



Annual Report of the Executive Committee Members (Trustees)

The Executive Committee presents its first annual report since Rising Voices Community Choir was founded. The report and accounts are for the year ending September 2014. The report celebrates the success of the choir and the achievements to date.

Background

Rising Voices was launched on the 8th January 2013 with highlights of the event being shown on BBC South Today. The aim of the choir is to primarily support recovery and help people whose lives have been affected by cancer, their families, and carers, including those who have been bereaved and health professionals. It is hoped that by giving support, encouragement and singing for fun will help improve people's well-being.

Underpinning formation of the choir was the intention of using participation in singing as a choir to aid recovery following cancer treatment, to encourage confidence and social interaction, and also promote wellbeing. The focus of the choir is to support people affected by cancer and their carers to regain their confidence and directly stems from the key principles defined through the National Cancer Survivorship Initiative (NCSI).

Aims and Objectives

The increase in prevalence of cancer and the success of treatments means that there will need to be a transformation in the way that the NHS cares for people affected by cancer, moving away from the emphasis on acute hospital towards a more holistic approach that is well coordinated and integrated. The aim is to transform care by offering people the opportunity for individualised support to enable self-management.

There are established associations between music and physical and spiritual health. Involvement with music making is recognized as having benefits for specific conditions, especially cancer and neurological disorders including forms of dementia. Participation in music making has been shown to improve well-being and music has power to communicate with individuals at times of difficulty. This formed the background to the establishment of *Rising Voices Wessex*.

The initial aim was to establish:

- Regular rehearsals
- Choir membership and peer support
- Taking part in performances and events

To achieve this, the Operational Steering Group needs to undertake:

- Promotion and Marketing
- Management and administration
- Facilitation
- Catering
- Resources for rehearsals and performances
- Fundraising and financial visibility
- Evaluation to demonstrate the benefits
- Rising Voices Network

Note: Further details can be found in the constitution of Rising Voices on request from the Trustees.

Management of Rising Voices

Rising Voices is administered by the Executive Committee, members of which constitute Trustees. The Chairman, officers and other Trustees are appointed (or re-appointed) at the annual general meeting. The desired profile of Trustees is reviewed periodically by the Trustees and appropriate appointments are made to ensure a balanced committee. It should include individuals with a clinical background, to provide clinical leadership and support. No external bodies have the power to appoint Trustees and the Executive Committee is ultimately responsible for the governance of the choir. The names of Trustees who served during the year are set out under Legal and Administrative Information of this document. The Trustees meet or telephone conference at least four times a year to review the charity's operations and to decide policy. The Trustees of Rising Voices are voluntary and any private benefit gained is incidental. No member of the Trustees provides goods or services to the organisation except by way of a free gift.

All new Trustees are given background information about the charity and are advised of their responsibilities by the Chair. In addition they are given recent information about the charity and advised of sources of information about their responsibilities. The training needs of the Trustees are examined and acted upon as part of the regular review of risks.

The Operational Steering Group which includes the Musical Director, Trustees and members of the choir and meets monthly to discuss the day to day operational process of the choir and report to the executive committee. The members of this group are also voluntary and involvement of choir members is encouraged. The Operational Steering Group has established a number of workshops to enable all members of the choir to comment on the development of Rising Voices.

Legal and Administrative Information

Rising Voices is set up as a community choir and is currently not a registered charity.

The Executive Committee members (Trustees) are:

- Dr Alastair Smith (Chairman)

- Dr Simon Pennell
- Verena Cooper
- Jean Querol
- Noëline Young

Note: Further information about the Executive Committee and the Operational Steering Group can be found on the website or on request from the Trustees.

The Rising Voices Choir has both Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance with Access Insurance:

Charity Insurance: Rising Voices Wessex

Policy Ref: SC2100F130YR/9/315

Inception Date: 06/08/2014 Renewal Date: 06/08/2015

Rising Voices review of the year

Regular rehearsals

Initial establishment of the choir was facilitated from Poole Arts Centre (The Lighthouse) however practical constraints meant that this was not a long term arrangement, so rehearsals were temporarily taking place at Lewis Manning Hospice until a suitable venue was found; our thanks to both of these venues for their support.

The choir rehearsals now take place at a permanent venue at St Johns Church, Ashley Road, Poole, BH14 0AA

Rehearsals are every Tuesday evening at 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm. Thank you to St Johns Church for their support and enabling us to use this lovely venue and facilities. A small suggested donation is requested for all members that attend the choir rehearsals to cover the running costs of the choir including a donation to the church.

The choir rehearsals are led by our musical director and our accompanist is a student and member of the Wessex Youth Orchestra

Choir membership

From the start the choir has proved popular and continues to grow with 35 to 40 whose lives have been affected by cancer members attending rehearsals.

