



**Rising Voices Wessex**  
**Community Choirs for people affected by cancer**  
**Strategy for 2019 to 2022**

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## Introduction

The increase in prevalence of the cancer and the success of treatments means that there is a need to transform the way that the NHS cares for people affected by the disease, moving towards a more holistic personalised approach. The aim is to offer people the opportunity for more individualised support and access to services that enable them to find the appropriate support.

There are well known associations between music and health, physical and spiritual. Involvement with music making is recognized as having benefits for specific conditions, including cancer, neurological disorders and 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 our choirs, *Rising Voices Wessex*.

Underpinning the development of the choirs was the intention of using participation in singing as an aid to recovery following cancer treatment, to encourage confidence, social interaction and promote wellbeing. The focus of the choirs 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.

### Our Mission

To provide and promote music participation through singing as a means of regaining confidence, health and wellbeing to complement rehabilitation during and following treatment for cancer;

To spread the word and share the magic – singing is good for you.

### Top 5 Strategic objectives for 2017 – 2020

1. To foster mutual help, co-operation and friendship in an understanding in an empathetic environment for those affected by cancer;
2. Seeking to "normalise" post-cancer living by making available support through singing in the community in a safe friendly environment for people to have fun and regain their confidence.
3. Ensure sufficient funding per annum to be able to sustain and continue to grow and develop Rising Voices Wessex.
4. Improve public awareness by promoting the choirs, conducting and engaging in research/evaluation as to the benefits of music and singing to those affected by cancer and to publish and/or publicise such work as appropriate
5. Promote a strategy that supports the development of other choirs within the Wessex Region mainly Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire and forges appropriate musical and cultural links with other like-minded choirs.

For further details see our Constitution available on [www.risingvoices.org.uk](http://www.risingvoices.org.uk) in the About Us section.

## Our funding requirement

To achieve our mission and deliver our strategy we need to generate an income of £20,000 per annum.

This income will be generated from the following sources:

- Donations: Weekly from members attending and ad hoc donations.
- Earned income: From performances and merchandise.
- Statutory income: From grants or sponsorship that is usually ring fenced.
- Investments:

## Our Brand

### Name and strapline

**Rising Voices Wessex** – community choirs for people affected by cancer

Choirs for people who have cancer, had cancer or lost a loved one to cancer.

Spread the word and share the magic – singing is good for you.

### Logo and branding



Rising Voices Wessex logo will appear on all correspondence and information provided by the charity, shown without outline.

The brand colour is **royal blue** and this will be used with all information.

The brand colour **royal blue** will be used for clothing for performances with black and white as appropriate.

### Similar Choirs

- Tenovus Choirs – Sing With Us - <http://www.tenovuscancercare.org.uk/how-we-can-help-you/sing-with-us/>
- Wessex Cancer Trust Choirs – Sing For Life - <https://www.wessexcancer.org.uk/sing-for-life>

## Unique Selling Point

Rising Voices Wessex is a registered charity set up and run to benefit people affected by cancer, using singing and music to help improve their health and wellbeing.

**This Strategy outlines** the aspirations of Rising Voices for the next three years identifying what the Trustees would like to achieve by 2022, where we are now, what we need to do next to achieve our aims and objectives and what it would cost. The sections relate to our five main objectives as per constitution.

### Sections: (page per section)

- Rehearsals
- Membership
- Events
- Fundraising
- Promotion and Marketing
- Administration
- Catering
- Resources
- Rising Voices Wessex Network

## Weekly Rehearsals

1. To foster mutual help, co-operation and friendship in an understanding in an empathetic environment for those affected by cancer;

### What we would like to achieve by 2022

- Rising Voices Wessex Choirs visible in the community and seen to be accessible and welcoming to new members, specifically people affected by cancer.
- Choir rehearsals that offer a supportive, 'healing' environment and a sense of the "fun" in singing a varied range of music as a choir.
- Ongoing funded Choir Director with professional backup/support – see below.
- Sufficient funding to engage of an Assistant or Deputy Choir Director? Accompanist
- Sustain regular attendances at Poole and Bournemouth choirs.
- Members taking personal responsibility for their own musical development, without excluding those whose ability may restrict their progression.
- A dynamic steering group of members in terms of both organisation and involvement of members.
- A robust database, compliant with legislation, to facilitate communication with members, stakeholders and friends.

