



Annual Report of the Executive Committee Members (Trustees)

The Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs presents its third annual report. The report covers the year ending September 2016 and the accounting year ending March 2016. It covers the activities of the choirs, their 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 choirs is to support recovery following cancer treatment and help people whose lives have been affected by cancer, their families and carers including those who have been bereaved through cancer. 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 as well as promoting the concept of “living well “.

The focus of the choir is thus to support individuals regain their confidence and well being; it 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 reduce medical dependency through enhancing individuals’ improved confidence, health and wellbeing - strengthening their ability to cope with issues they deal with following cancer.

There are established associations between music and health, both physical, psychological social and spiritual. Involvement with music making is recognized as having benefits for specific conditions such as cancer, neurological disorders and some forms of dementia. Participation in music making has been shown to improve wellbeing. Music also has power to communicate with individuals at times of difficulty. These facts formed the background to the establishment of **Rising Voices Wessex**.

The increasing prevalence of cancer that results from increased life expectancy in the UK population generally combined with improved life expectancy and “survivorship” as a result of treatment has establish the need for change and better support for people affected by cancer, moving away from acute hospital care towards a more holistic, community approach.

At the outset the objectives for Rising Voices Wessex were to:

- Establish a regular session for meeting and rehearsing.
- Establish a core choir membership.

- Show the existence of local demand for such a choir.
- With the above in place then seeking 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 then identified further key areas of work necessary for the effective administration and progress of Rising Voices Wessex.

- General management and administration.
- Promotion and marketing of its existence and activities.
- Managing practicalities of rehearsal venues and performances.
- Fundraising as part of achieving financial viability.
- Initial evaluation to assess the 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 Wessex at www.risingvoices.org.uk or on request from the Trustees.

Management of Rising Voices Wessex

Trustees – Executive and Strategic

An Executive Committee of Trustees directs Rising Voices Wessex choirs. In January 2016 Rising Voices Wessex became a registered charity.

The Chairman, officers and other Trustees are appointed (and may be re-appointed) at the annual general meeting. The skill mix of Trustees is subject to regular review by the Trustees to ensure an optimum balance of expertise. The current board of Trustees consists of individuals with an NHS clinical background who have provided leadership and support throughout the development of Rising Voices Wessex.

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. Further development of the board of Trustees will be proposed to Members at the 2016 AGM. No external bodies have the power to appoint Trustees. 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 the Legal and Administrative Information in this document and registered with the Charity Commission. The Trustees meet or telephone conference at least four times a year to review the charity's operations and to decide policy.

Vee Cooper, a co-founder of Rising Voices Wessex and Trustee, has tendered her resignation as a Trustee. Shortly after the establishment of the choir NHS reorganisation in the region resulted in her being re-located to West Dorset – combined with work pressures this has made it much more

difficult for her to be an active Trustee. In this context Rising Voices Wessex places on record its profound gratitude for Vee's role in setting up the choir and is delighted she will continue an association with Rising Voices Wessex in an advisory capacity.

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.

Steering group - Operational

The steering group meets monthly and is responsible for the week by week operational management of the choir. It reports to the executive committee and includes the musical director, some Trustees and members of both choirs. Membership of this group is also voluntary.

The steering group meets on the last Tuesday of the month. The steering group has also undertaken workshops and commissioned surveys to enable all members of the choir to give feedback on Rising Voices Wessex based on their experience.

Minutes are taken from each steering group meeting and are available on the website www.risingvoices.org.uk or on request. Mrs. Noeline Young currently chairs the steering group.

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 database. The information is compliant with data protection legislation requirements. Having basic information on those attending as well as on past members ensures we can contact people about activities and events, have contact details in case of an emergency and can seek simple feedback information as to how the choirs are "performing" in meeting people's needs.

Legal and Administrative Information

Rising Voices Wessex is set up as a community choir and is a registered charity. The Executive Committee members (Trustees) are:

- Dr Alastair Smith (Chairman),
- Mrs Noëline Young (Vice chair)
- Mrs Jean Querol (Treasurer)
- Dr Susi Caesar – proposed at 2015 AGM (replaced Dr Simon Pennell)
- Dr Simon Pennell (resigned in January 2016 – work commitments)
- Mrs Verena Cooper - resigns at AGM 2016

Note: Further information about the Executive Committee of Trustees and the Steering Group of Rising Voices can be found on the website and on request from the Trustees. The Trustees have completed relevant governance documents and most of these are available on the website or from the Trustees on request.

