



Annual Report of the Executive Committee Members (Trustees)

The Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex Community Choir presents its second annual report. The report and accounts cover the year ending September 2015. The report covers the activities of the choir, its achievements and the work undertaken by the Trustees to further the project of singing for health and wellbeing to support recovery for those affected by cancer.

Background, Aims and Objectives

Rising Voices Wessex was launched on the 8th January 2013 at the Lighthouse Arts Centre, Poole with local media coverage and a brief feature 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. 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). Fundamentally the intention is that by having such a supportive activity available in the community, singing 'for fun' will help improve people's well-being and reduce medical dependency.

There are established associations between music and health, physical and spiritual. Involvement with music making is recognized as having benefits for specific conditions, especially 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 increasing prevalence of the cancer and improved life expectancy and 'survivorship' means that there will be changes in the way that the NHS cares for people affected by cancer- moving away from the emphasis on acute hospital treatment towards a more holistic, community -based approach. The aim is to transform care by offering people the opportunity for individualised support to enable self-management.

At the outset there were three main objectives for Rising Voices

- Establish a regular session for meeting and rehearsing
- Establishing choir membership

- Seek opportunities for public performance to promote the message of the benefits of singing and to encourage ongoing member recruitment

As the choir became established the initial steering group work then identified further key workstreams necessary for administration and progress of Rising Voices Wessex

- General management and administration
- Promotion and Marketing of its existence and activity
- Managing the practicalities of rehearsal venues and performances
- Fundraising as part of achieving financial viability
- Initial evaluation to assess benefits of singing and the choir project
- Ensuring availability of simple catering at rehearsals

Note: Further details can be found in the constitution of Rising Voices (available on the website).

Management of Rising Voices

The overall Rising Voices project and strategy is administered by the Executive Committee, members of which constitute Trustees. The Chairman and other Trustees are appointed (or re-appointed) at the annual general meeting. The skill mix of Trustees is subject to periodic review by the Trustees with appropriate changes made when necessary to ensure an optimum balance of expertise. The current Trustees consist of individuals with a clinical background who have provided leadership and support throughout the development of Rising Voices Wessex. No external bodies have the power to appoint Trustees. The Executive Committee is ultimately responsible for the governance of the choir.

As the choir develops and its aspiration to become a charity is realized it is anticipated that there will be a need for additional expertise on the board of Trustees - for example individuals with a nonclinical, financial or business background.

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. Trustees provide their expertise and leadership on a voluntary basis and receive no financial benefit, their services to Rising Voices Wessex are provided free of charge. No member of the Trustees provides goods or services to the organisation.

New Trustees, when appointed, will be given background information about the charity and advised of their responsibilities by the Chair. In addition they will be given recent information about the organisation and advised of sources of information about their responsibilities. Training needs of the Trustees are also reviewed and acted upon as part of the regular review of risks.

The operational steering group includes the Choir Directors for Bournemouth and Poole choirs, Trustees and members of the choir. It 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 steering group has undertaken a number of workshops and commissioned a recent online survey to enable all members of the choir to comment on the development of Rising Voices and give feedback.

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
- Mrs Verena Cooper
- Mrs Jean Querol
- Mrs Noëline Young

Note: Further details about the Trustees Executive Committee and the Operational Steering Group of Rising Voices Wessex can be found on the website and 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
Effective Date: 06/08/2015 Renewal date 06.08.2016

Rising Voices review of the year

Regular rehearsals:

The Lighthouse Arts Centre in Poole was a valuable partner in the initial establishment of the choir and provided accommodation in its first few months - unfortunately practical constraints meant that this was not a viable long term arrangement. After a period during which rehearsals were temporarily taking place at Lewis Manning Hospice a suitable venue was ultimately found and the Poole choir rehearsals now take place at St Johns Church, Ashley Road, Parkstone.

Rehearsals for the Poole choir are every Tuesday evening at 6.15 to 8.30 pm. Rising Voices Wessex is deeply grateful to St Johns Church for their support and enabling it to use this excellent venue and facilities - and for the warm welcome given to the choir. 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

A second Rising Voices choir based in Bournemouth commenced activity in June 2015. It meets and rehearses every Monday evening at 6.45 to 9.00 pm. Rising Voices Wessex is profoundly thankful to Tesco Extra for their support in this, they have made available their community hall and facilities for regular practices. A small suggested donation is similarly requested for all members that attend the Bournemouth rehearsals to cover the running costs of the choir.

