

## **Stewartby Operatic Society**

### **Arrangements for Rehearsals in Person at Stewartby United Church Hall**

#### **Introduction**

Since early March, 2020, all rehearsals of Stewartby Operatic Society have been cancelled as a result of restrictions and guidelines issued by the UK Government to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Two charity concerts in April, the Spring Concert in May, a jumble sale in October and the show in November 2020 have also been cancelled. A jumble sale has been booked for February 2021 but must be regarded as very doubtful.

Some members of the Society have expressed a desire to resume rehearsals, an option investigated by the Committee which resulted in the issue of a questionnaire to members to canvas opinions and to investigate options.

Government guidelines now permit music groups to rehearse together, i.e. in person, provided the environment is Covid-secure, a risk assessment has been made and measures have been taken to reduce the risks of catching the disease.

This document sets out the arrangements for Stewartby Operatic Society to restart rehearsals in person at Stewartby United Church hall, and includes the required risk assessment. At present the plans are for singing-only rehearsals. There will be no movement or dance.

#### **Documents**

The following documents have been used for and in consideration of all the arrangements for singing-only rehearsals, with thanks to Mike Cocke for the use of Luton Choral Society's documents for reference.

- Government Guidelines relevant to Choirs and Orchestras as set out by Making Music
- Risk Assessment by Stewartby Operatic Society
- Stewartby United Church Guidance for Opening the Hall and Annex
- Stewartby United Church Risk Assessment Hall and Annex
- Survey: If Rehearsals Resumed at Stewartby Church Hall
- NHS Track and Trace QR code
- NHS Local Alert Level posters

Each of these documents is available for inspection by request to the Chairman of Stewartby Operatic Society at [stewartbyoperatic@saods.org.uk](mailto:stewartbyoperatic@saods.org.uk) or by visiting the Society's web site at [www.saods.org.uk](http://www.saods.org.uk) and following the coronavirus links.

#### **Summary of Considerations and Proposed Arrangements**

The key things about rehearsing in person to keep within the government guidelines are

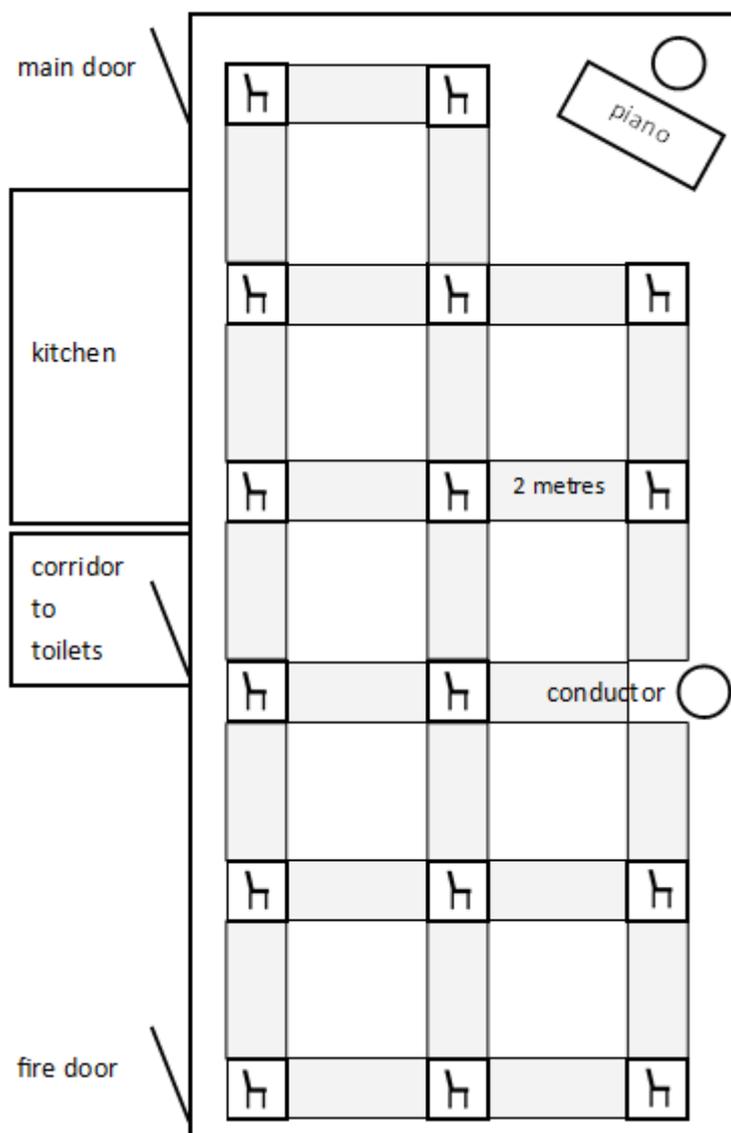
- to ensure that people who have symptoms or are isolating do not attend rehearsals
- to keep 2m distancing at all times
- to ensure there is no mingling or socialising amongst members

