

## RISK ASSESSMENT FOR CHOIR INDOOR REHEARSALS

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### **Risk assessment addressing:**

Arrival and Departure  
 Singing, Aerosol & Ventilation  
 Socialising  
 Contaminated surfaces  
 Vaccines  
 Testing

I have tried to keep this as simple as possible, whilst covering all bases. Therefore I am not putting all possible scenarios in – I am putting in what WILL be happening at rehearsals and not bothering to highlight would 'could' happen. I have then indicated whether these actions are deemed lowest, medium or highest risk. The difficulty with this is that this is partially my opinion on the matter and what one person deems to be a low risk another person might deem to be high risk. Plus, if I have identified something to be of 'highest' risk it doesn't mean the risk is actually 'high' – it just means things could be better and don't we wish they were! However, I have been honest and I am not labelling something to be low risk if I don't think it is. Ultimately though it is up to you to decide, and to weigh up the risk assessment in relation to your own circumstances. We are not all in the same boat. I feel it is very worth noting that this risk assessment could be very useful whether covid exists or not. Whilst members may be worried about getting poorly with Covid I think most of you are aware, and some of you personally so that many choir members have been really, really poorly with flu, chest infections, bronchitis etc and in some cases have taken weeks or even months to recover. Of course we cannot blame choir for these illnesses, that is impossible to prove but good practise is going to be beneficial to us all going forwards. One final note, I have not on purpose made this look like it is all very low risk – it just so happens the measures we will have in place make it the lowest risk possible in most cases – because that is the whole point!

<u>Arrival identified risks:</u>	<u>Requested actions:</u>	<u>Level of risk:</u>
- Entry into venue: Biggest risks are lack of social distancing and cross contamination.  Once inside venue: biggest risks are mingling, moving around the building and visiting the toilets	- Multiple entry point - Social distancing - Mask wearing - Walk in single file - Hand sanitise on entry (provided)  - Wear masks when NOT seated - Wear masks to the toilet and follow the rules of the venue	- Lowest risk to avoid long queues & less crossover of people - Lowest risk <u>if maintained</u> - Lowest risk esp if social distancing is compromised - Lowest risk (as opposed to side by side) - Lowest risk to avoid contamination of surfaces  - Low to medium risk as it is optional to remove them to sing - Lowest risk – make sure you know the guidelines of the venue

<p><b><u>Departure identified risks:</u></b></p> <p>Biggest risks: Lack of social distancing, cross contamination of surfaces and mingling</p>	<p><b><u>Suggested actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sanitise on departure</li> <li>- Social distancing</li> <li>- Avoid mingling</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Required actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Masks to be worn when still in the building</li> <li>- Exit through the door you entered through</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Level of risk:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lowest to avoid cross contamination</li> <li>- Lowest if maintained</li> <li>- Lowest risk to limit number of people in contact with</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lowest risk</li> <li>- Lowest risk</li> </ul>
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**Arrival and Departure summary:**

The above actions are identified as the lowest risk possible. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with proceedings at each venue. The way you travel to and from choir is your choice and nothing to do with me. So the assessment begins at the point you arrive at the venue. Therefore actions are 'suggested' for departure as once you have left the building – you are no longer in the choir space. But please exercise caution and be as careful as possible. It would be frustrating for me if a positive test from a choir member was actually a result of close socialising in the carpark and not the actual rehearsal!

<p><b><u>Aerosol &amp; ventilation identified risks:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Singing and speaking creates droplets and aerosol</li> <li>- Efficiency of ventilation</li> <li>- Accumulation of aerosol over time</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Possible actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wear a mask until it is time to sing then remove</li> <li>- Wear a mask throughout the rehearsal</li> <li>- Don't wear a mask ever</li> <li>- Sing/speak quietly to expel less aerosol</li> <li>- Windows and doors open</li> <li>- Possible shortening of rehearsals</li> <li>- Possibly taking a break outside mid-rehearsal</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Risk:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medium to high risk – we expel aerosol when singing, especially loudly</li> <li>- Lowest risk possible</li> <li>- Highest risk and NOT ALLOWED</li> <li>- Lowest risk but unsustainable. See below.</li> <li>- Difficult to gauge. Lowest risk we can manage but this does not mean it is highly efficient.</li> <li>- Lowers the risk slightly. See below.</li> <li>- Lowers the risk slightly. See below.</li> </ul>
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**Aerosol & Ventilation summary:**

There is a lot to say about this one as it is really not cut and dried. The masks issue is fairly obvious and easy to understand. The lowest possible risk is to wear masks at all times. But for many, this is a real question of balance, weighing up risk versus enjoyment of singing. Look at it this way. If none of us wore masks, at all, for the entire rehearsal this would be the worst scenario. There would be significant accumulation of aerosol before we even

started. If we however wore them until we started singing, we would have already taken steps to reduce the aerosol. At this stage I think it is fair to make mask wearing optional whilst singing. This may have to change if government guidelines change for which I can only apologise. I think it is important to remember there is no real difference between loud singing and loud speaking (proved in a study). So let's not be too frightened of the singing.