The Operational Steering Group has a membership secretary and has established the use of a membership form so that all those attending have their details recorded on a database (currently 45 active members). This ensures we can contact people about activities and events and have contact details in case of an emergency.

The choir has a website and social media has been established through both Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Regular events

Since the choir started it has been involved in several events which have included a visit to the twin town of Poole, Cherbourg. At first the repertoire of the choir meant that performances were short

(10 mins) however now the choir is able to perform for 30 mins or more and has a repertoire of nearly 30 songs enabling the choir to hold its own concert.

Past Performances include:

Concert with Wessex Harmony, fundraising for Cancer Research UK
An Evening of song with the Rising Voices Community Choir at St. John's Church
Healthy Happy Living, Bournemouth School for Girls
Fun-day organised by Keepmoat construction
Panto, Lighthouse, Poole
Broadstone WI annual dinner
Lewis Manning Conference at AFC Bournemouth
Lewis Manning Open Day
Poole Lighthouse Health Day
Performed Live on BBC Radio Solent.
'Crafts on the Quay' - Performed on Poole Quay
Debut performance in Cherbourg as part of women's health festival linked with Poole / Cherbourg twinning

There are two people on the Operational Steering Group who share the responsibility for organising attendance at events.

Promotion and Marketing

The Trustees have a Communications and Marketing plan (copy available from the Trustees on request). The choir has had publications in the Echo, Mac Voice and Ovacome newsletters and is currently planning further publications and a video for the website and YouTube. Early success also meant that the choir has been on local radio and TV to promote its achievements.

To recruit new members and encourage donations the Operational Steering Group are developing a range of banners, posters and leaflets to promote the choir at events and when performing and to be available at local libraries, doctors surgeries and hospitals.

The choir has two members of the Operational Steering Group responsible for promotion and marketing.

Administration

The Trustees have completed a suite of governance documents (copies available from the Trustees on request).

These include:

- Constitution
- Terms of Reference (covering Trustees and Operational Steering Group meetings)
- Fraud Policy
- Fraud Plan
- Communications and Marketing Plan
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults policy

- Strategy 2014 - 2017
- Stakeholder analysis

The Operational Steering Group meets monthly and oversees the day to day administration of the choir. Minutes are taken from each meeting and are available. There is a chairman and secretary for the Operational Steering Group.

Catering

Catering for rehearsal evenings and events has become something that all members participate in, with a regular cake rota supporting the teas and coffees. For events people bring a contribution to the table creating a social event that helps to support the individual as well as the choir as a community.

There is a cost to providing the ingredients for teas and coffees however members do make a donation towards this.

Resources

In order to support the choir there is an ongoing need for some resources such as:

- Folders for lyrics (each new member is given a folder of lyrics).
- Uniforms – Tee shirts and sweat shirts with the choir logo (members pay a small donation for these).
- Props such as feather boas.
- Posters and leaflets for marketing.
- Banners and advertising boards.
- Telephone for membership and performance enquiries.
- The MUSICAL DIRECTOR provides 'boom box', music stand and computer.

Note: Details of resources for the future are outlined in the Strategy for 2014 – 2017

Fundraising

Rising Voices was initially funded and supported by Dorset Cancer Network for six months as a pilot project to look at what benefits singing and music bring to people's wellbeing.

However the project was so successful that it was set up to continue to offer rehearsals and perform as a choir.

Subsequently Rising Voices Wessex have applied for and received grants from Macmillan Cancer Support and the Big Lottery Fund to enable further development and ensure the choir is sustainable. The choir aims to be self-sufficient therefore members donate weekly to the day to day running of the choir and when invited to perform the choir invites the event organisers to donate.

The choir has two members of the Operational Steering Group responsible for overseeing fundraising and one for book keeping.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the pilot project was carried out by a professional music Psychologist, Dr Jane Oakland, during the first 12 weeks of setting up the choir. It is acknowledged that the diagnosis of cancer creates enormous physical, social and emotional upheavals for both patients and their carers or other family members, and with advancing developments in the treatment of cancer, that many more patients have the potential to survive the disease. However, as survival rates increase, so does the need for psychosocial support and quality of life initiatives and the aim of the evaluation of the choir was to recognise this as research has shown that group singing has several physiological, psychological and social components that can interact to create a feeling of well-being.

Health questionnaires were distributed to all participating members and participants assessed their physical and psychological states on a scale of 1-10 at monthly intervals during the 12 week project and semi-structured interviews were conducted with five choir members. The interviews were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The interview participants felt overwhelmingly that they had experienced greater social and psychological benefits than physical benefits. They valued the empathic nature of the group and a safe environment where they could share information, be supported or inspired by others who were further into the recovery journey. Public performance enhanced self-esteem and personal confidence. The choir was perceived as having benefits for family relationships and, additionally, the choir was seen as a transition between dealing with the effects of cancer and re-entering 'normal' life. The consequences of this desired transition were that any friendships which developed were confined within the choir in order to minimise reminders of cancer within daily life. The venue and general organisation of the choir was regarded as excellent. The current Musical Director played a significant role in the success of the choir. We do plan to repeat the evaluation of the choir soon and use the information to help us develop further.

