

Protest in Harmony Chair's Report to AGM 5.04.25

This past year has been dominated by the ghastly events in Gaza and the numbers supporting the San Ghanny Friday vigils have grown to roughly 30 – 40 singers each week. We now have a repertoire of very well rehearsed songs and a growing band of increasingly confident song leaders. Our weekly presence has also enhanced both our profile and membership and raised over £6k for MAP. Personally, it has kept me going with a weekly ray of hope in dark times.

Tragically we have also lost our beautiful Belle, but we keep those grieving and those caring for loved ones in our hearts and minds and continue to hope for the recovery of Jane Rubens.

It has been a very busy year!

In addition to our weekly vigils for Gaza we have sung for the MAP walk fundraisers at Holyrood and at the start of a National March for Palestine at Waverley, at 2 Israeli product boycott events outside Tesco and Sainsbury's in Leith, at the Gaza Day of Action over in Kirkcaldy in Fife, in Peebles with Borders Palestine Support Group and most recently outside Barclays Bank.

We have also sung for peace at International Conscientious Objectors Day, CND's Hiroshima Day commemorations, the opening of the Peace Garden at Bridgend Farmhouse, an Arms dealers convention at the EICC, the Alternative Remembrance Day event, at ICAN's procession to celebrate the Hibakusha's Nobel Peace prize award and at a recent Close the Bases event at the Castle.

On climate Justice we sang at the hand in of petitions on Peterhead and the Fossil fuel Non-proliferation treaty, on the Mound after a number of vigils, to support the Stop Rosebank Court case and at the recent Pensions Divestment event

In addition, we supported the annual Grenfell commemoration, the Sheku Bayou enquiry, the 40th anniversary of the Bhopal disaster, a showing of our Chilean friend, Martin's film on the song 'El pueblo unido', and against the Rwanda deportations and Fascism

We also had a big team representing PIH magnificently at the Street choirs Festival in Sheffield, held a successful Away Day in November, we were treated to a rare and spectacular local performance of Shereen's acapella Forth Valley Chorus and celebrated some significant birthdays.

Finally, some thank you's:

1. My particular thanks to Kathy, my ongoing guide and mentor throughout.
2. PIH has roots which, as the song says, 'go wide and down' and is underpinned by a huge amount of good will across the city. It runs in a frankly miraculously seamless fashion: rooms get booked, opened and heated (thank you May and Penny!) doors get managed and money collected (thank you, Neil), cash ends up in our account and fees get paid (thank you, Neil and Susan), direct debits get increased (thank you all who have done so), the website gets updated (thank you to Jane D and the two Chris's), our social media profile is enhanced (thank you Lily) our

accounts are audited (thanks to Hilery and Neil), the banner is looked after and unfurled (thank you Maxine and Ian) and all the other 'backstage stuff' is taken on by the lovely committee. I would especially like to thank Jane for her stalwart help and for continuing to do the Event reports for us on the website. We will miss you!

Front of house we are extraordinarily blessed with the talent and commitment of our three amazing song leaders Jane, Penny and Shereen (and a growing band of songleaderos) not only rehearsing us but giving us beautiful original songs to share and the confidence and skill to perform them in public. Thank you too to everyone who has liaised at events, the craftivists and Lily for the washing line banners. And thank you to John for chairing us so ably today.....

Whatever you bring to PIH, your defiance and courage, your determination to bear witness, to keep hope alive, thank you for your willingness to come out rain, wind or shine, often at ungodly frozen hours of the morning, to sing..

Sue Cowgill

5.04.25