These include:

- *Constitution.*
- *Strategy for 2014 to 2017.*
- *Terms of reference for Trustees and Steering Group.*
- *Outline responsibilities for key Trustee roles.*
- *Fraud and response plan.*
- *Grievance Policy.*
- *Communications and Marketing plan (Social Media policy).*
- *Safeguarding vulnerable adults' policy.*
- *Strategy 2014-2017.*
- *Equity and diversity Policy.*
- *Data protection policy.*
- *Rising Voices Wessex survey results for 2015.*

The Rising Voices Wessex has both Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance with Access. Insurance:
Charity Insurance: Rising Voices Wessex
Policy Ref: SC2100F130YR/9/315

Rising Voices Wessex review of 2015-16

Rehearsals:

The Rising Voices Wessex Poole choir rehearsals are established and continue to take place at St Johns Church, Ashley Road, Parkstone. Rehearsals are every Tuesday evening at 6.15 to 8.30 pm. Rising Voices Wessex remains profoundly grateful to St John's Church for their support and enabling it to use this excellent venue and facilities - and for the warm welcome given to the choir.

The Rising Voices Wessex Bournemouth choir commenced activity in June 2015, meeting and rehearsing every Monday evening at 6.45 to 9.00 pm in the community room of Tesco Extra in Bournemouth. We are delighted to report that the Bournemouth choir has moved to a new home in June 2016 at the New Church, Tuckton, Bournemouth. Rising Voices Wessex is extremely thankful to Tesco Extra for their support that enabled the formation of the Bournemouth choir – and to those associated with the New Church, Tuckton who have been extremely helpful in making the move possible.

Members that attend the choir rehearsals are asked to make a donation of £3.00 towards the running costs of the choirs, which includes a donation to the churches and the provision of tea and coffee.

Catering:

Catering for rehearsal evenings is a key part of the Rising Voices Wessex strategy and is something that all members contribute to. Social interaction over tea, coffee or a soft drink creates a supportive social environment that links with the support provided through the choirs. Members do make a donation towards the cost of providing tea and coffee; the choirs have purchased some basic equipment such as hot water catering flasks.

For events such as birthdays individuals often bring cake - enhancing the social interaction and making birthdays a special event.

Resources :

To support the choirs there is also the need for the following -

- Each new member is given a set of lyrics covering the choirs' repertoire and folders for lyrics are available to purchase.
- Rising Voices Wessex clothing – Polo shirts and fleeces are available with the choir logo (members pay a small donation for these). They are important for us, to present a professional image of the choir and its work.
- Tote bags with the choir logo which members can buy.
- Posters and leaflets for marketing.
- Banners and advertising boards.
- Mobile phone for membership and performance enquiries.
- 'Boom box' for backing tracks and music stand.
- PA system (Funded by a kind donation from "Going for Bust").
- Laminator for posters for hospitals and GP surgeries.
- Microphones and suitable sound equipment for performances
- Staging/risers to enable all members to be visible at performances.
- Two large catering flasks

Choir membership:

From its outset, Rising Voices Wessex has proved popular with people whose lives have been affected by cancer. Numbers attending continue to grow with up to 60 members attending rehearsals at the Poole venue and 20 at the Bournemouth venue – it is hoped the move to the new Church will see an increase in numbers attending the Bournemouth rehearsals.

Rising Voices Wessex has a website and social media presence established through both Facebook and Twitter accounts. During 2015 Rising Voices Wessex, in accordance with the terms of awarded grants, commissioned some promotional video clips to promote its activities and encourage recruitment. An edited version is now incorporated on the website. The video clips are in the process of being updated for 2016-17.

Rising Voices Wessex are members of Arts and Health South West, The National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Living Well Active.

Fundraising and grant applications:

Rising Voices Wessex was initially funded in 2012-2013 by the then Dorset Cancer Network for a six month period - as a pilot project to explore the benefits of singing through performing as a choir, to people's wellbeing. With an ongoing requirement for appropriate financial support, Rising Voices Wessex subsequently applied for and received grants from Macmillan Cancer Support and The Lottery Fund to enable further development and work towards its sustainability.

With a stated aim of self-sufficiency members are asked to offer a small donation weekly toward day to day running of the choir and basic catering. When invited to perform the choirs requests that event organisers donate £50.00 - £75.00 - as a contribution towards costs, especially for the choir director. The choir has two members of the steering group responsible for overseeing fundraising and one for book keeping.