### Where we are now?

- An energetic and committed Musical Director directing Bournemouth and Poole choirs and public performances.
- A Deputy Musical Director who is a volunteer and choir member.
- A paid professional assistant for the choir director once a month.
- Regular "tenancy" on Tuesday rehearsals at St John's Church, Parkstone – reviewable annually
- Regular "tenancy" on Monday evenings at The New Church, Tuckton – reviewable annually
- Regular attendance of members of 40 members at both choirs
- Good commitment of members to take part in public performances

### What do we need to do next?

- Proceed to engage a professional deputy supporting the Musical Director for leave, performances etc.
- Consolidate and manage systems for printed folders/booklets for lyrics.
- Continue to develop music library including backing tracks.
- Ensure rehearsals offer the right balance that keeps them interesting, appropriately challenging "fun" for members.
- Continue to add to the repertoire and explore new ideas.
- Continue to promote the choirs and encourage regular attendance of members.

### What costs are incurred?

- Deputy/Assistant may add up to £5000.00 annually in running costs.
- Costs of promotion and marketing of the choirs.
- Provision of folders/booklets for lyrics.
- Provision of/ obtaining backing tracks.

## Membership of Rising Voices Wessex Choirs

2. **Rising Voices Wessex** seeks to help "normalise" post-cancer living by making support available through singing in the community in a safe friendly environment for people to regain their well-being and confidence at the same time, in the process, enjoy themselves.

### What we would like to achieve by 2022

- Robust level of membership of Bournemouth and Poole choirs.
- Improved public awareness of choirs' existence and accessibility to new members.
- Core membership of 200 members.
- Achieve higher levels of male membership.
- Developed 'Friends' or associates group of Rising Voices Wessex established to facilitate local charitable support, giving and sponsorship - to be a core component of fund-raising.
- Maintained, robust data base to enable contact with members, stakeholders and friends.  
Compliant with data protection legislation.

### Where we are now?

- Regular membership of the choirs 40 in both choirs.
- Sporadic recruitment of new members.
- Existing data base with details about our members, stakeholders and friends to be updated to 2018 legislation.
- Members involved in running the choirs through involvement in steering group or voluntary assistance with tasks such as staging etc.
- Established Trustee Board addressing strategy and governance with Steering group which is operational, addressing week by week running of the choirs.

**Relevant Policies:** Social Media Policy, Equity and Diversity Policy, Safeguarding Adults Policy and Grievance Policy and Procedure, all available on [www.risingvoices.org.uk](http://www.risingvoices.org.uk) in the About Us section.

### What do we need to do next?

Continue to:

- Promote the choirs and what they represent through social media, by word of mouth, performance and opportunities for press, radio or TV publicity.
- Improve efforts to engage r support from local NHS Hospitals, Primary Care and Private Hospitals and Health Care Providers in the area.
- Raise awareness of choirs in Clinical Commissioning Groups locally.
- Seek to maximise rehearsal attendance of members.
- Encourage and involve suitably capable members in all aspects of running the choir commensurate with their skills and motivation.
- Maintain the data base of members to improve access, ensure that we can keep in contact with everyone and know who to contact in an emergency.
- Ensure that everyone is able to receive and respond to information via email, website, social media and word of mouth.
- Make choirs aware of definition of membership for purposes of voting at AGM.

### What will it cost?

- Specific financial costs will be variable depending on circumstances.
- Main resource is time and commitment of membership, friends and Trustees.

## Events and performances

### What we would like to achieve by 2022

- A commitment to two concerts per year plus a Christmas concert put on by Rising Voices Wessex as core component of publicity and fund-raising.
- Partaking in performances remaining voluntary to choir members – a key principle of which is that events are accessible to all members – although there will be occasions when space and choral balance may necessitate some selection.
- Performances that demonstrate an appropriate level of professional discipline that show enthusiasm and a sense of joy for the singers, rather than too much technical "perfection".
- Smartly dressed with appropriate clothing and brand colours for events.
- Friends involved in organising and running events.
- An annual 'Big Sing' event that publicises the choir and embraces participation from other singers and choirs.
- Ability to offer some simple workshops or material that can help enhance, where requested, individual members' musical ability and confidence.
- Regional and National recognition of Rising Voices Wessex as a beacon of excellence demonstrating the benefits of community choirs to people affected by cancer.

