

WHITEHALL CHOIR MEMBERS' SURVEY 2020

Survey findings

Survey conducted over 2 weeks in May 2020

Background and context

In May, as the uncertainty over the duration and extent of the lockdown measures looked set to continue, the committee decided to ask you your views on a range of relevant areas. These included:

- General commitment to keeping the choir going
- Satisfaction with the content and duration of the online rehearsals
- Payment of subscriptions during this period of uncertainty
- Returning to face to face rehearsals at St Peter's
- Use of the online resources

We had a great response rate of around 80% of members, and gathered some really useful information.

Overall findings can be found in the subsequent slides. **All responses are completely anonymous.**

We would like to thank you all for taking the time to complete the survey.

Headline messages from the survey

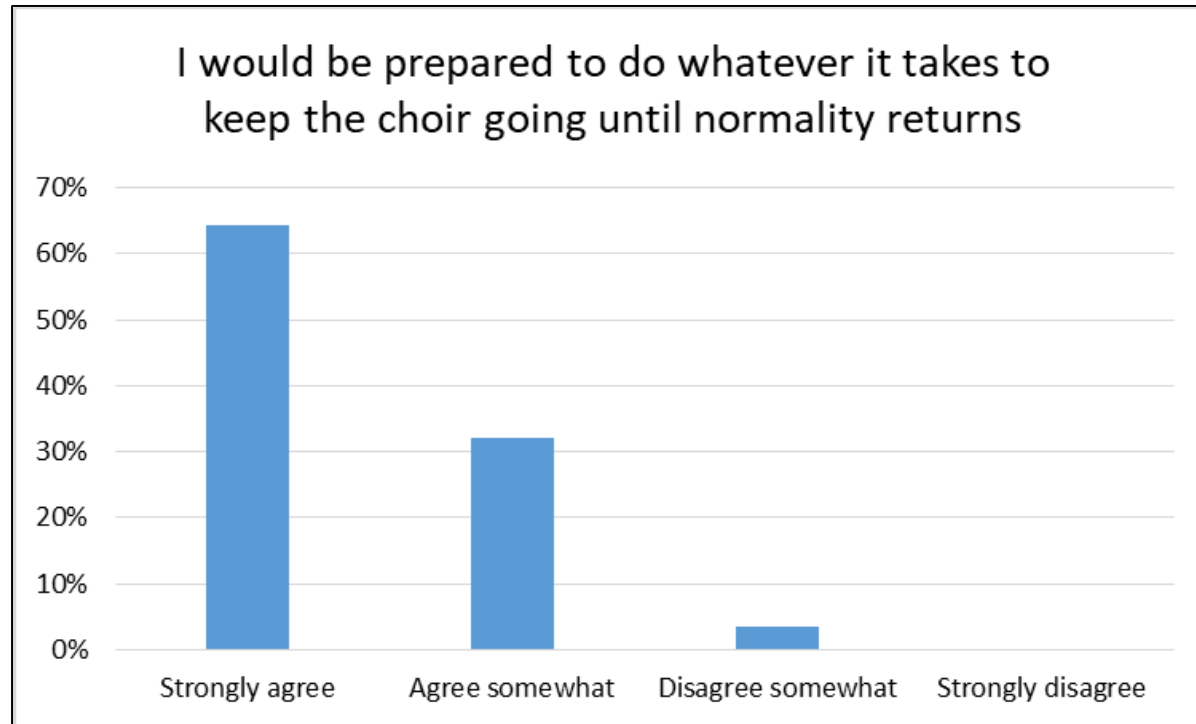
- In general, Whitehall Choir members are very committed to keeping the choir going in these uncertain times.
- While people would prefer to be rehearsing face to face, they are very appreciative of the effort to keep the choir going online, and are generally happy with the content.
- Most people are supportive of contributing financially to ensure we are able to keep the choir going.
- People are keen to return to rehearsing at St Peters but there are mixed comments about how feasible this would be in the near future for a variety of reasons.
- Some people use the online resources and are generally positive about them but many people lack the time to make use of them on a regular basis.