During the 2015-2016 year the choir received a grant towards equipment from the "Going for Bust" charity. The application for a grant from Arts and Health South West was not successful although the work of Rising Voices Wessex was "highly commended".

Rising Voices Wessex have also 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 is seeking clinical champions in both hospital and general practice settings. Presently we have two patrons, Fiona Castle OBE (who generously contributed towards the initial establishment of Rising Voices Wessex) and Lucy Braga, soprano. Rising Voices Wessex will be seeking further patrons to raise the profile of the choirs and also as a figure head when fund-raising.

People's Lottery

Following the previous receipt of a Lottery Grant to support Rising Voices Wessex, the Trustees received an invitation to apply for further funds from the Lottery through the "People's Lottery Project" - this involved submitting an application to the Lottery fund for support. The first stage was a competitive process involving some 70 or so applications from the Meridian TV region – a final 5 projects were selected of which Rising Voices Wessex was one. These then proceeded to a publicity campaign culminating in a "people's vote" organized through Meridian TV in March 2016. It was both a delight and an honour to learn that Rising Voices Wessex was one of the three projects chosen by public vote to receive £50,000.00 of Lottery money to help realize the aims outlined in the original application.

The outcome was a triumph for the choir and all those who engaged in the publicity process – including brave souls who canvassed for support on the platforms at Bournemouth Station in the early hours of February and March mornings. Thanks go to Noeline Young, Jean Querol and key steering group members who masterminded the campaign.

Additionally the outcome of the People's Lottery Grant was a vindication of the vision of the choir to offer support through participation in music-making for those affected by cancer.

The Peoples Lottery was applied for to:

- help spread the word and share the magic that singing is good for you,
- raise public awareness of the benefits of singing in a community setting on wellbeing, and showing that there are ways to recover that are non-medical, fun and uplifting. Singing in a choir improves emotional and physical health, aiding recovery and reducing medical dependency,
- provision of staging and suitable equipment to support public appearances and performances,
- support Rising Voices Wessex in partnership with the Lighthouse in Poole a Big Sing open day event for similar choirs in England as well as any individual who life has been affected by cancer, and achieve media coverage which would in turn raise awareness of the benefits of community singing,
- support Residential weekend(s) for choir members – combining a singing workshop with other holistic supportive facilities,
- develop an educational event for clinicians - facilitate the development of an accredited educational programme for clinical staff in both hospital and general practice that encourages professionals to be more holistic in understanding the problems of the cancer patient after treatment,
- have an available stock of suitable Rising Voices Wessex “uniform” clothing for public appearances,
- offer support towards transport costs to more distant performances,
- produce a Rising Voices Wessex CD,
- look to the future development of a possible third Rising Voices Wessex choir in Dorset.

Choir public appearances

Since the choir has started it has been involved in numerous events. A visit to Cherbourg, Poole’s twin town, to feature at a cancer awareness event early in 2013 was a very positive initial experience. Subsequently Rising Voices Wessex has featured twice on Radio Solent and been a supporting choir for Russell Watson at the Lighthouse in Poole during his UK “Up close and Personal” tour in June 2015. In April 2016 the choir appeared at the Regent Centre in Christchurch as a supporting choir for the close harmony group, Blake.

When the choir was first set up the repertoire of the choir meant that performances were limited to around 10 minutes. The choir now has quite a wide repertoire and can perform for over an hour - and can perform songs in languages other than English.

We would like to thank the Macmillan Beauty Therapists at Boots and A’Courts hairdressers for their support at our major performance.

Events and appearances Sept 2015 - Sept 2016

- **2015**
- **Come and Sing** 14th Nov - Invitation from Patron, Fiona Castle,OBE - St John's Church, Wimborne
- **Christmas Tree Lights** - 28th November, St John's Church, Parkstone from 4.30 - 6.00 pm.
- **Christmas Carol Concert on Dec 5th** - St Michael's Church, Lyndhurst.
- **Tesco Extra, Bournemouth** - 21st Dec
- **The Grove Hotel.** "Turkey & Tinsel", Monday 30th November and Friday 18th December at 3pm.
- **Poole Hospital in the Dome** – 22nd December
- **Forest Holm** - 22nd December
- **Lighthouse Pantomime** – foyer singing, December
- **Singing on the wards Poole Hospital.** - 24th December
- **2016**
- **Bag packing at Tesco Extra,** Bournemouth 6th Feb.
- **Lottery People's Project event** made public on week commencing 29th February.
- **BLAKE** – appearance at Regent Centre, Christchurch 6th May
- **Corfe Castle** - 21st April for Queens Birthday.
- **St Johns – Queens Birthday celebrations** – June 12th
- **Grove Hotel Birthday celebrations** – June 18th
- **Living Well Active Conference,** Bournemouth University - 29th June
- **Penny Brohn Cancer Centre, Bristol** - weekend workshop 6th / 7th August
- **Summer Concert** - St John's Church, Parkstone - 20th August
- **Andover Lodge** – 23rd August
- **Health and Wellbeing festival at Kinson Hub** - 17th September