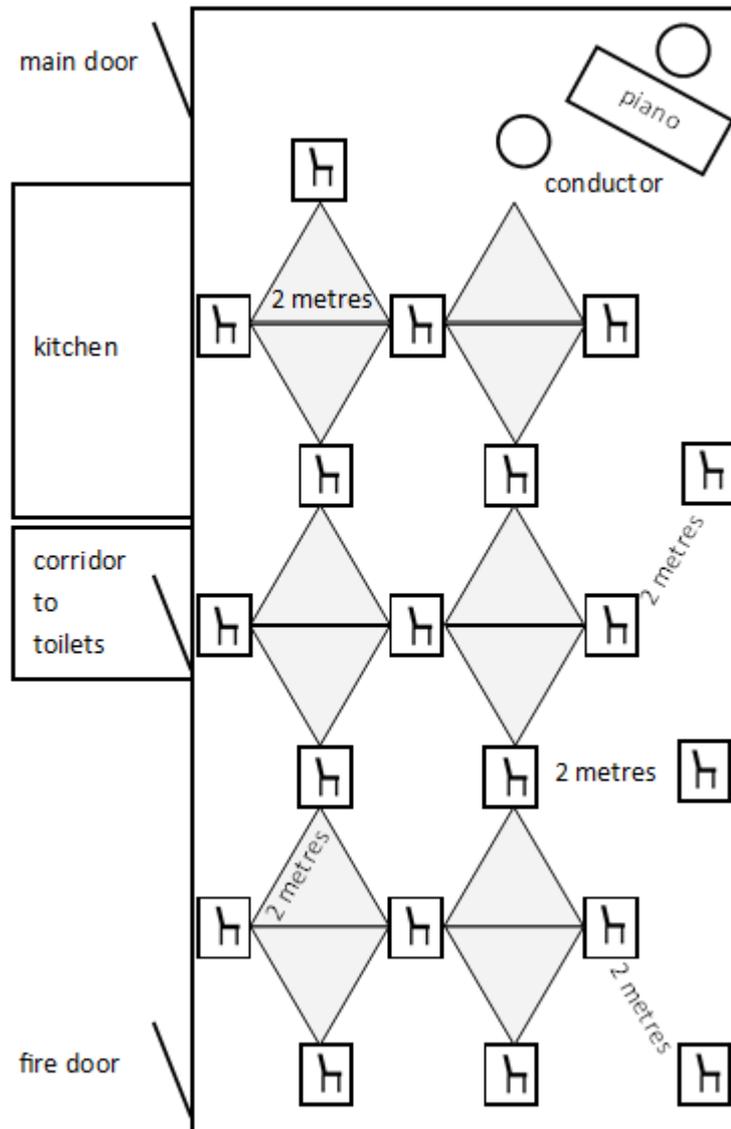
If arrangements are in place to ensure these key things, then the environment is Covid-secure and planned activities such as rehearsals are permitted.