Summary statistics

NB: With the exception of the response rate, all other percentages relate to the number of remaining members who responded, not to all members of the choir. No extrapolation has taken place and members who did not respond have been disregarded for the purposes of these survey results.

Response rate	59 responses (out of 74 members surveyed) equating to an 80% response rate overall with a minimum of 76% in any one voice part (NB: 3 of the people responding stated that they would be leaving the choir. Therefore these 3 are not included in the statistics below, reducing the total responses detailed below for remaining members to 56.)
General commitment	54 out of the 56 (96%) agreed to a greater or lesser extent they would be willing to do whatever it takes to keep the choir going, with 38 of those (64%) agreeing strongly
Attendance at online rehearsals	Attendance at online rehearsals: Of the 56 remaining members who responded, 47 (84%) had attended at least some of the online rehearsals
Payment of subscriptions	All of those surveyed would be willing to pay at least a proportion of the subs with 77% being prepared to pay the full amount.
Face to face rehearsals	Most of the 56 people who responded would be at least somewhat likely to attend face to face rehearsals if they were to resume – 33 (59%) would be very likely and 14 (25%) would be somewhat likely
Online resources	43 out of the 56 (77%) had used the online resources at some point

Overall commitment to keeping the choir going



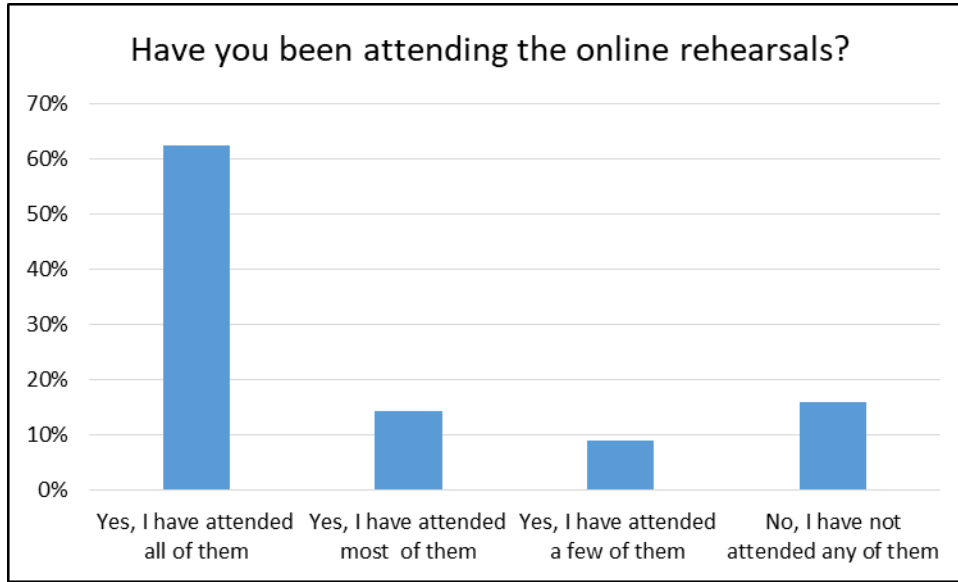
It is noticeable how committed Whitehall Choir members are, and the current crisis only serves to reinforce this, as reflected in your responses.

Prior to the survey taking place individuals commented to committee members that they would want us to continue paying Jo and Ian if possible. Some of the comments in the survey reflect this too, showing a commitment to all aspects of what makes the choir a great organisation to be part of.

Significant numbers attend the online rehearsals each week and are positive about the content and the way in which they are conducted, even if they recognise it is no substitute for our normal rehearsals. They want to keep seeing people and making music together despite the difficulties.

Several people have commented that they are pleased at all the work being done to keep the choir together.

