

Frequently Asked Questions

NEW EGHAM SINGERS INFO

What is 'NES'?

NES is the acronym for New Egham Singers - you'll often hear the choir being referred to as NES.

How is NES structured?

For general information about NES see the website – www.neweghamsingers.org - but in summary, NES is a member of Egham District Choral Society, which is a registered charity.

Is there a committee?

Yes, NES has a committee made up of volunteers. For information about the committee and its members please see website <http://www.neweghamsingers.org/committee.html>. You can contact the committee by emailing neweghamsingers@gmail.com

Can I volunteer/get involved?

If you would like to get involved whether it be in the general running of the choir, e.g. helping with the box office or drinks at rehearsals, or to be on the committee please speak to the Chairman or email neweghamsingers@gmail.com

Can I give any compliments, comments or suggestions?

We welcome feedback about rehearsals, concerts, repertoire etc. Please speak to a committee member who you feel comfortable with or email neweghamsingers@gmail.com

Do you have a Facebook or Twitter page I can follow?

Yes. Please like and follow us, www.facebook.com/neweghamsingers and <https://twitter.com/NewEghamSingers>

REHEARSALS

When / Where are the rehearsals?

Rehearsals take place during term time on a Monday evening at the Easter Centre attached to St John's Church, Egham TW20 9HR, between 7:30 and 9:30pm. Dates of rehearsals and any changes in location can be found both on the email newsletter which is sent out to choir members, and on the calendar under the Members' Area of the website. Password for the Members' Area is available to members of NES at rehearsal or email neweghamsingers@gmail.com

Is there parking at the Easter Centre?

There is a small amount of car parking at the Easter Centre on Manor Farm Lane. (Ideally, these spaces should be left available for any members with mobility difficulties). Otherwise NES members will need to use Egham town car parks, for example Hummer Road (Tesco) car park.

Are there auditions?

No, there are no auditions for the New Egham Singers. We are a community choir. If you choose to join the Progeny chamber choir (see below) there is an audition but joining this smaller choir is optional.

What can I expect the first time I come?

Come along to the Easter Centre, ideally at approximately 7:15pm on your first evening. Make your way upstairs and when you enter the room there will be tables set up with committee members/helpers sitting ready to take names and issue new music etc.

On your first evening please approach someone sitting at a table (or anyone you see) and let them know this is your first evening. You will be asked to complete a new registration form and then given music in a folder which you can use for your first trial session at the choir. Please do not make any notes on the music in this folder as it will be handed back at the end of this rehearsal.

At the end of the first evening please return the folder that you have been given – if you decide to join the choir, you will be given a folder which you will be able to keep for the term.

Where should I sit at rehearsal?

When you collect your music you will be asked whether you are a soprano/alto etc. and you will be signposted to where each voice type sits.

I don't know which voice type I am

Don't know if you're an alto or soprano? Tenor or bass? Don't worry - when you collect your music you can let them know that you don't know. You are welcome to try a voice type and if it's too high/low you can swap over to a different voice type. Or you can approach the Musical Director and ask for advice.

Are the rehearsals formal?

When rehearsal starts we begin with a series of exercises to help warm up. These warm-up exercises and the rest of the choir rehearsal are informal and often a very good laugh!

Is there an interval?

Yes at around 8:30pm there is an interval of approx. 15 minutes where you can take a break, meet and chat to fellow choir members, and juice/biscuits are available to purchase.

Do I have to sit in the same seat each week?

Once you've decided on your voice type you will need to sit in the area where your voice type, e.g. soprano, sits. However you are welcome to move around within that section e.g. you may find it easier towards the front of the seating or in the middle etc. It can be a good way to meet different people each week too.

What happens at the end of a rehearsal?

If it is your first time, please remember to hand your music back in at the end of the rehearsal.

At the end of each rehearsal we ask that you put your chair away onto the trolleys provided if possible. Remember that on the first night of the month some members of NES go to The Crown pub in Egham after rehearsal, all welcome.

How many rehearsals do we have?

We divide our year into three terms, each culminating in a concert. Each term is usually 13 rehearsals though occasionally additional rehearsals are introduced if we need more work on challenging pieces.

Do I need to attend all rehearsals?

No, but in order to help maintain the high standards that we have set in performances and to make sure that we look as professional as possible at our concerts members are required to attend at least 50% of the rehearsals in the term to automatically qualify to sing in our main concerts. The register will be checked periodically after week 7 of the term and Guy will remind individual members who are likely to miss the target. Three weeks before the concert he will advise any member who will fall below the 50% target and, should they wish to sing in the concert, invite them to be individually appraised to determine whether they have reached a suitable standard to sing at the concert. To make this process fair he will be assisted by a committee member.

MEMBERSHIP

Can I have a taster session?