### Where we are now?

- Range of performance requests received, selection and acceptance managed through steering committee.
- Not consistently generating income from events or fully covering our costs.
- Not getting the opportunities to showcase our work.
- Limited contact with other similar choirs locally and nationally.
- Some parallel support from friends for events.
- Good equipment, PA and staging.
- Application form for events on the website.

### What do we need to do next?

- Continue to encourage members to seek opportunities for performances locally.
- Further develop event management capabilities.
- Continue to try and establish robust link with other like-minded choirs and organisations – e.g. the Wessex Cancer Trust and Tenovus choirs.
- Not undertake unpaid performances for other charities unless **Rising Voices Wessex** is able to recover performance costs.
- Use a year planner (on the website) to identify and plan events across the year.
- Add details of donations for performances to the application form on the website.
- Record thanks from individuals or organisations for performances to the website and on social media.
- Set goals/events to work towards.

### What will it cost?

- Promotion and marketing of the choirs.
- Costs of venues.
- Restock of clothing including polo shirts and fleeces.

## Fundraising

3. Ensure sufficient funding per annum to be able to sustain and continue to grow and develop Rising Voices Wessex.

### What we would like to achieve by 2022

- Sufficient funding to be sustainable while maintaining a recommended weekly donation of £4.00.
- Able to attend events and cover our costs for musical director and transport.
- Specific fund-raising events over and above the concert strategy each year – e.g a regular quiz night.

### Where we are now?

We receive funds from:

- Weekly donations.
- Standing orders.
- Limited donations coming in from performances.
- Donate page on the website linked to Just Giving and BT MyDonate.

We have also received:

- Start-up funding from Dorset Cancer Network.
- Macmillan Cancer Support development funding.
- Big Lottery and People's Lottery Grants.
- Funding from Going for Bust.
- Support from Bournemouth Football Club for equipment purchase.
- Fund- raising challenge funding from Arts and Health South West.
- Funding from Pegasus Life.
- Funding from Aviva

**Relevant Policy:** Fraud Policy and Response Plan and Fund Raising available on [www.risingvoices.org.uk](http://www.risingvoices.org.uk) in the About Us section.

### What do we need to do next?

- Continue to identify and apply for appropriate grants and other sources of funding.
- Look to the feasibility of achieving local business sponsorship.
- Develop repeatable and popular fundraising events or concerts each year.
- Encourage more donations/fees for the events we attend.
- Use local contacts from within the choir.
- Use local external contacts.
- Develop a fundraising policy
- Develop hints and tips for fundraising.
- Improve ease by which donations can be made and the use of Just Giving and BT MyDonate.

### What will it cost?

- Marketing and promotion



## Communications, Marketing and Promotion

4. Improve public awareness by promoting the choirs, conducting and engaging in research/evaluation as to the benefits of music and singing to those affected by cancer (publishing the useful results for the public benefit).

### What we would like to achieve by 2022

- Members actively involved in promoting the choirs and their benefits.
- A robust network of regular contacts, friends and organisations that can promote the choir.
- Active, influential 'champions' and patrons.
- Portfolio of press releases and case studies.
- A dynamic, attractive Website that is informative and enjoyable to review and learn about Rising Voices Wessex.
- Contribute to raising general public awareness that music is good for health and aids recovery.
- Ongoing favourable reviews through annual qualitative and quantitative survey of members on their perception of benefits of singing.
- Form a sound liaison/relationship with research organisations, most probably Bournemouth University, to produce a significant peer-reviewed research publication on the effects of singing in choirs.
- Have an accessible 'how to' guide published on the Rising Voices Wessex website.

### What do we need to do next?

- Ensure that people see us first and foremost as a choir.
- Receive visible and active support from local Hospitals, Primary Care and Clinical Commissioning organisations.
- Ensure local councils are aware of Rising Voices Wessex and similarly receive active support and publicity of its existence in the community.
- Produce a demonstration CD that shows what Rising Voices Wessex has achieved.
- Prepare a You Tube video clip of Rising Voices in action.
- Develop and support friends i.e. people who are interested in our work and can support and promote us.
- Link with other recovery projects locally.
- Ensure local libraries and entertainment venues have posters and leaflets.
- Ensure local media, newspapers, TV and Radio understand and support the choirs.

### What will it cost?

- Costs of producing CD and/or MP3 files.
- Cost of publicity in the media.
- Advertising materials, banners, posters, leaflets etc.
- Costs for developing and maintaining the website.
- Survey Monkey for annual survey.