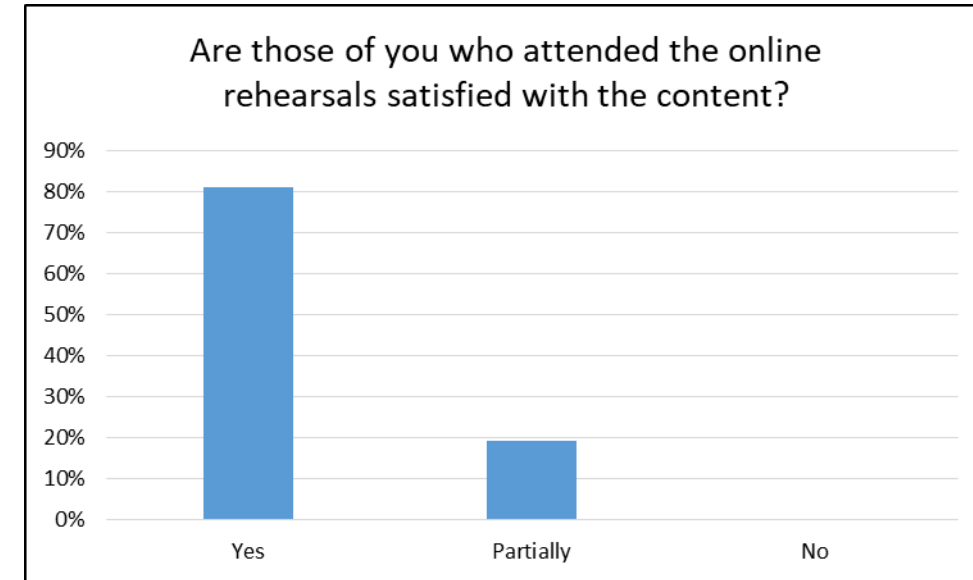
Your views about the online rehearsals



People's overall commitment is reflected in the fact that most people who responded to the survey have attended at least some of the online rehearsals.

Obviously it's not ideal but everyone's doing a great job in the circumstances

It's difficult to do singing together but important to have the rehearsals to keep the choir together



The chance to sing together is great but at the same time a sad reminder of what we are missing

People were happy with the length of rehearsals with 91% saying it was about right. Only 9% of people would be less likely to join in if we had a mixture of rehearsals and other online events such as talks and quizzes.

While acknowledging in their comments that online rehearsals were not a substitute for the real thing, most people were satisfied with the content of the rehearsals.

Here's a selection of what people said they liked

I enjoy learning and singing the new pieces

I like being able to see everyone

The theory and sight-singing sessions have prompted me to go back and relearn things

The chance to do something different from usual

People had very positive comments about various aspects of the online rehearsal sessions

I've enjoyed an imaginative variety of sessions

Going through the music in smaller groups

I like the vocal technique teaching and theory

Learning new musical skills

You are keen to try other things too

More of the targeted sectional sessions

Slightly longer warm-ups

Could we attempt to put one of the Baltic pieces together to compare our lockdown version with our eventual real version?

More vocal technique would be helpful

Could we try to record one song together online to have something to aim for?

You had a number of suggestions of things you'd like more of.

On theory, could we have break-out groups for different abilities?

Taking the chance to sing something we are familiar with as well as new pieces

More on use of voice – warm-up and vocal exercises

There was mention of talks – that could be interesting

More and more advanced sight-reading practice please!

Subscriptions and the impact of COVID-19

What do subscriptions pay for?

Your subscriptions mainly cover our rehearsal costs, that is, the fees we pay to Jo and Ian for the work they do with us, and the cost of hiring the rehearsal space.

We aim to cover the bulk of the concert costs through the sale of tickets. The remainder is covered by what is left over from the subscriptions after rehearsal costs. Concert costs can be very high so it would be risky to rely on ticket sales alone.

What is the impact of COVID-19?

The uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation meant that we wanted to reassess our financial position going forward.

