

Open letter to political party leaders

Making Music represents 4,000 leisure-music groups (comprising around 230,000 hobby musicians) located across the UK in every constituency. Our members are choirs of all kinds, orchestras, brass bands, ukulele groups, jazz ensembles, choral societies, steelpan bands, folk groups, drumming circles, festivals, volunteer promoters and more.

These self-organised volunteer-run community groups bring well-researched benefits to participants and local areas: social, psychological, educational, health, well-being, economic, place-making. They are largely self-financed, but they need government to protect the infrastructure and support they rely on to flourish. There are two policy matters which would make a real difference.

1) Enable choirs to claim creative tax reliefs by adding 'voice' as an eligible instrument to (existing) Orchestra Tax Relief

Orchestra Tax relief has been successful in sustaining the growth of professional and amateur ensembles of 12+ acoustic instruments, leading to increased engagements for professionals, more ambitious programming, additional venue hires and growth in night-time economy.

But choirs are not able to access such support. That lack of inward investment is holding back the development of this sector and the significant contribution it makes, for example, to professionals' portfolio careers, engaging around 30,000 choir leaders, composers and singers annually.

That is why we are now asking that choirs may become eligible to claim tax reliefs, by making 'voice' one of the eligible instruments under the existing Orchestra Tax Relief legislation.

2) Protect and develop the spaces community groups need to run and flourish

Groups need hyperlocal, accessible and affordable spaces everywhere to run their regular activity. Our members use religious buildings (54%), educational establishments (21%), community or village halls (15%), plus Local Authority owned space, cultural venues, private clubs/halls, residences

They need you to notice, cherish and support this infrastructure in everything you do e.g.

- Stop the sale of buildings when local authority finances are temporarily precarious
- Enable funding for essential maintenance of volunteer run community buildings
- Prevent accidental threats from inappropriate legislation (Martyn's Law first draft)
- Support communities to manage and take on their buildings with asset transfers
- Safeguard community spaces through planning legislation

If your party is successful in these elections, I hope we may look forward to working with you on these two matters, for the benefit of individuals and communities all across the UK.

[Election asks 2024 | Making Music](#)

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Eifler".

Barbara Eifler, Chief Executive, Making Music