



PRESS RELEASE 2022

Wednesday, December 14th, 6-7pm

Doorstep Carols is back again this year! This nationwide singalong is aiming to unite the nation in song - and strengthen communities - for the 3rd year running.

This year's singalong is supporting the Alzheimer's Society, with care homes across the country set to join in - at one home, in Halstead, Essex they've even got (live) penguins joining in!

On December 14th 6-7pm participating BBC Local Radio stations and BBC Sounds will provide the nation with the opportunity to sing together again. Everyone is invited to join in - on their doorsteps, in their streets, hospitals, care homes - wherever they are.

The 'epicentre' of the event will be Carols in The Square in Shrewsbury, hosted by Shrewsbury Town Council and BBC Radio Shropshire, and organisers say they are inundated with requests from across the UK from streets wanting to get involved again.

Last year, more than 30 BBC Local Radio stations broadcast the carols across the UK with some exciting linked-in events under Concorde in Bristol, in Trafalgar Square, at Canterbury Cathedral, at care homes, children's hospitals and community centres and much more!

In 2020, Doorstep Carols - which began in Shropshire in response to lockdown - attracted major national media coverage in Shrewsbury, including a special feature on *The One Show*. Doorstep Carols 2021 was featured on *BBC Breakfast News*, with Popchoir from Trafalgar Square.

Shrewsbury streets are planning their singalongs: "We'll have to get the urn out again," says Katie David, from Frankwell, where neighbours gather together for Doorstep Carols each year in the front driveway of Rev Tim Vasby-Burnie of St George's Church.

"In these dark cold times, and not just the weather, it's good to come together as community and bring some light and joy," said Rev Tim. "People enjoy seeing their neighbours and singing together - especially those who are isolated - when most of the time we're not often

out on our streets chatting, we're rushing between home, work and the shops at this time of year."

In Oxfordshire, Richard Cook from Banbury is organising a singalong for his neighbours for a third year: "We've looked at the weather for Wednesday and we think we'll invite everyone inside this year. We've done it twice - we heard about it from my wife's sister in Liverpool. We live in a close and there are about 15 people who know each other very well, and we do things together, but Doorstep Carols has developed it. There are some new people who joined us two years ago who are up for getting involved. If you have joiners it helps. The personalities of people is important."

Doorstep Carols was the idea of mum of two Katy Rink, from Shrewsbury, who joined with friends Beth Heath and Rebecca Smith to help spread it across the nation.

Doorstep Carols organiser Katy Rink said:

"It's wonderful to watch Doorstep Carols grow bigger each year as the word spreads. We've enjoyed great support from BBC Local Radio to help bring this to the nation.

"Doorstep Carols has the power to bring people together, creating communities where maybe they didn't exist and cementing friendships year on year.

"It's a small ask to help get this going on your street - and it can have a big impact. Plus you'll create some wonderful festive memories and a new family tradition."

Co-organiser Beth Heath of Shropshire Festivals added:

"It's so simple to join in and completely free - tune in to participating BBC Local Radio stations at 6pm on December 14th, download the words from our website and sing.

"Obviously, we'd recommend having some fun with it too - make mince pies and mulled wine, decorate the street - or even get a band together to play along. Add your own sparkle and sing along, wherever you are. You could even join in at the work Christmas party!"

Rebecca Smith of Link for Good, who is once again supporting the delivery of Doorstep Carols, added:

"Community, charity and joy are at the core of the Christmas message. Last year hundreds of care homes gave their elderly residents the opportunity to join loved ones and the nation in song through Doorstep Carols. Vicky McClure and BBC1's "Our Dementia Choir" has shown us the value of that engagement. It is wonderful that this emerging annual tradition continues to provide the opportunity to sing together supporting communities and in particular this year - the Alzheimer's Society."

This year, the event will be supporting the Alzheimer's Society, Katy said. "You can hop on the event and use it to raise funds for causes close to your heart, by setting up a JustGiving

page where you live, or using collection buckets on the night - or you can donate to sing via our website www.myshrewsbury.co.uk

Abi Horton, Alzheimer's Society Community Fundraiser for Shropshire, said:

"We are delighted Doorstep Carols have chosen to raise money for Alzheimer's Society, helping to support 900,000 people living with dementia across the UK. A single donation of £10 could help provide someone with their first telephone conversation with one of the charity's expert dementia advisers.

