

Thinking of joining Raised Voices?

Useful Information

Hello from Raised Voices! We are always glad when people are interested in joining us. We are a political choir aiming to become as diverse as London itself, and want to make it as easy as possible for you to take part in the choir. You may have been in touch with the membership secretary already, but if not email info@raised-voices.org.uk to find out about attending our rehearsals. If you feel it would be helpful to you the Membership Secretary can introduce you to a buddy. A buddy is there to help you understand quickly how the choir works, where the music scores are, how best to prepare for rehearsals and to answer all your queries about the choir. With the support of a buddy you can soon feel part of the choir and enjoy the experience.

1. Our rehearsals during the pandemic:

We are currently rehearsing on Zoom, and instead of our 2-hour rehearsal on a Thursday in normal times, we meet twice a week – on Mondays and Thursdays, 7.30–8.30 pm. Because we run as a collective, we also have a business meeting at 8.30 pm on Thursdays where we make collective decisions, often about our choice of songs. If you have questions about how the choir operates, ask your buddy or the membership secretary, and perhaps read our [fuller information](#) (though you can leave that until later on!)

2. How the Zoom rehearsals are run

Rehearsals are led by our musical leader, Jake, who teaches songs and conducts us. Rehearsals start with a short physical and vocal warm-up and we often start the singing with a simple song. Jake records his own voice singing each part while he is teaching it to us, and then he overlays those into a single recording. This means we can hear all the parts. Unfortunately, we cannot listen to each other singing because of time lapses on the internet, which prevent us from being able to synchronise with each other, so all of the choir members have to be muted! (Jake can't hear us either.) Each week a member of the choir acts as coordinator and is the host on Zoom. (Members of the choir volunteer to do this and there is no expectation that everyone will do it.)

Any member of the choir can suggest songs, and then the whole choir decides which songs to sing. Together, we agree which songs to work on during the next few weeks, and Jake chooses which songs we sing at each rehearsal from this list.

At rehearsals, anyone can record if they wish. (We don't record during the business meeting or any conversations before or after the rehearsal.) This means we can practise the songs between rehearsals if we choose. Just remember to wait until Zoom has finished converting the session at the end of the rehearsal, otherwise you will lose your recording!

3. The Raised Voices Website

If you have not already seen our [website](#), do take a look. It has detailed information about the choir, how it is run, what we sing about and where, some samples of songs, events the group has taken part in, and much more. (We should point out, though, that it is currently being updated.)

4. Membership Subscription

While on Zoom, or for the first four weeks in-person, attending is free for everyone, so you can decide whether you want to join. If you do decide to join us after that, our standard fee is £28 a month. But we don't want anyone to be unable to join us for lack of funds, so a lower fee, whatever you can afford, is fine and we recognize that some may not be able to afford a fee at all. If you decide to join, the treasurer will be happy to discuss this with you, in confidence.

5. Before a rehearsal

Our music librarian sends the scores (words and musical notes) of the songs at least a day before the rehearsal so that you can print them or have them ready online. They are sent to the choir email list, which you can join if you become a member. If you are not a member, you will be invited to join a platform called Slack (see <http://www.slack.com> for general information). Our song scores and details of rehearsals are available on the Raised Voices area on Slack.

You may prefer to sing by ear using the words only, and Jake teaches each song line by line so that this is perfectly possible. In fact, some simple songs are even taught without printed words. We have a songbook, which is available for members, containing just the words of most of our songs.

6. Where can I find older and more recent songs

Many of our songs have recordings (rehearsal tracks) to help us learn but others only have the musical scores or words. Some older songs can be found here:

<http://www.raised-voices.org.uk/music.html>.

More recent songs are currently on a separate page; after joining, members are given the password for that.

7. I do not know my voice range. How can I know what is the best part for me to sing?

Most of the songs we sing are in three or four parts. If you are unsure which part to sing, try them out to see which best suits your range. Alternatively, a brief meeting with Jake can be arranged (on Zoom at the moment) so he can listen to your voice and advise you. This is not an audition; it is simply for Jake to see whether you have a higher or lower voice.

8. To join, do I have to read music?

It is not necessary to read music to join Raised Voices. If you are interested in singing you are welcome. Raised Voices is a very helpful and informal group, and people with different levels of ability are all welcome. For most songs both lyrics (words) and scores are available. (An exception is for simple warm-up songs that are short and are taught by ear.) Many members do use scores, but others just use the words, and you can do that too. Also, it helps if you watch Jake who raises and lowers his hand to show where the notes go up and down while he teaches each part.

Some members have asked to learn more about musical notation so our musical leader, Jake, has produced a basic introduction for us:

[A Guide to Music Notation for Choir Singers.pdf](#)

Do have a look if you are interested but you will be able to sing in the choir without it.

July 2021