## Capacity

Stewartby United Church Council have not specified a maximum number of people who can occupy the hall but stipulate that the size of the gathering must allow for 2 metre distancing. The approximate scale drawings below indicate two different methods of arranging chairs for rehearsals whilst maintaining 2 metre distancing. In the first case the capacity is 16, in the second case the capacity is 19. If there are likely to be more than 19 members attending consideration will have to be given to limiting numbers by the use of a pre-booking system.

The dimensions of the hall are approximately 6.5m by 14.5m.





### Covid-security

Members with Covid symptoms and members who are isolating must NOT attend rehearsals. Although the Society has taken all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of Covid transmission, these precautions cannot guarantee a risk free environment and attendees must accept that the decision to be present at a rehearsal is their responsibility. To this end an email or letter will be sent to every member or other potential attendee before the first re-started rehearsal and then at the beginning of every month thereafter. This communication will ask five questions.

- Have you had in the last 14 days any Covid-19 symptoms (raised temperature, new persistent cough or loss of or change to your senses of taste or smell)?
- Have you been or do you suspect that, in the last 14 days, you might have been in close contact with anyone who might have or has tested positive for Covid-19?
- Have you been contacted by a 'Track and Trace' service and told you should self-isolate?
- Are you quarantining having returned from abroad within the last 14 days?
- Have you been advised to shield because you are in a vulnerable or extremely vulnerable group?

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes” that person must NOT attend rehearsals until such time as they are able to answer “no” to all the questions. Members will be reminded to re-check these questions before every rehearsal. These questions will also be displayed prominently at the entrance to and inside the church hall.

A register will be kept of attendees at each rehearsal and there will be on display copies of the NHS Track and Trace QR code for those who are using the NHS Covid-19 app. Any rehearsal attendee who falls ill or who tests positive for Covid-19 will be expected to notify a member of the Committee and to use the NHS Covid-19 app, if possible, and to follow the guidance issued to them thereafter.

In accordance with the guidance issued by Stewartby United Church Council for the use of the church hall, before each rehearsal at least one member of Stewartby Operatic Society will be designated the responsible person for the session, will display appropriate notices at the entrance to and inside the hall, will switch on all the lights, will place hand sanitiser at the entrance, will set out and sanitise chairs, the piano, a music stand and any other equipment required for the rehearsal and will open windows in the hall.

Everyone must maintain at all times 2m distance from everyone else, so people must be prepared to queue at the entrance to get in. Everyone will be required to wear a face covering, unless exempt, when entering, moving around and leaving the hall. All attendees will be required to use the hand sanitiser on entering the hall and will be asked to proceed directly to a seat and to wait for the rehearsal to commence.

When everyone is seated they will be facing in the same direction, never face to face. Guidelines state that face coverings must be worn with some allowable exceptions. One exception is if an exercise or an activity is being undertaken and it would negatively impact the ability to carry out the activity. A clear example of this is a wind instrumentalist, but it is also the case that singing in a face mask negatively impacts one’s ability to sing, and so our risk assessment and guidance states that members must wear face coverings at all times but that they may be removed when singing.

To avoid people mingling and also because the kitchen is closed, there will be no breaks and rehearsals will be limited to a maximum of 90 minutes, so most people will arrive, sit down, sing, and then leave without the need to use the toilet facilities. Only one toilet, the disabled toilet, will be available for use as necessary. If water or any other refreshment is required, attendees must bring their own in a previously sanitised container.

During the evening a register of attendance will be taken which can be cross-referenced to membership details should the need arise to make contact at a later date.

At the end of the rehearsal everyone will be required to use the hand sanitiser on leaving the hall. The responsible person will ensure that any chairs that have been used will be cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes or spray and returned to the stacks at the side of the hall, will clean the piano and any other equipment, will clean the table near the door, will clean the toilet, including taps, drier, switches, flush, seat, handles etc., if it has been used, will prop open the toilet door, will clean all other surfaces touched e.g. door handles and light switches, will close windows and clean the window catches, will collect any rubbish, will use the hand sanitiser and THEN turn off the lights, exit and lock the door.

Suitable cleaning materials are available in the cleaning cupboard but the Society will also provide its own items.