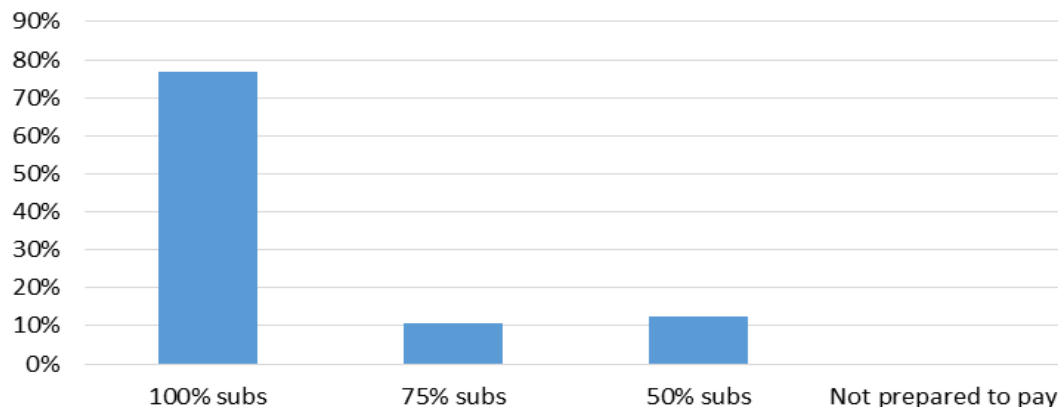
Your responses to the survey are good news for the choir financially during the current situation.

Everybody is willing to pay something, with 77% of those who responded saying you would be willing to pay full subs in the Autumn term even if we cannot go back to rehearsing at St Peter's.

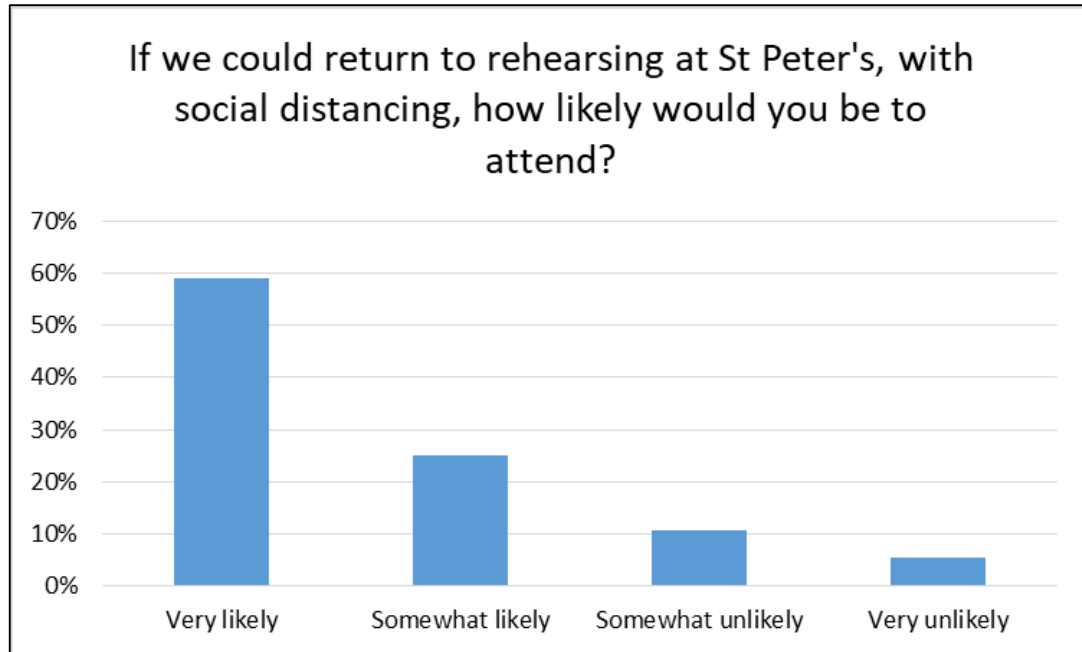
This means we will have adequate funds to continue to pay Jo and Ian rehearsal fees in the Autumn whatever happens. However we will need to keep the situation under review as circumstances evolve.

