**St George’s Singers Green Strategy and Suggestions for Implementation v0.2**

**Aim**

The aim of this strategy is to reduce the environmental impact of St George’s Singers while ensuring the choir continues to meet its objectives. It builds on those environmentally friendly practices which are already in place and introduces new actions to further minimise use of plastic and paper, and to reduce our carbon footprint.

This strategy should be seen as an initial step. It should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure the choir continues to make efforts to reduce its environmental impact.

# Waste and energy reduction

Waste hierarchy is a tool used for the evaluation of processes that protect the environment alongside resource and energy consumption, from the most favourable to the least favourable actions. This can be described as Reduce – Reuse – Recycle, where reducing the amount of resources used is the most favourable option, followed by re-use and then recycling of waste. So for example, although it might appear to be good environmental practice to arrange for all single use plastic bottles or cups provided by the choir to be recycled, processes which reduce the amount of plastic used and which encourage re-use will usually have substantially less environmental impact, even allowing for energy and water used for cleaning.

# Drinks provided at rehearsals

Tea and coffee is available at the rehearsals at St George’s Church Hall, arranged by Peter Farrington. There is much good practice in place already, including the use of reusable cups. Nevertheless, there are opportunities to improve practice still further.

## Single use plastic water bottles

SGS will no longer sell plastic bottles of water either at rehearsals or at other events (eg singing days). A jug of tap water and some tea cups may be provided at rehearsals to avoid members having to use the kitchen to get water. *Most choir members bring their own water bottle already.*

## Milk

Production of dairy milk has a substantial environmental impact from greenhouse gas emissions, water used in production and land use. SGS should consider offering plant based milk alternatives in hot drinks for those who would prefer a non-dairy option or who are intolerant of cows milk. It is recommended that further investigation is undertaken to find the milk alternative which best meets requirements for palatability and which does not split in hot drinks. Plant based milk alternatives are currently more expensive than dairy milk. It is suggested that the price of tea and coffee could be increased to cover this. It is noted that there has been no rise in the price charged to SGS members for very many years, so this can be achieved while still keeping costs reasonable.

# Refreshments at Singing Day

A substantial quantity of single use and non-recyclable cups and spoons are used during the Singing Day. There are many opportunities to reduce this waste. Some actions will require significant planning so could not be implemented at the January 2020 event. Reducing single use items may require additional planning and volunteers. Currently Peter Farrington takes sole responsibility for provision of drinks, cups and spoons**. To avoid increasing the burden on Peter, consideration should be given to splitting the responsibilities, with another member taking responsibility for organising washing up.**

## Single use plastic water bottles

**SGS will no longer sell plastic bottles of water** (see above).

## Tea and coffee

**Reusable cups to be used for all tea and coffee**. Currently drinks on arrival are served in reusable cups, but at lunch and afternoon tea disposables are used. The argument for this has been that there are not enough pot cups to provide drinks for everyone in attendance. However, if the choir were to purchase mugs for soup as suggested below, some of these could be used in addition to the cups provided by the church. There are excellent cup-washing facilities at St George’s, so it would be possible to wash cups and mugs ready for re-use for each break. An alternative suggestion has been to use recyclable cups/mugs. However, this is a less favourable option in terms of environmental impact.

## Soup

Currently disposable plastic cups are used for soup, which has a significant environmental impact, further exacerbated by the need to double up on cups to prevent burns. **From 2021 soup at Singing Days will be served in mugs, either brought by attenders or provided by SGS.** The additional costs of mugs could be covered by an increase in the booking fee for the Singing Day. If the choir has a stock of mugs these can also be used to supplement cups during tea breaks. An alternative suggestion has been to use recyclable cups/mugs. However, this is a less favourable option in terms of environmental impact.

## Spoons

**By 2021 no plastic spoons will be provided at the Singing Day**. It is noted that at the 2020 Singing Day, reusable soup spoons from the kitchen were used instead of plastic spoons.

## Milk

Consideration should be given to **offering plant based milk alternatives by 2021** for guests and members who would prefer to use a plant based alternative or who have cows milk intolerance. If a suitable alternative has been agreed for SGS rehearsals, the same alternative can be used at Singing Days*.*

# Travel

## Lift sharing

Choir members should be encouraged to share lifts to and from rehearsals. As well as reducing the environmental impact from transport, more lift sharing would relieve some of the pressure on car parking space. **SGS should introduce a system whereby prospective car sharers can be identified**.

## Choir tours

**Where possible choir tours should avoid air travel**. Where air travel is deemed necessary, members should have the opportunity (and be encouraged) to participate in a carbon offsetting scheme.

# Paper

SGS should aim to reduce the use of paper. Currently paper is used for publicity (leaflets and posters), Hemiola, papers for AGM, concert information, and other general choir information.

## Papers for AGM and concert information

All SGS members have e-mail addresses and can receive documents electronically. Some members may choose to print these for convenience, but not everyone needs a hard copy. **With immediate effect paper copies should not be provided where documents can be circulated electronically to SGS members.** Those SGS members who want a paper copy can print their own. If they do not have printing facilities and feel they must have a paper copy, the choir could identify a member willing or able to do limited printing.

## Hemiola

Hemiola is a substantial newsletter which is produced as an electronic and hard copy. All SGS members have access to the electronic copy via e-mail and the SGS website, and some hard copies are available at rehearsals. It is also sent out to some non-SGS members. **Non-choir members should be surveyed as to whether they would prefer to receive copies electronically or in paper format.** A move to electronic distribution would save both on paper and postage.