

North Kingston Choir 9th AGM
Monday 7th February 2022 – 9.00pm
Fern Hill School

Attendees

Committee members: Penny Hamilton (PH, Chair), Georgi Vaughn (GV, Secretary), Sue Manson (Treasurer), Sally Winter (Membership Officer), Shira Keshet (Communications Officer).

Choir members: Darlene Ahmed, Ellie Alderman Lucy Aurelius, Andy Baillie, Diccon Bate, Ellie Bate, Tristan Bate, Alex Buss, Mo Che Yim, Neil Gowe, Vanessa Hartley, Rob Hicks, Nicola Hinde, Corinne Ingram, Marcus le Brocq, Susanne Jessernigg-Rehbein, Lesley Keirle, Rachel Mahoney, Maike Rentel, Emma Richards, Helen Trott, Alan Waterman, Rebecca Watson.

Also attending: Jessica Bate (JB, Musical Director).

Proceedings

1. Welcome by Chair and introduction of existing committee members

PH opened the meeting and introduced the existing committee members: Chair, Penny Hamilton; Secretary, Georgi Vaughn; Treasurer, Sue Manson; Events Officer, Nello Bearzatto; Membership Officer, Sally Winter; Communications Officer, Shira Keshet; Social Secretary, Vanessa Hartley.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Nello Bearzatto, Linton Broadley-Stace, James Clack, Jem Goddard, Katie Treagust and Fiona Williams. Proxy votes were passed to the Chair.

3. Chair's summary of existing committee members' reports for 2021

PH presented the annual report for 2021 (attached hereto).

4. Elections of 2022 committee

The choir members present voted unanimously in favour of the nominees and the members of the 2022 committee were elected as follows:

- Chair: Nello Bearzatto
- Secretary: Rachel Mahoney
- Treasurer: Nicola Hinde
- Events Officer: Andy Baillie
- Membership Officer: Penny Hamilton
- Communications Officer: Shira Keshet
- Social Secretary: Emma Richards/Darlene Ahmed (role share)

5. Motions

There were no motions.

6. AOB & thanks

TB thanked the committee on behalf of the choir for their work, especially for the extra work that had to be done to comply with Covid restrictions.

PH thanked the section leaders for their help in sending messages and reminders to members. PH also thanked the outgoing committee members for all their hard work this year.

PH thanked JB on behalf of the choir for making rehearsals a joy and bringing out the best in all of us. PH presented JB with a gift from the choir members.

GV thanked PH on behalf of the choir for all her hard work over her four years as Chair. GV presented PH with a gift from the choir members.

(Attachment 1)

North Kingston Choir Annual Report 2021

This time last year we were having our AGM via Zoom because we were still in lockdown and hadn't sung together physically since March 2020. Thankfully, this year we can hold it in person again having managed to get our rehearsals back up and running.

It took a huge amount of work from the Committee this year to enable rehearsals to be held in as safe a way as possible for our members. All in all, the Committee met five times this year (20 March, 13 July, 17 August, 12 October and 7 December), with the meeting in March lasting an epic three hours whilst we discussed the risk assessment required to enable us to sing again in person. We have also liaised regularly through the Committee WhatsApp group throughout the year.

1 Events

The highlight of 2021 was undoubtedly the Christmas Concert at Southwark Cathedral on Saturday 5 December. It was an emotional day for a number of reasons – it was the first time we had performed together for two years (the last time being the Christmas concert at the V&A) but it also provided us with the opportunity to sing the song Shallow in memory of Ken, who we sadly lost to Covid the year before. It was an emotional moment for the choir which was also keenly felt by the audience. It was amazing to sing 'O Holy Night' in a Cathedral setting and it was heart lifting to see the standing ovation we got from the audience at the end of the performance.

There was a lot of hard work that led up to the Southwark Cathedral performance and it seems amazing to think that at the beginning of 2021, we didn't know if, and when, we would be able to sing together again.

In the early part of 2021, we kept the community spirit of the choir going by creating another NKC video, this time of the song 'I'll Stand By You' by The Pretenders. Lucy also did one of her brilliant online quizzes in February and we ran four Live Lounge events on 22 January, 5 March, 9 April and 7 May. It was brilliant to see the wide range of member talent on display during these online events with people performing a wide variety of songs including some a cappella! The standard of the videos became more and more impressive and professional at each event with the highlight being at the last Live Lounge event, Corinne's 'Walking in Memphis' video which was produced by her son and included a section specifically shot at Heathrow Airport and Rob's 'Ordinary World' which not only included shots of him singing to camera along the banks of the River Thames but also involved the whole band setting up and then performing in the song. Very impressive!