Ventilation is a difficult one as we can only work with what we have got. None of our venues are brilliant for ventilation and clearly a person sat right next to an open window is going to be in a better position than a person down wind! We don't have fancy ventilation systems, just doors and windows. I imagine this would be a common theme across Cornwall.

We could shorten rehearsals but is half an hour shorter REALLY going to make a difference?

We could take a break in the middle and go outside for 15 minutes. But is this REALLY going to make a difference if the rooms aren't particularly well ventilated and could the benefit be offset by people huddling outside having a chat? And do we want to do that in the rain and dark.....

Finally – quiet singing. Yes, this is the safest form of singing (if you don't have a breathy tone!!!!) But can we sing quietly all night? Would that be satisfying? No it would not. So we will mix it up a bit and make sure we don't have all the belters all at once. Another note on masks – you might feel you can cope wearing it when learning your part and then enjoy to take it off for a 'proper sing' which would I expect be beneficial.

<b><u>Socialising identified risks:</u></b>	<b><u>Recommended actions:</u></b>	<b><u>Risk:</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking to each other and compromising social distancing</li> <li>- Mixing with a large number of people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep a safe distance from others</li> <li>- Wear a mask for chatting</li> <li>- Don't share snacks and drinks</li> <li>- Avoid physical contact</li> <li>- Minimise the amount of people you mix with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lowest risk</li> </ul> <p>NB Lowest risk of course is not mixing or coming to choir at all. These measures are the lowest risk in the context.</p>

**Socialising summary:**

This one is straightforward and easy – we know it is close contact with other people that most commonly spreads covid. I don't want to be a grumpy gru and say you can't chat to your friends at choir – afterall that is a big contributing factor as to why you want to come! But, please, please, exercise caution. Don't get up in someone's space. People might not want to be hugged yet. Try not to travel throughout the choir, limit your chat to a few people each week. Keep your masks on. At the end of the session don't hang about in the hall to chat – go outside.

<b><u>Contaminated surfaces:</u></b>	<b><u>Requested actions:</u></b>	<b><u>Risk:</u></b>
Risk from door handles, chairs and handling lyrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choose your chair and stick with it</li> <li>- Leave it in place at the end of the session</li>   <li>- Don't pass around lyrics or share books</li> <li>- Sanitise regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Avoids sharing of chairs – lowest risk.</li> <li>- Avoids too many people handling chairs and moving around the room with them – lowest risk</li> <li>- Avoids over-handling – lowest risk.</li> <li>- Always a good idea, always lowers risk.</li> </ul>

**Contaminated surfaces summary:**

The risk of catching Covid from a surface is deemed to be very low now. The biggest risk here is lyrics – if we passed those around they go through many hands and it would become a highest risk scenario. Any new lyrics will be put on your seat in advance, or you can print them out at home.

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## **Vaccines and testing**

We are in a strong position with vaccines with as far as I can work out, 100% of the choir vaccinated. This is wonderful as you can come along to choir with increased confidence that you have the best protection possible.

BUT we all know, and many of us have experienced this ourselves this summer, that it is still possible to get and spread Covid even if vaccinated. This is where testing comes into play. The numbers in Cornwall are very high at the moment and testing twice a week is being highly recommended and encouraged by the government and Cornwall Council. We have to take responsibility for doing absolutely everything we can to prevent Covid from getting into the room in the first place. I strongly ask that you please consider testing within the 24 hours before choir.

Please note that if you have symptoms and take a lateral flow test, that will likely come back negative. Lateral flows are NOT reliable for confirming a positive case. You need a PCR test for that. So please do not turn up at choir with a cold and say “it's ok I did a lateral flow and it was negative”. Or “it's ok it's just a cold”. Delta is very much like a cold! You simply cannot take these chances at choir. If you are symptomatic please stay away. Please think of your fellow choir members, and of me!

### **And me.....**

Obviously I am the common thread across the week. As much as I want to chat to you all, please keep a sensible distance and if you need to tell me something please keep it brief (or message me after instead!) I will be testing every Tuesday and Thursday which will hopefully reassure you and I am of course vaccinated!