During 2015 we were sad to learn that in June 2015 we would be losing the services of Sarah McNaughton our Choir Director from the beginning of the project – however we were delighted for her given her reason for leaving – to emigrate to California to be married. Sarah made a major contribution to the development and success of Rising Voices Wessex; the Trustees and choir members are profoundly thankful for her role and contribution and wish her well and every happiness in her new life. Thank you also to Megan Mackney for running the Poole choir rehearsals for the past three months. The choir rehearsals at Bournemouth and Poole are now led by Choir Director Ali Sharpe.

Choir membership:

From the start the choir has proved popular with people whose lives have been affected by cancer. The numbers attending continue to grow with up to 60 members attending rehearsals at the Poole venue and 20 at the Bournemouth venue.

The 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 data base. This ensures we can contact people about activities and events and have contact details in case of an emergency. Rising Voices Wessex has a Data Protection Policy to adhere to (copy available on the website).

The choir has a website, and social media established through facebook. During 2015 Rising Voices, in accordance with the terms of awarded grants, commissioned some promotional video clips to publicise the choir and encourage recruitment, an edited version is now incorporated on the website and available on You Tube.

Regular events:

Since the choir has started it has been involved in several events these 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 held its own concerts. The highlight of 2015 was an invitation to perform as the supporting choir with Russell Watson, on his UK “Up close and Personal” tour, at the Lighthouse in Poole. For this the choir had to not only learn a new technique, opera, but also learn songs in French and Italian. We were very proud to have performed very successfully at this event. The choir is grateful to the Lighthouse for this opportunity.

Performances 2015 included:

- 7th February 2015 - Dorset Cancer Patients Group, The Grove Hotel, Bournemouth
- 28th February 2015 - Dorset Cancer Patient Group, Dorchester
- 22nd May 2015 - Live Performance on BBC Radio Solent
- 3rd June 2015 - An Intimate Evening with...Russell Watson, Lighthouse, Poole
- 22nd June 2015 - Opening of the 2nd Rising Voices Choir at Tesco Community Room, Bournemouth.
- 12th July 2015 - Summer Social Event

- 15th July 2015 - Concert at the Shelley Theatre, Bournemouth to Launch the Bournemouth choir.
- 17th July 2015 - Two performances at the Living Well Active conference at Bournemouth University
- 8th August 2015 – Two performances at the Marie Curie Tea Party at Red House Museum, Christchurch.
- 12th September - Two performances at Boots the chemist at Castle Point.

Performances for 2013 – 2014 included:

- Concert with Wessex Harmony, fundraising 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 steering board who share the responsibility for organising attendance at events.

Promotion and Marketing:

The Trustees have a Communications and Marketing plan (copy available on the website). The choir has been the subject of articles in the Bournemouth Echo, Mac Voice and Ovacom newsletters. It also has a video on the website and YouTube. Early success also meant that the choir has been on local radio and TV to promote its achievements.: Sarah McNaughton and members of the Trustees have done interviews on local radio stations about the choir.

To recruit new members and encourage donations the steering group has developed a range of, posters and leaflets and to promote the choir and to be available at local libraries, doctors surgeries and hospitals.

At events and when performing we use banners and posters and these are currently being reviewed and updated.

The choir has two members of the steering group responsible for promotion and marketing.

Administration:

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

These include:

- Constitution.
- Terms of Reference (covering Trustees and steering group meetings).
- Fraud Policy.
- Fraud Plan.
- Grievance policy.
- Data Protection Policy
- Communications and Marketing Plan.
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults' policy.
- Strategy 2014 – 2017.
- Stakeholder analysis.

The operational steering group meets on the last Tuesday of the month and oversees the day to day administration of the choir. Minutes are taken from each meeting and are available on request.

There is a chairman and secretary for the steering group.

Catering:

Catering for rehearsal evenings and events has become something that all members contribute to, with regular cakes supporting the teas and coffees and to celebrate Birthdays. 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 – Polo shirts and sweat shirts with the choir logo on (members pay a donation for these) as it is important to present a professional image for the choir and its work.
- Tote bags with the choir logo which members can buy.
- Props such as fancy scarves – used in certain songs.
- Posters and leaflets for marketing.
- Banners and advertising boards.
- Mobile telephone for membership and performance enquiries.
- ‘Boom box’ for backing tracks and a music stand.

Note: Details of resources for the future are outlined in the Strategy for 2014 – 2017 (available on the website).

Fundraising:

Rising Voices was initially funded in 2012-3 and supported by the then Dorset Cancer Network for a six months as a pilot project to look at the benefits of singing and music 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 a grant from Macmillan Cancer Support and The 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 a minimum of £50.

The choir has two members of the steering group responsible for overseeing fundraising and one for book keeping.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the pilot project was carried out by a music psychologist, 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. With advancing developments in the treatment of cancer; many more people have the potential to survive the disease. However, as survival rates increase, so does the need for psychosocial support and quality of life initiatives. The aim of this evaluation was to confirm the supportive benefit of the choir given that research shown that group singing to have several physiological, psychological and social components that can interact to create a feeling of well-being.

