this journey together 😊

Nudity

Everyone will be aware that the calendar shoot is the best-known aspect of the Calendar Girls' story. It is essential that the audience see nothing that we do not wish them to see in this scene. It will be carefully choreographed and will require great team effort from all those involved to ensure that each person's modesty is protected by her fellow actors. However, if you are uncomfortable about the possibility (and this is live theatre so there may be a possibility!) do not audition for the role of Chris, Annie, Cora, Jessie, Celia or Ruth.

Accents

Calendar Girls The Musical is proudly rooted in the Yorkshire Dales, and our cast use gentle Northern accents to reflect the setting and the spirit of the story. Our focus is always on clarity, character and warmth rather than strict regional precision, ensuring every lyric, joke and emotional moment is easily understood by all audiences while still capturing the heart and humour of Yorkshire life.

♥ Characters

Please note that the ages listed below serve only as a guide, however all ages will be considered for all roles to achieve the best overall fit for the cast. All roles are available and casting is open. An indication of the size of each role has been given based on the time on stage.

CHRIS: 40s – 50s

You want Chris at your party. She will talk to people she doesn't know, find things to say to fill silences and generate laughter. Part of this is because Chris is at home in crowds, holding court, being the centre of attention. Without Chris in her life, Annie would be better behaved, her life less fun. The two of them are like naughty schoolgirls.

ANNIE: 40s – 50s

Annie will join in mischief but, at heart, is more conformist and less confrontational than Chris. If Chris has put a waiter's back up in the restaurant, Annie will go in and calm the situation. However, Annie has enough edge to be interesting and enough salt not to be too sweet. The mischievousness Chris elicits, saves Annie from being a saint.

Together these two are greater than the sum of their parts. The relationship between these roles is of particular importance.

CORA: Late 30s – 40s

Cora went away to college and soon came back pregnant with her tail between her legs. She has too much native resilience to be downtrodden. She is the joker in the pack, but she never plays the fool. Her wit is deadpan. It raises laughter in others, but rarely in herself... Her relationship with her son is more akin to that between Chris and Annie.

JESSIE: 50s – 70s

Get on the right side of Jessie as a teacher and she'll be the teacher you remember for life. Get on the wrong side and you'll regret every waking hour. A lover of life, Jessie doesn't bother with cosmetics, her elixir of life is bravery. Jessie goes on roller coasters. Her husband has been with her a long time and is rarely surprised by her actions. Jessie bothers about grammar, correcting stallholders regarding their abuse of the apostrophe "s".

CELIA: Late 30s – 50s

The fact that Celia is in the WI is the greatest justification of its existence. A woman more at home in a department store than a church hall, she may be slightly younger than Chris or the same age, but she always feels like she's drifted in from another world. Which she has. She is particularly enamoured of Jessie, and despite the fact Jessie has very little time for most Celias of this world, there is a rebelliousness in Celia to which Jessie responds. It is what sets Celia apart from the vapid materialism of her peer group and what makes her defect.

RUTH: 40s – 50s

Ruth's journey is from the false self-confidence of the emotionally abused to the genuine self-confidence of the woman happy in her own skin. Ruth is eager to please but not a rag doll, and despite being Marie's right-hand woman she is desperate to be the cartilage in the spine of the WI and keep everyone happy. She has a spine herself – if she was too wet, no one would want her around. But they do, and they feel protective of her because they sense there is something better in Ruth than her life is letting out. They are proved right.

MARIE: 40s – 70s

Marie (pronounced Maree) has gradually built the current 'Marie' around herself over the years as a defence mechanism. She went to her Oz, Cheshire, and found Oz didn't want her. She came back scorched. The WI is a trophy to her, which justifies her entire existence. There is a lingering part of Marie that would love to be on that calendar.

JOHN: Annie's husband. 40s – 60s

John is a human sunflower. Not a saint. Not a hero. Just the kind of man you'd want in your car when crossing America. When he dies it feels like someone somewhere turned a light off.

ROD: Chris' husband. 40s – 60s

You have to be a certain kind of guy to stick with Chris and Rod loves it. He can give back when he gets and has a deadpan humour which has always made Chris laugh. He drinks a lot but never so much as to have a problem. He would work every hour to make his shop a success. And John was his mate, even though the relationship was originally channelled through their wives.