Rising Voices Network

It is an ambition of the Trustees to set up a Network of Rising Voices Choirs in Wessex and therefore it is hoped to set up a further choir in Bournemouth in 2015. A small group has been established in the west of Dorset, with links to Rising Voices Wessex. An additional pilot was run to allow the choir to work in a local hospice, Lewis Manning Poole, to offer individuals whose health was not so stable to continue singing, but in a more supportive environment. The future aim would be for the choir to set up a 'Friends of Rising Voices', people who are willing to help to support the choir but who do not necessarily want to sing. The choir enjoys the support of two clinical champions Mr Dexter Perry and Dr Maxine Flubacher and a patron Fiona Castle OBE and is seeking the support of other patrons.

With thanks

A special thank you to all those who have supported the choir since it was founded, both in fundraising, helping with the day to day running of the choir, supporting us at the venues, sorting the lyrics, administration for the Operational Steering Group and events and making cakes. Also especially to our Musical Director Sarah Mcnaughton and musical accompanist Mark Anstead (a music student) who have been with the choir since it was set up, providing the musical support and additional responsibilities to ensure the choir rehearsal run smoothly.

Financial Review

Gross income and expenditure figures from 01.04.2013 till 31.03.2014 were £20,936.95 (Jan 2013- Sept 2014) and £13,991.88 (Jan 2013 – Sept 2014), giving a surplus for the year of £6945.07. The review of the accounts was carried out by Mr Robert Taylor, FCA.

Rising Voices has been fortunate to receive funding for initial set up of £20,000 from Dorset Cancer Network and £500 from Fiona Castle (Patron). This was followed by a grant from Macmillan Cancer Support and a recent successful bid for Lottery funding received in October 2014 which will be shown in the accounts for 2014 – 2015.

The main expenditure for running the choir is the contract for the Musical Director which amounts to £ 8,670.00 during the period covered by this annual report and initial administration costs of £1511.54 were incurred initially for an administrator to set up the choir.

Further expenditures have included ‘gifts in kind’ to support the musical accompanist, £200.00, promotion and marketing resources, £1,525.84, this includes tee shirts, posters & banners. Initial evaluation costs of £850.00 to establish the benefits of a choir and venue costs especially whilst at the Lighthouse totaling £956.80. Public liability and indemnity insurance, £199.30. During the financial year funding of £1000.00 was donated to set up Rising Voices West in Bridport as part of the ambition to have a network of choirs in Wessex.

The monthly running costs for Rising Voices choir from reviewed accounts are £1166.00 including administration and evaluation. For the last 6 months the running costs per month have been £819.00. The monthly running costs of Rising Voices have reduced as we no longer employ someone for administration or evaluation. All administration is undertaken by volunteers who are part of the Operational Steering Group.

Both the Macmillan Cancer Support Grant and the Big Lottery Grant have spending restrictions and the funding is dedicated to consolidating what has been achieved and expanding the choir and the Rising Voices Wessex Network. These designated funds of £2,958.70 from Macmillan Cancer Support and £10,000 from the Lottery grant are to cover both running costs and further development of the choir and should be used in the period up to September 2015. They include matched funding for expenditure on Website development, promotion and marketing materials, video and CD, venue hire, supporting the cost of further choirs in Wessex and part of the Musical Director costs. The opening balance of these two restricted grants is £ 12,978.70. Total expenditure against these will be covered in the 2014 – 2015 annual report.

Unrestricted funding, that is funding raised by members donations since the choir started is £5,554.90, an average of £332.00 per month. This represents 10 Months of trading without the restricted funding.

Looking Forward

As shown above in “Rising Voices review of the year”, the Trustees continue to be committed to sustaining, developing and expanding Rising Voices and hope to establish the choir as a charity in the future to be able to support the choir and meet the initial ambition to give support and encouragement by singing for fun, to help improve the well-being of people affected by cancer.

Having established the choir, its management structure, a suitable venue and the various arrangements to enable the day to day running of the choir and to be able to perform at events, we are now looking to consolidate and be able to reach more people affected by cancer in the local area.

Statement of Executive Committee's responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the incoming resources and application of resources for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the choir will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the choir and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, and the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the choir and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The accounts of the choir have been reviewed by Mr Robert Taylor, FCA and we thank him for his help in this matter.

On behalf of the Executive Committee

Chairman Dr Alastair Smith