Yes. Your first evening with NES is free. This helps give you a taste of how the choir is and whether you would like to join. You will be given music which you will need to hand back at the end of the evening.

You can have a free taster session at one of the first 3 rehearsals of any term. Should you wish to join after one of these sessions you can do so straight away. If you wish to have a free taster session any later than 3 weeks after the start of term this is possible, but you would then have to wait until the start of the following term to join the choir. This is intended to ensure that joining is as easy as possible and that you don't find yourself having to catch up with the work already done by the choir on that term's repertoire.

What if the choir is not for me?

If you don't wish to join the choir after your taster session that's ok. Please ensure that you have given your music back and if you have any feedback about your experience please do let us know (neweghamsingers@gmail.com).

How do I join?

To become a member you need to pay a membership fee of £134 per year. This can be paid in two instalments of £67 with the first instalment being paid in September and the second instalment of £67 being paid in February. Please do pay these subs as NES is part of a charity and we have costs to cover.

Who do I make a cheque payable to?

Please make any cheques payable to 'New Egham Singers'.

Can I pay by bank transfer?

Yes. The bank transfer needs to be made to the following:

Sort Code 60-07-33

Account 47791225

with a reference of your surname and SUBS.

If paying into the bank account please can you email the membership secretary at neweghamsingers@gmail.com to let her know.

Can I sign up for Gift Aid to be applied to my NES subs?

As NES is part of Egham and District Choral Society, which is a registered charity, members' subscriptions can qualify for Gift Aid tax relief. This is a payment to NES from HMRC on subs from choir members who pay income tax during the relevant tax year (April to March).

If you qualify for Gift Aid please ask the membership secretary for a Gift Aid Declaration Form, complete all of the fields, and return to the membership secretary.

We encourage all members who qualify to register for Gift Aid as it helps choir funds to grow, which in turn helps NES to improve the quality of our venues and concerts in the future.

MUSIC

What type of music do you sing?

New Egham Singers has a range of music from pop to musicals to classical to folk. The repertoire is very varied and you can also request music (see below) so there is bound to be something for everyone.

Do I need to have to be able to read music?

No. Music and words will be handed out and you will pick up things over the weeks, and although it can help to be able to read music or understand when the notes are going up or down, it is not essential. Rehearsal tracks are available for download or on CD, and explanations are given throughout rehearsal.

Can I make my own notes on the music?

Once you have registered as a member and are given your own folder with your music, you are welcome to write on the music to make your own notes. However please use HB pencil only – no highlighters or pens.

Do I hand the music back in or can I keep it?

You can keep the music for the term however at the end of term the music must be handed back in. Instructions on how/when to do this will be given. The music is numbered and allocated to you so if you do not hand it back a member of the committee will be in touch to request it be given back.

I want to leave the choir, what do I need to do?

If you would like to give feedback as to why you are leaving NES please do so; neweghamsingers@gmail.com or speak to a committee member. Please remember to give your music back also.

Can I suggest a song for the repertoire?

Yes. You can add your suggestions (which can include previous pieces) to the request list, which is accessible through the Members' Area on our website.

A paper copy is also available at rehearsals. To request a song on the paper copy:

- If the song is already on the list, simply put your initials next to the song
- If the song is not already on the list, add it to the bottom of the list

and then put your initials next to the song

How are song requests considered?

The Musical Director meets with the Music Committee to review all song requests. Pieces are considered according to the number of initials, i.e. requests, next to a song, difficulty, time, repertoire of concerts and number of repeats.

Why wasn't my song request accepted?

After the Music Committee has met and reviewed the song requests, the Musical Director will make a note of any songs that have been declined along with the reason why, e.g. difficulty.

Can I practice during the week?

Yes. In the Members' Area of the website you can download rehearsal tracks. If you have difficulties doing this or do not have internet access, CDs will be available at rehearsal for your voice type.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

How do I get to know people?

New Egham Singers is a social choir, with over 100 members, and we have several regular social events over the year which may be of interest. Examples include:

- First Monday of the month – social meeting at The Crown pub in Egham after rehearsal
- Monthly 'Knit & Natter' meetings - open to all NES members whether you'd like to knit, natter or both
- Ad hoc theatre trips
- Annual Christmas meal
- And much more

How do I register for social events?

Social events are advertised on our newsletter and also in the interval of rehearsals. If registration for an event is required, all information will be available.

I have an idea for a social event.

Any member within the choir is able to suggest and/or organise a social event. Please discuss any ideas with our social secretary (for their name see 'committee' section of website) or email neweghamsingers@gmail.com. We would be happy to advertise it on the newsletter so do get in touch.

Why do you have a raffle?

Once a month during the NES rehearsal there is an optional raffle that takes place. Funds raised through this raffle go towards social events for the choir. Dates of raffles are communicated in the newsletter and at rehearsals. If you would like more information or would like to donate prizes please get in touch neweghamsingers@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER & NOTICES

How can I register for the newsletter?