In this initial evaluation the 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 reentering 'normal' life.

A repeat evaluation of all members through a simple online survey has been initiated and results from this will be covered at the 2015 AGM.

Survey for 2015

This year's survey was conducted in August using a Survey Monkey questionnaire. The survey was therefore quantitative and did not involve qualitative interviews.

The results showed that the majority of 80% of members found attending the choirs uplifting and great fun. They enjoyed the social interaction and the sense of achievement. They also enjoyed the new experiences and opportunities that Rising Voices Wessex offered. There were some challenges during the year and in particular members found the changes since the Russell Watson concert, different choir directors and changes in musical style challenging. The Trustees have noted the concerns raised and addressed them.

The survey also identified that the Bournemouth venue in Tesco was good and 83% of members found St Johns Church in Poole to be excellent.

Overall members reported that they enjoyed the singing (98%) having fun (84%) and the sense of achievement 86%.

Rising Voices Choirs

It was the ambition of the Trustees to have a network of choirs working together and therefore we have set up a further choir in Bournemouth in 2015. A small group for music therapy has been established in Bridport in the west of Dorset, with links to Rising Voices Wessex and there is also an additional project at, Lewis Manning Hospice, Poole, for individuals whose health is not so stable to be able to continue singing in a more supportive environment.

A future objective is 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 has the support of clinical champions, Mr Dexter Perry and Dr Maxine Flubacher. Fiona Castle OBE is a patron and the choir is seeking the support of other patrons.

With thanks

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 steering group and events, making cakes and importantly to our Choir Directors and accompanists.

Financial Review

In the 2014-2015 accounting year £7067.15 was carried forward from the previous year.

Income: There was an income of £16,148.00 this was made up of £4848.00 in donations and £11,300 grants (£1300.00 from Macmillan Cancer Support and £10,000.00 from The Big Lottery)

Balance: Expenditure was £11,218.65 which left us with a balance on 31.3.2015 of £11,995.68. The main expenditure was the cost of the choir director (£7,320), Filming (£1552.80), Clothing (£1,385.82) and Room Hire (£470.00) other miscellaneous costs included insurance, printing and the website.

Grants: We have produced end of grant reports for both Macmillan and the Big Lottery for the year ending September 2015. Spending from the grants was restricted to items specified in our bid and there were certain items they would not fund.

Expenditure: In addition to some of the items above we also spent £586.80 on printing, £585.00 on the new website, £1,502.00 on performance costs (including the concert at the Shelley Theatre) and £1,524 set up costs for the Bournemouth choir.

A donation of £900 of the Lottery funding was made to the Lewis Manning Hospice for the music therapy group and for the cost of printing our lyrics. There was a certain amount of match funding involved and in total £16,149.28 was spent. We are required to return any unspent money by the end of the financial year but hopefully this will not be an issue.

In the last financial year our unrestricted funds that is money raised by members' donations and donations for performances was £4848.00 or £404 a month. The monthly cost covering just the choir director's fees and room hire was £650 per month. In the first six months of the current financial year £4194.00 has already been raised mostly due to the increased numbers of members attending the Poole choir.

The monthly contribution from both choirs is £680.00 and the monthly costs are £1080.00. With the balance of £11,300 this represents 10 months trading.

Looking Forward

Looking at the current year the Poole choir is at break-even point with regard to covering the cost of the choir director and church. Bournemouth is running at a loss and will need a minimum of 35 members contributing per week in order to cover the choir director's costs. At the moment we have some of the lottery money earmarked for covering the shortfall but we must look for ways of increasing the numbers and of further fundraising. The trustees will continue to look for further grants and funding but these cannot be guaranteed.

As shown above in this Annual Report, the Trustees continue to be committed to sustaining, developing and expanding Rising Voices Wessex. We are working towards establishing Rising Voices Wessex as a charity to be able to support the choirs and meet the initial ambition to give support and encouragement by singing for fun and to help improve the well-being of people affected by cancer.

Having established the choirs, its management structure, suitable venues and the various arrangements to enable the day to day running of the choir and to be able to perform, 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 accounts of the choir have been reviewed by Mrs Alison Taylor and we thank her for her help in this matter.

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).

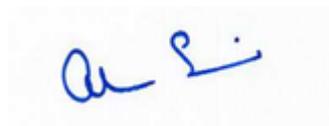
The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the incoming resources and application of resources for that period.

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 judgements 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, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Trust Deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of Rising Voices Wessex and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Executive Committee



Chairman Dr Alastair Smith