

# Newsletter

Issue 15: August 2020



## It's life Jim, but not as we know it!

We hope you are enjoying the summer break despite the very variable weather! It has been tough not to meet in person ... but hang on in there, we are looking at all options and plan to hold face-to-face (F2F) rehearsals as soon as official guidance indicates that it is safe to do so (more about that below).

## Autumn term 2020

Our new term will commence on **10 September 2020** and run until **10 December** with a half term the week of **28 October – 1 November**. Initially the meetings will be Zoom only but this will be continuously reviewed.

## Zooming along

Many of us have enjoyed the weekly Zoom sessions and while they are not the same as meeting up in person, they are a great way of keeping in touch. Ann has invested a lot of time in exploring interactive approaches, steadily increasing engagement and interactive activities over the weeks. We have commissioned specially recorded backing tracks which change the experience totally from early Zoom days and make it feel much more like singing together. If you haven't yet watched the beautifully crafted mix of those who sent individual recordings in to create the **Catch a falling star** video, please do. I guarantee that listening to it and seeing choir chums singing along will bring a smile to your face and brighten up your day. The second collaborative recording of **Here comes the sun** will be available soon.

It has been great to see other family members joining in too (our demographics have gone down a few years). **Apollo5** members have also popped in to Zoom to join us on occasion which has been especially lovely since we were unable to join them in concert.

We know that not everyone has joined in the Zoom sessions and it would help us to know why this is, whether it is a personal preference or whether there are any technical difficulties we can help you overcome. If you haven't yet joined us online and would like help to get into the sessions or find out more about them let us know and we will find a **Zoom buddy** to support you.

## Exploring all options for face-to-face rehearsals

There is some good news in that a recent research project, **PERFORM**, has shown that singing does not produce very substantially more aerosol than speaking at a similar volume. But while non-professional choirs can now meet, other restrictions are still in place and there are logistical challenges (2m distance, limits on numbers, cleaning routines, access to toilets etc). We are very lucky that Ann's work and contacts mean she receives the latest information and advice about what is, and isn't, safely possible.

Some of the options we are exploring include whether it is possible to hold small F2F sessions of say up to 15 people on a Thursday night between 7-7.40pm followed by a Zoom session from 8-9pm on the same evening. Depending on how many people were interested, it is likely that this would have to be done on a rotational basis to be fair to all. Another option would be to explore whether we could hold a series of sessions on a Saturday, once or twice a month.

For both options, participants would have to bring their own chairs and sanitiser, sanitise hands on entry/exit, keep two metres apart at all times and sessions would be limited to 40 min to minimise the amount of time people are in a closed space. We would have to allow 20 min to 'clear' the room and allow particles to disperse. Face-to-face rehearsals are likely to incur additional expenses.

It is likely that F2F options will incur additional costs which we would have to pass on to those attending.

We also need to explore what Winchcombe School would be happy with, any additional cleaning costs, how this might work alongside their weekly deep-clean cycle, access to toilets etc. We are also looking at other possible venues if Winchcombe is not viable.

## Members' survey

As we plan the autumn term around the current restrictions it would help the committee enormously to know what you would feel comfortable with and how you feel about the Zoom sessions, whether you have joined us or not (and if not, why this may be). Please complete our [short survey](#) to guide us further. If you could do this by **Monday 14 September** that would be much appreciated.

Survey link: <http://bit.ly/TRCC-C19>

## What's you can look forward to this term

Ann is working on some new pieces and recordings and continues to evolve our online sessions, drawing on her wider experiences. We have some new pieces planned with recorded backing tracks along with a new twist on some past favourites and Ann is already planning for Christmas!

In the line-up for the autumn term so far we have:

- **Shenandoah** – with the opportunity for choir members to contribute to a recording
- **There's a River Flowing in My Heart** - a beautiful four-part piece we can learn with the option to record for those that would like to
- **Vivaldi Gloria** - first movement - lively, fun and recording this may also be possible
- **Sweet Afton** - a gorgeous arrangement of this traditional Scottish folk song which we can record
- Winter/Christmas music - Ann thinks we will be able to record **Amid the Falling Snow**, the Enya piece we sang in our January 2020 concert and is also looking at other suitable music

We will also have a **guest or two** dropping in to say hello and do some **singing with us!**

And if you need any further encouragement, an experiment conducted by the [Trust me, I'm a doctor team](#) found that singing can give us a natural high and improve mood. When compared to reading, cycling and dancing, singing showed the biggest increase in endocannabinoids of 42%, twice as much as cycling!

**Do join us for the autumn term – we look forward to seeing you soon**

## Thank you

Both Ann and Christine have invested a lot of time, effort and thought into making the Zoom sessions interactive to keeping the choir going which has been very much appreciated. Thanks too to Angie Creed for organising the Zoom sessions and sharing the links and to Brin Snowdon for keeping those not on Facebook up to date.

And a big **THANK YOU** to all the members who generously made a donation to the running costs last term. This made a huge difference.

## Fees

We are still incurring costs while we meet virtually (professional fees, music, the recording of backing tracks and mixing our own recordings). We therefore need to resume membership fees although this is at the reduced rate of £3/session for the first half of the 2020 autumn term (**£21 for 7 weeks**). We can no longer take cash, but payment can be made by BACS online or by posting:

### Paying online

Account: **62367080**  
Sort code: **60-15-07**

**Paying by post** Please send your cheque to:

The Treasurer  
Three Rivers Community Choir  
Collaroy Cottage  
Collaroy Road  
Cold Ash  
Thatcham  
RG18 9PG

