



The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2BQ

16 June, 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

I am sure that you are aware of Richard Morrison's article in *The Times*, published online on 4 June 2020 (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/times2/sing-it-out-will-no-one-in-government-stand-up-for-british-choirs-7nb28sl0q>). Mr Morrison describes how the 70,000 choirs in the UK are nearly unable to rehearse or perform. There are therefore well over a million people who would love to resume singing, (an activity with well-known associated physical and mental health benefits) but who of course wish to restart only when it is safe to do so.

Chingford Parish is one of the bodies affected by this suspension. As well as a very popular community choir at All Saints', Chingford, the Parish Church hosts several large choirs who maintain a cathedral-style repertoire and regularly tour in the UK and overseas. We are proud to say that our choirs are among the largest and best of any parish in England. A large part of the music-making and ministry comes in careful, consistent, and professional working with young people. None of this work can be undertaken during the current situation and with current regulations.

What all choirs need is authoritative, independent, scientifically based advice on, amongst other things:

- 1) What national and local conditions must be met to ensure that safety?
- 2) What configuration(s) should choirs adopt in rehearsals, and in performance? and
- 3) Is there any type of PEP that is effective and practical for choral singers?

Will your Department commission such research, to be completed and published as soon as possible, to allow the resumption of music-making in this country, and the fullness of public worship?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Lewis-Anthony".

JUSTIN LEWIS-ANTHONY

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