When you register to become a member you should start to receive the weekly newsletter which is sent by email. However if this does not happen please email neweghamsingers@gmail.com and request to be added to the list.

I don't have email – can I still see the newsletter?

A copy of the newsletter is printed and displayed on the noticeboard each week. The noticeboard is placed in the hall at rehearsals. The noticeboard has information about choir events, and non-choir events which may be of interest.

Can I advertise something?

Yes. If you would like to advertise an event please email neweghamsingers@gmail.com and we can add it to the newsletter if appropriate. Requests need to be made by Monday 10 pm to be considered for that week. You can also display your event on the noticeboard at rehearsals which is accessible to all members.

I want to unsubscribe from the newsletter

At the bottom of the newsletter there is an option to unsubscribe. Please click on this button and you will be automatically unsubscribed. If you have any questions or problems with this please contact us neweghamsingers@gmail.com

PROGENY

What is Progeny?

Progeny is a smaller group within NES which arose out of a few members wishing to sing more complex music. The small group size and focus on one or two pieces a term allows members to receive detailed vocal tuition in a fun and informal way.

What type of music do Progeny sing?

This is totally up to the members. Each term members put in requests that Guy goes through, to check their suitability. A list is then drawn up (half classical, half popular) and Progeny vote on one or two pieces. By

being a Progeny member, you are more likely to have your request chosen as the number of people voting is smaller.

When do Progeny rehearse?

Progeny rehearse fortnightly on a Wednesday evening from 7:15 – 9:15pm. Rehearsals are at Strode's College in room AE02 (Almshouse East 02).

What is the cost of joining Progeny?

There is an extra fee to pay of £28.00 per term, however your first rehearsal with Progeny is offered free of charge as a taster.

Is there an audition for Progeny?

Yes and no! In order to join Progeny you need to be a member of NES and perform a short extract from any piece to Guy at the piano as part of your taster session. This usually takes less than a minute. It isn't really an audition, but just a check that you have vocal confidence and can stay on your part.

How do I join Progeny?

If you'd like to come along for a taster session you can speak to Guy at a NES rehearsal, email him, or speak to Chloe Spencer (the Progeny Administrator).

CONCERTS

How many concerts do you have a year?

NES tends to have 3 main concerts annually; one in December for Christmas, one in Spring and one in the Summer. Usually the Christmas one is beginning of December and includes carols. The Spring one is around the end of term in March/April (depending on when Easter is) and the Summer concert is in July. The July concert tends to be a picnic concert with the first half of the concert being sung indoors followed by a picnic outdoors, then the second half sung indoors or outdoors depending on the venue.

NES often does other performances on an ad hoc basis, e.g. in 2015 we performed at the Magna Carta event. These events are publicised at choir and on our newsletter.

If I miss some rehearsals can I still sing in a concert?

NES and Progeny have a base attendance rule of 50% of rehearsals to be eligible for concert participation. If you attend more than 50% of rehearsals in one term, you are automatically eligible. Around three weeks before a concert, the MD will approach members whose attendance is looking to fall below 50% and discuss their options. This

rule has been created to enable NES to fall in line with other choirs' policies and to ensure a good concert performance.

Will I always be able to sing in the concert if I am eligible?

Some of the concert venues that we use cannot accommodate a choir comprising all of our current members. In the event that more eligible members wish to perform in a concert than the venue can accommodate, preference will be given to those members who have attended the most rehearsals.

What dates are the concerts and how can I buy tickets?

Dates and information on how to buy tickets will be communicated at rehearsals and on our mailing list.

What do I wear for dress rehearsal?

Please wear your usual clothes for the dress rehearsal

What do I wear for the concert?

- Women – black trousers/ankle-length black skirt and a white collared shirt. If you wish to wear a skirt instead of trousers we ask that you do not sit on the front row of the choir for the performance. Please ensure the shirt is white (not beige) and has long sleeves. A blue corsage will be given to ladies on the night of the concert.
- Men – black trousers, white shirt. A blue tie will be given to men on the night of the concert

Can I take a bottle of water on stage at the concert?

We understand you may need this in case your throat dries up however we would ask that you keep any bottles off stage if possible. There is an interval in concerts so you can get the drink then. If you really need to take a bottle of water on to the stage please keep it out of sight of the audience.

Can I nominate a charity to support in a concert?

Most NES concerts are in support of a local charity. If you have a charity you would like put forward for consideration, please contact our chairman at neweghamsingers@gmail.com. Charity nominations are considered in the August committee meeting. Charities should be:

- Local to our community. This includes the community that you as a member live in, not just Egham
- Non-denominational
- Non-political

Last updated: 23 August 2018