

North Kingston Choir 8th AGM

Monday 1st February 2021, 8.00 pm

Held on Zoom

Attendees

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

Choir members: Darlene Ahmed, Lucy Aurelius, Åsa Bäckman, Diccon Bate, Ellie Bate, Tristan Bate, Alex Buss, Hannah Deveson, Ellie Giffard, Vanessa Hartley, Corinne Ingram, Susanne Jessernigg-Rehbein, Lesley Keirle, Lu Luo, Rachel Mahoney, Paulene McCaul, Maike Rentel, Emma Richards, Mark Singleton, Katie Treagust, Helen Trott, Alan Waterman, Rebecca Watson, Fiona Williams, Ed Young.

Also attending: Jessica Bate (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, Phil Meir.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Mohd Norizam Bin Che Yim, Linton Broadley-Stace, Jem Goddard and Karen Goddard.

3. Chair's summary of existing committee members' reports for 2020

PH presented the annual report for 2020 (attached hereto) and thanked the outgoing committee members.

4. Elections of 2020 committee

The choir members present voted unanimously in favour of the nominees and the members of the 2020 committee were elected as follows:

- 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

5. Motions

There were no motions.

6. AOB & thanks

Tristan Bate thanked PH and the committee on behalf of the choir for their work in organising virtual choir activities and keeping the choir going while it has been unable to meet in person.

(Attachment 1)

**North Kingston Choir
Annual Report 2020**

It was a very strange year for North Kingston Choir with the Coronavirus pandemic having a significant impact on the activities of the charity, with all physical rehearsals and events stopped from March 2020. At this moment in time, we also do not know when we will be able to resume our regular programme of activities but are optimistic that with the vaccination programme now being rolled out that we might be able to resume singing in the Summer term.

Sadly, North Kingston Choir experienced directly the impact that COVID is having on people's lives as tragically one of our members, Ken Lambatan, died in April 2020. Ken worked as an NHS research nurse at St George's Hospital but had been redeployed to work on a COVID ward. The choir dedicated the recording of the song 'Shallow' in memory of Ken.

The NKC Committee set out to maintain the community spirit of NKC throughout this difficult time, meeting five times (25 March, 19 May, 21 July, 8 Oct, 8 Dec), trying where possible to provide both singing and social opportunities throughout 2020.

1 Events

At the beginning of the year NKC had programmed a busy schedule of events for 2020, including a big concert at Twickenham Theatre. The programme set out was as follows:

- Saturday 18 Apr: Ellie Giffard's wedding. Hampton Court Golf Club
Choir to sing from 2.30pm onwards with band for 45 minutes
- Saturday 16 May: Spring Concert, Twickenham Exchange Theatre. 4pm.
Ticketed event
- Saturday 13 June: Ham Fair, Ham. 3 - 3.45pm. Outdoor gig with band.
- Sunday 11 July: Hampton Court Flower Show (provisional booking)
- Saturday 5 Dec: Christmas performance. Southwark Cathedral, 12-1pm

Before COVID hit, we did manage to have a few rehearsals in January and February 2020, including a workshop with Charles MacDougall. We were preparing hard for Twickenham Theatre performance, learning songs including 'Stand by Me', 'Ain't No Mountain', 'Shallow', 'You're the Voice', 'Take Me to the Church', 'Back to Black', 'Fix You' and 'Something Inside So Strong'. Tickets even went on sale for the event at the back end of February.

However, on 16 March (and a week before the national lockdown) we made the decision to stop all future rehearsals and the following week cancelled all forthcoming events. We are hopeful that we may be able to re-book some of them in 2021.

Singing however did continue for NKC! An initial Zoom rehearsal was attempted on 23 March although it didn't prove very successful. We subsequently focused on working on the development of a new video for NKC with the song 'Shallow', with a Facebook Live rehearsal (18 April) and members and the band submitting their own video recordings which were then edited together. It was at this point that we learnt the news of Ken's death and decided to dedicate this song in his memory.

The 'Shallow' video was first premiered at one of the choir's online social events on 4 May and was also subsequently shown at the virtual Making Music concert on 4 August, where we received some very positive comments and reaction from people who attended the concert online.

A new form of singing programme was introduced in 2020 with the NKC Lockdown Live Lounge events, where members of the choir performed their own choice of song – either live via Zoom or submitted as a pre-recorded video – in front of other members of the choir as part of an informal Friday night music session. To date, we have six Live Lounge events (19 June, 17 July, 11 Sept, 13 Nov, 11 Dec and 22 Jan) with 30 choir members now having performed. It has been fantastic to see so many members step out of their comfort zones, including those who have not previously performed solos, highlighting the incredible range of talent in the choir, not only singing but also in terms of playing instruments as well!