From March onwards, the Committee started to prepare the grounds for us to get back to rehearsing together in person. Based on Member feedback, the first set of rehearsals in the summer took place outside in the playground at Fernhill School. With all the necessary precautions in place such as social distancing and doing a health check registration, our first rehearsal took place on 7 June. It was great to be back singing again and it was as if we had never been away. New repertoire such as 'Sunshine on Leith' and 'Here Comes the Sun' were practiced but unfortunately the British weather didn't necessarily take the weather themed hint and two out of the original five rehearsals had to be cancelled due to bad weather, however we ran an additional one at the end of July to make up for it.

Indoor rehearsals resumed at the beginning of September with a further round of consultation and risk assessment work done by the Committee over the summer. At the end of September, members of the choir once again supported Tom Speight at his gig at the Fighting Cocks in Kingston. Work began in earnest for what we thought would be two performances – the first at Southwark Cathedral on 5 December and the second the Snowball Concert at the Rose Theatre on 20 December but sadly with the advent of the Omicron variant and the introduction of Plan B restrictions, the Committee made the decision to withdraw from the concert at the Rose, which was then subsequently cancelled anyway. It will be re-run on 14 May and NKC plan to be there!

2 Treasurer's Report

For the year ending 31 December 2021:

1. The accounts for the year show a deficit of income over expenditure of £820. This deficit compares to a surplus of £413 in 2020.
2. The accounts for 2021 represents a part year with activity from the summer only. The main items of expenditure are £880, being the hire of Fernhill Hall, £1,700, the fees for the Musical Director and £612, the cost of attending the 2 concerts, Tom Speight and Southwark Cathedral.
3. Accumulated reserves at 31 December 2021 (i.e. unspent profits from 2021 and earlier years) amount to £4,683.
4. At 31 December 2021, NKC's bank balance amounted to £5,340 (last year end £4,836).

3 Membership

As of 31 January 2021, we had a total of 45 members (30 ladies and 15 men) plus the band members. We currently have 38 ladies on the waiting list and we are in the process of reaching out to fill some of the spare slots.

4 Social Events

As with our singing events programme, COVID had a major impact on NKC's social programme but we did manage to organise two mini socials – one on 9 July and one on 8 October, both at the Queen's Head, and a bigger social event after the Southwark Cathedral concert at the Horniman at Hays. This event was well attended by members and a good time was had by all!

We did have a Christmas Party planned for 17 December at the Canbury Arms but sadly Covid got in the way and it had to be postponed. We hope to rearrange the date soon.

5 Communications

With no external events in the first part of the year, there was little externally facing promotion activity. However, we did contribute to a blog on the Making Music website highlighting our experiences of getting back to rehearsals over the summer.

With indoor rehearsals back up and running in September, we were able to announce our forthcoming performances and videos of our fantastic Southwark Cathedral concert are now uploaded.

Communications has focused on keeping in regular contact with members, updating them on rehearsal plans, events or activities, as well as asking members to do a health check register ahead of rehearsals as part of our Covid safety measures. The members' section of the website has been a valuable tool for us to keep members up to date on the latest Covid guidelines and expected behaviours which have had to be updated several times through the course of the year and 27 newsletters and 23 registration emails have been sent out.

Throughout the year, we have tried to be mindful of members' needs and so undertaken a number of polls and surveys asking for members ideas and opinions on returning to rehearsals safely, and thank you to the Section Leaders – Emma, Rachel and Linton – for updating and reminding members when they were surveyed as well as highlighting upcoming activities.

Finally, thank you to all of the Committee – Sue, Sally, Georgi, Nello, Shira and Vanessa – for their help and support throughout this year. There has been an immense amount of work done over the last year, particularly on the risk assessment side of things, and I really appreciate all the work you have done. This will be my last Chair Report and I can honestly say that it's been a pleasure to run the Committee over the last four years and whilst these last two years in particular have proved challenging in terms of keeping the community spirit alive and what makes NKC so special, I hope you will agree that your Committee has done the choir proud.

And finally, last but certainly not least, I would like to thank Jessica, our Musical Director. She makes our rehearsals a joy to attend and brings out the best in all of us when we sing. We are very lucky to have her.