

[REDACTED]

From: C [REDACTED] Jamieson [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 January 2019 15:50
To: Future Merton; Councillor Stephen Alambritis
Subject: Future Wimbledon Masterplan: Consultation Response

> Dear Future Merton, Dear Councillor Alambritis,

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> I am writing in response to this consultation on behalf of Sonoro, the internationally acclaimed professional chamber choir founded in early 2016 by N [REDACTED] Ferris and M [REDACTED] Higgins as Artistic Directors. In particular my response relates to the creation of a cultural space suitable for hosting large musical events.

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> Based in Merton, Sonoro works regularly with large amateur groups. However, the lack of a suitable performance venue within the borough of Merton currently limits the scale of projects that can be undertaken.

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> Sonoro has rapidly gained a reputation in the world of classical choral music for its warm tone, rich blend of colours and vibrancy in performance. The 2018 CD 'Christmas with Sonoro' was BBC Music Magazine's Christmas Choice: "There's stillness and great joy in this standout festive offering from London's young choir." And from the Guardian, "This year's standout recording is Christmas with Sonoro abundant in warm tonal variety". The Choir travelled to Switzerland in 2018 to perform a world premier choral work, and opened the St Magnus International Festival in Orkney last June. In the relatively short time since its inception, Sonoro is drawing audiences from all of greater London and beyond. In order to accommodate a large audience, one of their Christmas concerts took place to great acclaim in King's Place, central London.

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> Sonoro, whose raison d'être is the accessibility to all of choral music of the highest standard, has strong links with Merton. The choir opened the Wimbledon International Festival in 2016 and 2017 jointly with Merton Music Foundation Young Voices, worked with Wimbledon Community Chorus to perform Handel's 'Messiah', and conducted a series of 'Golden Threads: Music and Art' workshops in three Merton primary schools last November. Other community aspirations include working with Wimbledon Symphony Orchestra and another performance with Wimbledon Community Chorus. Concert performances are currently given in local churches, but the audience capacity is a problem when there are large groups performing.

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> Sonoro's recent Wimbledon Christmas concert, in which members of the audience were invited to sing with the choir, took place in St John's Church, Spencer Hill. The concert sold out to the disappointment of many. Currently there are no venues in which Sonoro can comfortably perform with both Wimbledon Community Chorus and Wimbledon Symphony Orchestra. It would be to the enormous benefit of Sonoro to have a state of the art concert hall in the borough with dedicated rehearsal space, a large performance platform and an auditorium of the capacity to accommodate audiences on the scale Sonoro is now attracting. It would clearly be of benefit to the residents of Merton to be able to enjoy regular performances from Sonoro and joint ventures with community ensembles close to home.

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> If I can provide any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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> Yours sincerely,

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> C [REDACTED] Jamieson [REDACTED]
> Sonoro, Chair of Directors