

PIH AGM, 9 April 2022: Kathy Jenkins Chair's report

I have just reread Hilery's chair's report from last year with tears and smiles. I am not going to even try to write such a beautiful and moving tribute to PIH, its committee, its songleaders, but urge you to read her message again (on the website) and thank Hilery again for how she held us together and provided inspiration through the years of Covid lockdown.

The current committee's job has been different and exciting – to start us singing together again but in as safe a way as possible. As you know, we started by singing in small local groups (with thanks to the song leaders and songleaderettes (or roos) for making this possible.) Then we moved to singing in two groups outside in the Bellfield Church – in sunshine and rain! Finally, our first chance to sing altogether at the Augustine Church in December, February and March. It has been wonderful and life affirming, even if a bit of logistical nightmare! I can't thank Penny, Jane and Shereen enough for their detailed knowledge and advice about singing during Covid and the for the committee for visiting possible venues and working out how to do all of this while keeping people as safe as possible. I also want to thank the Augustine church and their staff who have been so helpful in making all of this work. As you will see, looking around you, we have moved to a larger venue (Broughton St Mary's church) – the result of our increase in numbers – something else that is exciting.

The other thing to celebrate is that we have begun to sing in the streets again: in protest against curbs on demonstrations at the Scottish Parliament; in Glasgow as part of the massive COP26 People's Coalition march; to mark the first anniversary of the signing of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons; for the peoples of Bhopal, Palestine and Ukraine; in support of the Campaign Against the Arms trade; with students on strike for the planet. And in coming months we have been invited to sing for those who died in the Spanish Civil War, at Sing for Earth Day, at International Workers' Memorial Day, on the May Day march and at Faslane. All of this is a message to us that our singing supports and is part of many different struggles to make our world a better place.

We have also taken steps to be part of wider international music projects including: supporting the people of Putaendo's campaign against mining destruction in Chile through the work of Penny, her international group and the resulting ceilidh which included many of us singing for the Somos Todos

video; becoming part of the Black Lives Matter Natural Voice Network commissioning project; and consideration of joining the international Culture Declares Emergency and Music Declares Emergency networks– watch this space.

I think that all that is left is to say thank you's. First and foremost, to our songleaders – who somehow manage to enable us all to sing and to sing together and to sing joyously. Second, to our committee who have worked hard throughout the year to keep us going and to explore new ventures (and a special thanks to Margaret Bremner for taking on the role of treasurer – again! and to she and Sheila MacKay for doing most of the committee minute taking). Third to John Ireson for chairing today and to Jan Killeen for taking the minutes (remembering to thank Elaine Wallace for last year's). And to all of you for being here and for being so willing to come out rain or shine to sing for peace, justice, the planet, and.... you can add your own to the list!

Kathy Jenkins

April 9, 2022