

North Kingston Choir

Meeting Agenda

21st July 2016

online discussion

Present

Jem Goddard (JG) – Chair

Jessica Bate (JB) – Musical Director

Daisy Morris (DM) – Events Officer

Vanessa Hartley (VH) - Treasurer

Emma Richards (ER) – Social Secretary

Tristan Bate (TB) – Communications Officer

Simon Thomas (ST) – Secretary

Alan Waterman (AW) – Membership Officer

1. Rehearsal venue

- JB - Plan to start rehearsals at Fern Hill School hall from 12 September. TB - I Think Fern Hill is worth a go with the breakout rooms, use of piano, use of whiteboard etc.
- **AW to Confirm dates with Fern Hill - 12 September (no rehearsal on 24 October for half-term) until 5 December inclusive (12 weeks) plus possibility of extra rehearsal on 8 Dec.** AW - The booking and start date have been confirmed with the school. I'll tell them about 24th October nearer the time and will enquire about 8th December once the new term starts; being a Thursday the hall may already be in use.
- **AW to confirm whether music stands and white board can be used.** AW - So long as they are accessible (and we leave them as we find them) then there won't be any problem using the white boards and music stands. If the stands aren't immediately visible then I'll talk to Corinne.
- **AW to Confirm key holder with Fern Hill - note AW has asked Jim Hawthorne to be back-up key holder.** AW - As far as Fern Hill are concerned, I'm the principal key holder. Jim has agreed to act as substitute.
- **VH to cancel Tudor Hall bookings**

2. Membership

- JB - To keep membership at existing 46 members with same men/women split? JG - agree, too many more would become tricky logistically (& I suspect musically?). ST - agree don't enlarge, we saw that less people makes for more cohesion in our extra rehearsal before summer concert. TB - agree keep the same.
- JB - To discontinue offering tasters? JG - yes but could we ask them to pay first and then refund the fee if they decide not to come?? Might filter out time wasters. ST - I think we should continue offering a taster session - people need to determine whether the choir is for them, it would generate unnecessary work to receive a payment then refund. But we should be strict about timescales for payment. TB - I agree with Simon, it's unfair to ask people to pay for a term without having tried out. It might also discourage people from joining or worse they pay up and then don't come for ages. AW - I was under the impression that we

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have replaced tasters with a free of charge first session once someone has been offered a place. This is certainly what happened with Lucy, Sam and Denise.

- JB - Decision as to whether we have cut off in term for new members joining (for example, no new members after 3rd week into term?). ER - not sure, if people have been on the waiting list for 6 months it seems a shame to keep them waiting for longer if a space is available. Understand it may be hard for them to join any concerts but that could be made clear before the space is offered? JG - not sure, if people have been on the waiting list for 6 months it seems a shame to keep them waiting for longer if a space is available. Understand it may be hard for them to join any concerts but that could be made clear before the space is offered? ST - agree that they could come but no guaranteed place in concert. TB - any choir needs new blood to keep moving forward. If there are people wanting to join we should let them join any time but maybe not in the 3 weeks before a concert). AW - I'm in favour of a cut-off; it makes joining far less daunting where there is a concert in the offing.
- **AW to fill places as they become available when members leave**
- JB - Discuss re existing members keeping membership open but not attending for a term due to work commitments or whether place is filled? ER - I think if we let people know that they should come and chat with someone before making the decision to leave then there may be occasions when this would be good. JG - agree. TB - I agree. AW - My recollection of the committee meeting at the Cardinal is that we argued quite strongly against keeping places open. Has anything changed since? We have more than enough ladies keen to join in the event of places becoming available (but not men) so now that we have a waiting list, I think our original decision should stand.
- JB - Discuss re approaching handful of members who have had sporadic or poor attendance and have not sung at any concerts since joining? ER - good idea, seems a shame for a space to be taken by someone who doesn't join concerts etc. JG - agree. ST - agree, we need to be firm in the best interests of the choir as a whole. TB - this is a bit tricky as we don't have any minimum attendance rules and we always wanted to avoid a tap on the shoulder for people who have been busy and not coming that much. Maybe an informal 'is everything ok' type conversation would be best. AW - I agree, in the first instance, having a quiet word with the miscreants and monitoring the situation going up to Christmas.

3. Fees and finance

- JB - £32 a term to continue. ER - yes. JG - would love to if we can get HMRC agreement. AW - Agreed
- JB - Whether to start gift aid from Sept? ER said yes. ST – yes. TB - Let's go for it. Will take some administration though. AW - If someone has a handle on the practicalities and is prepared to do the work, then I agree.
- JB - Whether to apply for RBK grant? ER - yes. JG - am happy to do this. I spoke to them and the fact we have applied before is not a problem - as long as we have a good case. My initial thoughts are we could consider buying 2 condenser microphones and a high (3 meter stand for amplifying the whole choir rather than just the soloist, also consider a small PA ???). ST –

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yes. TB – agree, plus mixing desk. AW - If someone has a handle on the practicalities and is prepared to do the work, then I agree.

4. Folders

- JB - Whether we have funds to get some nicer bespoke NKC folders - they are looking a bit tired now! ER - yes I think we are in need of some nicer folders now - I am not volunteering myself to break the news to Rob though! JG - agree, mine is a disgrace and BTW I did come across a choir called the Magenta choir (really!). TB - I agree, I think Making Music do some. AW - Incidentally, I currently have a stock of four folders.
- Now we have a core group of members - would probably be willing to pay a contribution?