"Too many people face dementia alone. Brilliant fundraisers like Doorstep Carols, help to support Alzheimer's Society's vital dementia services, used over 4.2 million times last year. Whatever you are going through, you can turn to Alzheimer's Society this festive season, and all year round, for confidential support, help and advice, call our support line on 0333 150 3456 or visit our website alzheimers.org.uk."

Helen Hampton, Director of Popchoir, which will once again be joining Doorstep Carols from Trafalgar Square on December 14th, said:

"Popchoir are delighted to be leading Doorstep Carols in London for the second year running, from underneath the Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square. We know the importance of singing and the enormous benefits that singing together brings in terms of wellbeing and mental health. Singing with others is one of the oldest forms of music making, and it survives for good reason - joining in song with other people makes us feel connected and to hear many voices together is always uplifting and inspirational.

*"The Doorstep Carols initiative in conjunction with BBC local radio stations across the country, strives to bring the nation together to sing favourite carols and Christmas songs for this one hour on December 14th. Those taking part, whether alone, or with family, friends, neighbours or community groups, know they are joining with thousands of others across the country - whether they can hear their voices or not. **It is a powerful and joyous occasion that embodies the spirit of Christmas.** Popchoir are delighted to share this hour and sing with our fellow Londoners in this truly festive and happy event."*

All the words and sheet music are available at doorstepcarols.co.uk plus details of how to get involved.

Watch & Share the Doorstep Carols Jingle!

Created by George Rink, 15, from Shrewsbury with the kind help of Tony Reed, Jane Pickworth and Chris Renshaw and students from Shrewsbury School.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4g7UoMfIJg&ab_channel=ShropshireFestivals

PICTURES HERE:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/uzs4uhz4n8vi0zx/AAA69w57d2E_uW4UfiV3Ub9Ya?dl=0

PR Ops (could be arranged ahead of time - or on the night):

- Popchoir massed choir singing in **Trafalgar Square**
- Colne View Care Home, **Halstead, Essex** - singing with REAL PENGUINS and the Halstead Community Choir and Dementia Friendly choir, with a winter wonderland theme & sleigh.
- **Withywood Retirement Home, Shrewsbury** - Santa in his sleigh, singing with residents
- BBC Radio Shropshire - will be broadcasting from **Shrewsbury Town Square** - the 'epicentre' of Doorstep Carols, where it all started.
- Rev Tim Vasby - Burnie - is reuniting his community, now for the third year running, to join in, with mulled wine, brass band, firepits, fairylights etc in the neighbourhood of **Frankwell in Shrewsbury** - vicar@shrewsburyabbey.com
- **The Drum and Money pub in Swadlincote, Derby** is organising a pub singalong
- **The Petersfield Post** is printing all the words in the paper, so people can sing along with Shine Radio.
- BBC Radio Suffolk is doing a special hosted show with Jon Wright. **Doorstep Carols Suffolk is led by Lightwave** which is encouraging people to put on wings and halos for the occasion, for the Diocesan Inspiring Angels initiative - see <https://www.lightwave.community/doorstep-carols>
- Sally Feben Smith - singing around the village pump with her remote rural community on the **Isle of Purbeck** - They say DSC created the community in 2020 and they now do it every year. febensmith@aol.com
- Doorstep Carol event in Edinburgh with members of Love Music Community Choir, Love Music Junior Choir, Stockbridge and New Town Community Orchestra plus any members of the public who want to join in. They will also be inviting members of the Ukrainian refugee community currently living on the MS Victoria ship in Leith Docks to join too.
Venue: **Leith Links, Leith, Edinburgh** EH6 7EZ
Time: 7pm
The start time is later than the official time as they have a workshop running until 1830. They will probably stream it live on facebook too.
- Look at our Twitter and Facebook feeds to get a feel for previous events:
- <https://mobile.twitter.com/doorstepcarols>

For more information contact Katy Rink on 07701 048360 or email Katy at editorial@myshrewsbury.co.uk