In addition to the Live Lounge events, a series of online Zoom rehearsals were introduced in October. Led by local music producer James Hawkins, five rehearsals took place (3 Oct, 20 Oct, 3 Nov, 17 Nov and 1 Dec) learning 4 songs – 'With a Little Help from My Friends' by The Beatles, 'Friday I'm in Love' by The Cure, 'Reach Out (I'll be There)' by the Four Tops and the choral piece 'Winter Canon' featuring the Christmas Carol 'In the Bleak Midwinter'.

This was a new experience for the choir as singing in your own homes via Zoom is not quite the same as rehearsing and learning new songs collectively in person. Approximately 15-20 choir members regularly attended and the rehearsals culminated in the creation of two virtual videos ('With a Little Help from My Friends' and 'Winter Canon') which were premiered at the Christmas Live Lounge event.

Whilst the online rehearsals proved successful, after subsequent polling of the members, the Committee decided not to proceed with further online rehearsals but will continue with Live Lounge events and collective member videos whilst we await a return to physical rehearsals.

As we move into 2021, we are in the process of recording a new NKC video and learning the song 'I'll Stand By You' by The Pretenders via Zoom rehearsals.

2 Treasurer's Report

For the year ending 31 December 2020:

- The accounts for the year show a surplus of income over expenditure of £413. This surplus compares to £1,623 for the previous year.

- 2020 varies significantly from 2019 as there was only any normal choir activity in the first quarter of the year. There was no expenditure on concerts, although higher expenditure on workshops which relates to the one held in January and the online workshops held in the autumn term.
- Accumulated reserves at 31 December 2020 (i.e. unspent profits from 2020 and earlier years) amount to £5,503.
- At 31 December 2020 NKC's bank balance amounted to £4,836 (last year end £4,476).

3 Membership

As of 31 January 2020, we had a total of 46 members (33 ladies and 13 men) plus the band members. We currently have 52 ladies on the waiting list and 3 men have expressed an interest in joining once we can resume singing again.

4 Social Events

As with our singing events programme, COVID has had a major impact on NKC's social programme with everything moving online.

We did manage to have one face-to-face social on Friday 28 February at the So Bar in Richmond just before the lockdown but since then our socials have taken place via Zoom.

In the early days of the first lockdown, we had several social events that included online quizzes delivered by various members of the choir (30 Mar, 6 April, 11 May, 1 June and 6 July). These were aimed at helping members to keep in touch with each other whilst we waited to see if we were able to get together to sing again. Thank you to Hannah, Alex, Jem, Karen and particularly Lucy for devising some ingenious quizzes – guess the album cover made out of Lego was particularly inspired!

The Live Lounge events became more of our social activity for the autumn term although we did also hold an NKC 'Watch Party' which involved members voting for their favourite old performances to be shown again via Zoom, with individual members providing the stories behind them. Subsequently inclusion of videos of old performances has since become part of the Live Lounge events. NKC is lucky to have a very rich and diverse range of videos of our performances dating right back to 2013 when NKC was first formed and these have not only provided great memories of previous events but also helped to keep the sense of community going during these extraordinary times.

5 Communications

With no external events taking place, there has been little externally facing promotion activity this year. We have posted the 'Shallow' video on our website as well as an update blog of our activities in the first lockdown.

Communications has mainly focused on keeping in regular contact with members, updating them on any online rehearsals, events or activities, including in the early lockdown signposting members to any external online choir rehearsals for information. Over the course of the year 31 newsletters have been sent out, which is on a par with the number of newsletters in any regular year. In addition, members have been posting up videos, photos and some fun comments on Facebook over the past year, keeping the choir in touch with each other.

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 how the choir should continue through the pandemic, and thank you to the Section Leaders – Emma, Rachel, Diccon and Linton – for updating and reminding members when they were surveyed as well as highlighting upcoming events and activities.

The online events and videos could not have been delivered without the technical wizardry of Diccon Bate at mission control, lining up all the videos so that they were shown seamlessly at the Live Lounge events, as well as Tristan Bate for his mastery of video editing skills. The latest video of Nello's performance of The River by Bruce Springsteen was a masterclass in music videos. Thank you to both.

Finally, thank you to all of the Committee – Sue, Sally, Georgi, Nello, Shira and Phil – for their help and support throughout this year keeping the momentum of the Choir going, and finally to Jessica, our Musical Director, whose infectious enthusiasm has helped to make the Live Lounge events one of the highlights of any month.