

Choir's Glastonbury trip eclipses the World Cup

Rhiannon Evans

A CROUCH End choir gained themselves tens of thousands of new fans at the weekend as they backed Kinks star Ray Davies on stage at Glastonbury.

Thousands shunned the football and flocked to see the Crouch End Festival Chorus sing with Davies, who played the traditional "legends slot" on the main Pyramid Stage on Sunday afternoon.

Almost 50 local singers travelled to the world-famous festival – including Haringey's Liberal Democrat leader Cllr Robert Gorrie – travelling there and back in a day.

The choir, which recently collaborated with former Oasis star Noel Gallagher, has worked with the Kinks frontman several times, appearing at Kenwood and

recording an album with him last year.

Musical director David Temple said: "I think as he was doing the Pyramid Stage he wanted to do something epic so he decided to use the choir – I also think Michael Eavis was quite interested in having the choir there as well.

"It was absolutely unbelievable – it was the best Glastonbury ever, partly because of the 40th anniversary and partly because of the weather, which was magnificent.

"I had a slight worry that with the World Cup being on we would not have an audience but it was fantastic, there were about 40,000 or more. I turned round occasionally, but it was great for the choir because they saw the audience right the way through and could see their reaction as well."



HIGH NOTE: The choir with Ray Davies. Picture courtesy BBC

He added: "It was a once in a lifetime experience for us – we just keep having these things coming up, but I say to the singers, 'You have to really savour the moment because you don't know if it's ever going to happen again'.

"I think they really did because

I don't think I have ever seen the choir so happy and relaxed, on such a high – it was marvellous."

The choir has played a series of special concerts over the years, from the Electric Proms to working with composer Ennio Morricone, but can now add yet another distinguished name to their fan base.

Mr Temple said: "Stevie Wonder's sound engineer said to Ray Davies's sound engineer that he thought the choir sounded fantastic and I was really thrilled."

It was, at times, an emotional performance as Davies paid tribute to his former Muswell Hill band mate Pete Quaipe, 66, who died of kidney failure last week.

"It was all very emotional when you think of some of the words of the songs, they could almost refer

to him and his passing," said Mr Temple. "I think it has been a tough few days for him, but he did come to see me afterwards to say please pass on my thanks to the choir."

□ The Crouch End Festival Chorus is looking for new male members or guest singers for their future programme of events. If you are interested, go to www.cefc.org.uk for more information.