Promotion and marketing:

The choir has been the subject for articles in the Bournemouth Echo, Mac Voice and Ovacome newsletters. The Lymington Times and New Milton Advertiser published a very positive article following the announcement of the Lottery grant award.

Rising Voices Wessex also has a video on the website and YouTube. As mentioned above, the choir has been on local radio and TV to promote its achievements. Sarah McNaughton, the initial choir director, and members of the Trustees have done interviews on local radio stations on the work of the choir.

To recruit new members and encourage donations the steering group has developed a range of, posters and leaflets to promote the choir and 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.

Evaluation

An initial evaluation of the choirs was carried out in 2013 - in the choir's first 3-4 months. The aim of this evaluation was to determine whether there was a supportive benefit from singing in the choir, given that research has shown that group singing has several physiological, psychological and social components that can interact to create a feeling of wellbeing. As has previously been reported the evaluation confirmed that individual members derive benefit from participation in the choir

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 as well as feel supported or inspired by others in similar situations. Public performance also 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.

Subsequent questionnaire surveys have continued to indicate that members derive significant benefit from Rising Voices Wessex. It is also clear from the questionnaires that the personality and approach of the Musical Director are very important to the success of the choir.

With thanks

Thanks are due 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 Musical Directors, Deputy Director and accompanists.

Looking Forward

As shown throughout this report, the Trustees remain committed to sustaining, developing and expanding Rising Voices Wessex. Registered charity status will help with fund raising and meeting the ambition of the overall project to improve the well-being of people affected by cancer through singing in a choir. Rising Voices Wessex is 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 Mr. Robert Taylor and we thank him for his 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 a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the choir will continue in business.

Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the choir enabling 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.

Financial Review

Income: Income of £13,093.64 (2014-15 = £15,678) was made up of £9,703 in donations which included £450 from Waitrose, £1,580 from Going for Bust, and a £3,390 grant from Macmillan Cancer Support. The decrease from 2014-15 is due to the fact that we received the £10,000 grant from the Big Lottery in September 2014

Expenditure: Expenditure was £18,290 in the year. Around 67% of expenditure is the cost of the choir director, which increased from 2014-15 due to the start of the second (Bournemouth) choir. The introduction of a second choir has also led to expected increases in clothing £1,601, (2014-15 £1,385), room hire £640, (2014-15 £450) and printing, (new posters, leaflets and banners) £750, (2014-15 £20) costs. Other miscellaneous costs include insurance, administration and website development, and maintenance costs.

Cash: Cash balance remains healthy, with £6,799.72 in the bank at the end of the year and £150 deposited in April 2016. The opening cash balance was £11,996. The reduction in the year reflects expenditure exceeding income. The monthly contribution from both choirs is £814.00 and the monthly costs are £1,080.00. As the choir directors fees are covered by the People's Project until April 2017, a remaining balance £6,799.72 represents 15 months trading. However it is hoped that we should be able to build a greater balance this year (thanks to the People's Project) which we hope will sustain the choir's into 2018, but it is vital that we increase the numbers of members of the Bournemouth choir.

Net income in 2016-17 is forecast to be around £10,000 plus the £50,000 from the People's Project, Most of our expenditure this year will come out of the People's Project leaving us with a balance of around £15,000 to take into the following year.

Ring-fenced Grants: We have produced end of grant reports for both Macmillan Cancer Support and the Big Lottery for the year ending September 2015. Spending from the grants was restricted to items specified in our bids which included a donation of £900 from the Lottery funding made to Lewis Manning Hospice for their music therapy group.

People's Project: In April 2016 we were winners in the People's Project and received £50,000. This will pay for the choir director for the year. We have already purchased the staging and PA system and taken the first group to Penny Bohn. We also intend to run workshops, have a Big Sing type event and an event for clinicians to promote the health benefits of the choir. Any money not spent at the end of the year's project will have to be returned.

On behalf of the Executive Committee

Chairman Dr Alastair Smith

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