5. Rose Cafe Christmas concert

- JB - Booked for Sat 10 December 1145am
- DM to liaise directly with Rose staff and plan flyers/publicity
- JB - To explore whether we can have rehearsal there week prior to performance

6. Socials

- JB - Date for social in Sept/Oct - whether to do karaoke again? Or another team-building activity! ER - karaoke is always good would we go for the one in Soho or New Malden? Or how about Ping Pong? There is one in Farringdon and one on Old Street. You can fit 20 people round a table which is £28 per hour. For 4 hours for 20 people it would be £5.60 each. Bar food is available. JG - I vote Karaoke but since ER is doing such a great job I will go with whatever she suggests. ST - ping pong is fun but not sure we'd get exclusive access or a private area? TB - Happy with karaoke. Prefer somewhere where the singing can start early!
- JB - Whether to plan for Christmas social after concert on Sat 10 Dec as big Christmas lunch in Kingston? ER - I think if people invite family to attend the concert it is tricky to then go off for lunch and would be hard to find somewhere to book that could accommodate families/friends too. Are we able to stay in the cafe area like last year, I know it is earlier this year but always nice to have a quick drink after and seems more people attend if at the same venue. JG - Agree quick drink or 3 afterwards and main social a week later. ST - I'm working that day. TB - drink in the cafe afterwards then informal low key lunch for whoever wants to come. If we get people to commit beforehand they might bring family along.
- JB - And/or a Friday night 16 Dec? ER - I think an evening thing is easier Pepes was well attended last year. JG - agree. ST - this is much better for me. TB - do this as well!

7. Tours/festivals/concerts next year

- JB - Cornerhouse excellent venue all round - lots of positive feedback received from members
- JB - Note that it was our smallest audience despite having most members in choir - need to explore how to improve audience numbers for next concert

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- JB - Planning for year ahead - proximity of Canbury Gdns concert to summer concert may have led to fewer audience numbers? ER - I think this definitely had an impact. Canbury Gardens was great to bring families to as the children could run around. Another one a couple of weeks later was probably a bit close. JG - Agree with ER. Corner house was great- I think the challenge is not the venue but that we are reliant on a group of loyal friends and family and we need to find ways to perform at events with a wider audience- need to find some festivals /events that want either choirs & other acts to fill a 45 -60 minute slot. I think one summer event , 1 xmas event and 1 Easter event is good, but of course we have to plan up to 12 months ahead. TB - I agree eg Ham fair, busking. I would suggest 1 big concert a year is enough even for die hard supporters! AW - I suspect this was definitely a factor.
- JB - Should we have our big concert in Easter term? ER - could be a good idea. TB - This could allow us to do a festival in the summer
- JB - What about tour/weekend away? Few members keen to help with organisation of this. TB - good idea. We would need a committed organising committee. Suggest one performance eg at a festival / collaboration with another choir, plus maybe something low key like busking for charity. AW - I will, this summer, as a condition of the Fern Hill booking, need to contact all members asking for their mobile phone numbers - unless anyone knows that we already have these? As part of that email, I could include a short questionnaire to try to establish the level of interest in a tour/weekend away, including likely cost, location, timing etc. Would this be an idea?
- JB - Should we book Cornerhouse again for next year? ER - liked it as a venue. JG - Me too they were so helpful and the whole event had a relaxed feeling. ST – yes. TB - Yes
- JB - Application for Chorus Festival Southbank to be submitted again. TB - Good plan. Is it worth asking them why we didn't get chosen last time? Maybe they don't want choirs with a live band
- JB - Any other events to participate in? TB - Ham Festival, Love Kingston, The Streets

8. Choir video

- JB - Keen to do again? ER - Would be nice to do again. Maybe we could take some footage at social events too to add in a more relaxed element. JG – Yes, could we link it to a charity or an event or promote it in some way so we can get more views. Fix you has had a round 1000 views which is pretty impressive, but there are lots of videos of choirs that are basically Karaoke sing- a longs that get a lot more views are nowhere near as good as we are !!!! ST - yes let's do it again, good promo material for applying to stuff too. TB - very happy to edit a video again. Need to decide what sort of video - a film of us recording the song like fix you with cutaways to rehearsal clips etc? Or a more traditional music video with people out and about singing along to one of our recordings? Or a mixture of both? Before Christmas would be good as we'll be preparing for other stuff next year.
- JB - Before Christmas or Easter term? ER - I guess it depends which song. If it is one from last term probably good to do it before Christmas whilst people still remember it.

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9. Music workshop

- JB - Popular with members
- JB - Need to book one for Autumn term plus Spring term? ST - I've only been to one of these but don't think it added great value. Jess already does a great job! TB - I think the choir value doing something a bit different in the workshop. So maybe gospel style or jazz?
- JB - Maïke suggested her singing teacher previously who is a jazz singer
- JB - Other thoughts on genres?

10. Sectionals

- JB - Whether we have nominated leaders for each section (SATB) to help with sectional leading/planning and also act as point of contact for any queries?
- JB - Likely to have more sectional time within weekly rehearsals as space available at Fern Hill so leaders may become more relevant than previously. ER - If people are keen to do it then yes good idea. JG - Sectionals are very productive and I think we already have de facto leaders - would also like to have band sectionals which is now possible at Fernhill. TB - I'm happy to lead bass sectionals. Jem could the band rehearse at Fern Hill instead of Mordern Studio? Not sure if that would be cheaper. There is also the Ham studio to check out.