The committee also recognises that there will be people for whom this situation may have had a significant financial impact and for whom paying full subs may not be an option. We want to help you to remain in the choir and are exploring ways to do this via a bursary fund. If this applies to you, please approach me, your part rep or another committee member to discuss this.

If we have to continue with online rehearsals in the Autumn, what is the maximum you would be prepared to pay?



Rehearsing at St Peter's



The committee is exploring how we might return to rehearsing at St Peter's. This might include (not exhaustive):

- Rehearsing in the church rather than the upstairs room;
- No refreshment break;
- Rehearsing with smaller groups on an intermittent basis, or in 2 shifts;
- A mix of face to face and online rehearsals.

Nothing is certain yet so we would be keen to hear any thoughts you have.

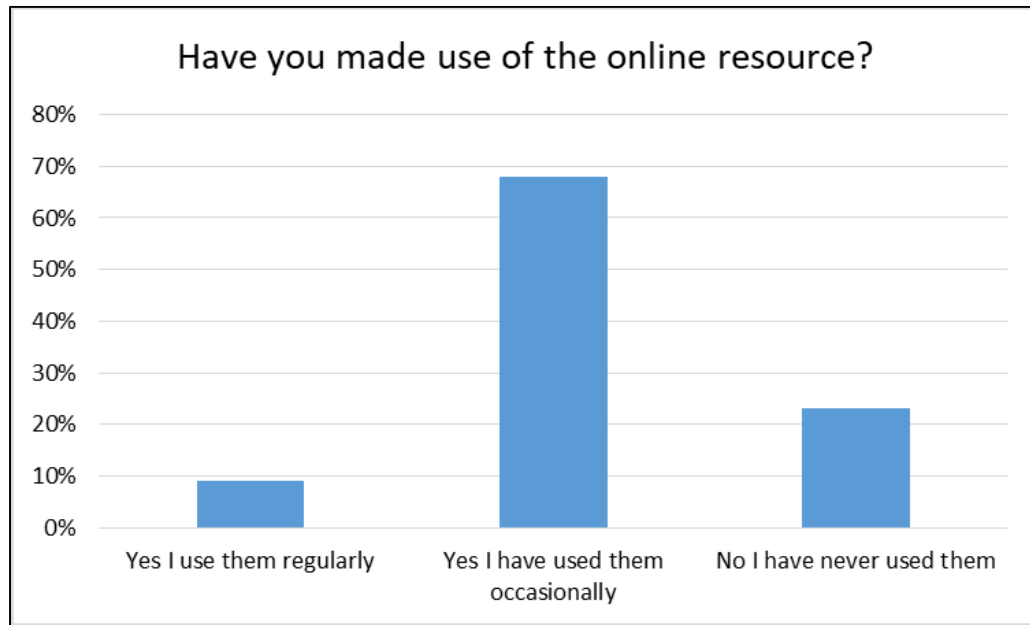
On the face of it the majority of people appear keen to return to rehearsing at St Peter's. However, some of the comments indicate that for some it may not be possible or practical:

“My office is unlikely to be open for the rest of this year and I would not want to take the risk of using public transport just to attend choir”

“Whether I attend physical rehearsals will depend largely on how safe I feel”

“I need to travel on the train to attend rehearsals and would feel uncomfortable doing this with social distancing in place”

Online resources – your comments



A majority of those who responded have used the online resources at some point although only a minority use them regularly.

Many people cited lack of time as a reason for not having explored them further. Others prefer other types of resources.

Where people had used them, comments were generally positive. People had some suggestions for other resources that might be made available

YouTube resources are useful for improving my singing and sight-reading

They are generally excellent

I don't have strong feelings about them

A great complement to the weekly rehearsals

Useful to have a central repository for members to use at their discretion

More vocal technique videos would be useful

Recommendations of online courses about history of music would be good