

St Paul's Church Community Choir

2020: The Community Choir was set up as an all-inclusive singing group aimed at encouraging everyone and anyone whatever their abilities, with a particular welcome to those with cognitive impairment. The repertoire of well-known songs was broad and prior to covid the meetings mostly in the Church Hall although the Church was used during school holidays. Sessions were held on Fridays at 1:30pm with admission from 1pm for a pre-sing cup of tea and biscuits with the option for a second cup of tea at half time. The last face to face meeting was on Friday 13th March 2020 after which the Choir moved online from one of the music teams homes. There were weekly broadcasts from April to July 2020 which after a break in August moved to twice a month until December 2020.

January 2021 on-line: From January we moved to monthly broadcasts. until the summer whilst restrictions on singing remain in force. The first broadcast in January 2021 was to recognise Barbara's contribution in starting the Community Choir and being the key person to oversee and manage the initiative. This event featured her favourite community choir songs and comments from community choir members recognising her significant contribution. The session in April was in memory of HRH Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh and our final online session was in July 2021.

November 2021 in -person: From November 21 in line with Government and church guidance, following protocols, we resumed in-person meetings of the Choir. Following a key stakeholder meeting in September we had agreed to only plan to meet in the church hall as we had noticed lower numbers when using the church. This meant readjusting the schedule to fit in with church hall availability only during school terms hence focussing on Autumn, Spring and Summer terms with a half-term break. To reduce contact time, we decided to meet from 1:30 to 2:30 pm offering refreshments only during the break and not to open at 1pm with an initial cup of tea being offered. Fortunately, we have continued with a core of key volunteers for the organisation including seven pianists.

Ambitions for 2022: We are replenishing our repertoire of songs, focussing on having at least one or two "special" sessions per term i.e., a Jubilee singalong in June and an ABBA tribute in July and on (re)marketing the choir to the community. We may wish to resume an initial offer of a cup of tea, and we are looking into the organisational implications.

Kevin Drury