LAWRENCE: 20s – 30s but any age suitable

Hesitant without being nerdy, Lawrence is a shy man with enough wit to make a joke and enough spirit to turn up at the WI hall in the first place. When he arranges the shots, he is close to female nudity but sees only the photo.

LADY CRAVENSHIRE: 50s – 70s but any age suitable

Lady Cravenshire really doesn't mean to be so patronising, but the WI girls seem from another world, the world of her estate workers. When she makes an entrance, she must make an entrance. She must glide in like a galleon.

BRENDA HULSE: 40s – 60s

Brenda is a woman committed to tedious subjects. In the previous year she spoke to the group on "The History of the Tea Towel". This year it is "The Fascinating World of Broccoli". She soldiers on seriously while her audience dissolves sniggering. Brenda is a bore.

DANNY: 16yrs – 18yrs

Danny is Chris and Rod's son, the conscientious Head Boy.

JENNY: 16yrs – 18yrs

We find out that Jenny is Marie's daughter and has rebelled against her mother for years.

TOMMO: 16yrs – 18yrs

Tommo is Cora's son and Danny's best mate. Tommo is also his mum's best mate

ENSEMBLE: Members of the WI and Knapley Village

♥ Membership and show fees

To take part in Calendar Girls, all cast members are required to pay a £95 show fee and a £35 annual membership fee. These fees help cover production costs, rehearsal space, licensing, costumes and the general running of the group. Participants must be fully paid-up members before rehearsals begin and fees should be settled in full to confirm your place in the production. Further information about the fees, deadline and how to make payment will be shared during the audition process. If you have any questions or anticipate any difficulty with payment, please speak to the team in confidence as early as possible.

♥ Auditions

At SMT, we want to create a company of performers. It's not necessarily about lead roles but a whole company of storytellers coming together to tell our story. It's important for you to think about whether this is the right production for you to be part of, and whether you can commit sufficient time to it. Casting a show is a massive jigsaw puzzle, please inform us if we consider you for a different role, you would be open to that.

Audition Dates:

Wednesday 19th February 7pm – 10pm Barn Theatre, Seaford

Thursday 20th February 7pm – 10pm Barn Theatre, Seaford

****To register your interest please email the audition form found on the SMT website, no later than Sunday 16th February to erica.thornton@seafordmusicaltheatre.co.uk****

Audition Process:

Please ensure that you arrive on time. Each audition will include 1:1 closed auditions for the individual characters where you will have the opportunity to read for the main role(s) you have identified. This will be followed by several small group auditions where you will be asked to read different characters to consider potential pairings / grouping for characters. All auditionees will be contacted as soon as possible after the audition process is completed.

♥ Rehearsal Schedule

Any absences, particularly for compulsory rehearsals, should be discussed with the director in advance of the rehearsal and agreed. Depending on your character, you may not be required for all rehearsals, and you will be informed by the director of times required and not required. Please make all rehearsal times available, we will endeavour to use your time as efficiently as possible.

Full rehearsal schedule is on page 2 of the audition sheet (download from SMT website.)

Below are the key dates for your information:

Wed 11 th Feb	7:30pm	Audition prep
Mon 16 th Feb	7:30pm	Audition prep
Wed 18 th Feb	7:00pm	Auditions
Thu 19 th Feb	7:00pm	Auditions
Sun 31 st May	10am – 6pm	Tech - stagger
Mon 1 st Jun	7:00pm	Tech - full
Wed 3 rd Jun	7:00pm	Dress rehearsal
Thu 4 th Jun	7:00pm	Dress rehearsal
Fri 5 th Jun	7:00pm	Opening night
Sat 6 th Jun	2:30pm	Performance 2
Sat 6 th Jun	7:30pm	Performance 3
Thu 11 th June	TBC	Hold for potential call
Fri 12 th June	7:30pm	Performance 4
Sat 13 th June	2:30pm	Performance 5
Sat 13 th June	7:30pm	Performance 6
14 th June	3:00pm	Performance 7

BREAK A LEG!!