## Administration

### What we would like to achieve by 2022

- A dynamic, active Trustee board structure that sustains best-quality strategic management.
- A dynamic, active steering group continuing to offer practical or day to day operational management.
- Best practice recording of account details and expenditure review.
- Identification of an Auditor to carry out annual accounts review to the requirements of the charity commission.
- Provision of a training and development fund for Trustees and key steering group members that would enable access to courses runs by organisations such as NCVO.
- Trustees covered by appropriate indemnity and public liability insurance.
- Review of Trustee board structure on a regular basis to ensure it meets current and future requirements.
- Newsletter for members, friends and stakeholders.
- AGM and Annual Report.

### Where we are now?

- Registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales 1165053.
- Seven Trustees (three with sign off for accounts). Requisite governance documents in place.
- Indemnity and public liability insurance in place.
- Steering group developed and functioning well.
- Process for funding and bookkeeping in place.
- Annual audit, reports and appraisals developed.
- AGM established and adjusted as of 2018 to coincide with the financial year.

**Relevant Policy:** Data Protection Policy and Terms of Reference for Trustees and Steering group available on [www.risingvoices.org.uk](http://www.risingvoices.org.uk) in the About Us section. Minutes from Steering Group are available in the members section of the website.

### What do we need to do next?

- Maintain a minimum of 4 Trustee meetings per annum and regular ongoing communication between times on key strategic issues.
- Sustain monthly steering group meetings to ensure good communications and organisation of the choir, especially scrutiny of events e.g. site suitability, income etc.
- Ensure clear audit trails and annual audit is in place and functional.
- Maintain indemnity and public liability insurance.
- Annual appraisal of Musical Director.
- AGM to follow annual audit and report.

### What will it cost?

- Trustees expenses.
- Steering group expenses.
- Maintaining registration with NCVO.
- Indemnity and public liability insurance.
- Auditor for the accounts.
- Payment for administrator/CEO.

## Catering

### What we would like to achieve by 2022

- Continued, simple basic regular catering at rehearsals and events.
- Income from weekly donations capable of covering catering costs and contributing to the running costs of the choir.
- Maintaining clear processes/rotas for providing catering.
- Friends or sponsors involved in catering for events.

### Where we are now?

- Teas, coffees and biscuits at meetings and rehearsals.
- Homemade or bought cakes for Birthday are by members.
- Donations £4.00 per person do not cover catering and infrastructure.
- Members contribute food for events.

### What do we need to do next?

- Encourage members to take part and add names to the Birthday Book.
- Ensure that members are aware of the request for weekly donations and what the funding is needed for.
- Seek support from friends and sponsors especially for events.
- Ensure health and safety in the preparation areas.

### What will it cost?

- Cost of providing the dry ingredients for teas, coffees and biscuits.
- Cost of providing refreshments or food for events.

## Resources

### What we would like to achieve by 2022

- Resources available for fundraising and marketing e.g. CDs and video.
- Merchandise such as badges/mugs/pens/pencils available for sale to supporters.
- Clothing available for all members for events, as required.
- Banners and balloons etc. available for events.
- Printed Lyric packs available to all new members with logo and sponsorship.
- Lyrics available for members to access electronically on the website.
- Appropriate equipment available for performances.
- Support/services of sound engineer/mixer for performances and/or training of individuals within choir to undertake such duties under the supervision of the Choir Director.
- Office/storage base.

### Where we are now?

- Trial CD produced for internal assessment – further work needed to achieve an appropriate standard for sale/distribution.
- Videos available on the website and YouTube.
- **Rising Voices Wessex** pens, Pin badges, bags, scarves, folders and ties for sale (NY. JQ).
- Stock of clothing available (St John's).
- Lyrics printed by musical director (ASh).
- Lyrics and backing tracks available in the members section of the website.  
[www.risingvoices.org.uk](http://www.risingvoices.org.uk)
- PA system (DM) and staging (RH) available for performances.
- Small (ASh) and medium boom (DM) boxes for rehearsals and performances.
- Music stand (ASh).
- iPad to store backing tracks (ASh).
- Laptop, printer and projector (NY) for presentations.
- Percussion instruments - tambourines, hand bells and maracas (St Johns).
- Two banners and two A frame board signs (NY.JQ. St Johns)
- Collection buckets and boxes (JQ).
- Two large catering flasks (NY. JA).

Note: Initials identify who is currently storing these items.

### What do we need to do next?

- Choose repertoire suitable for a promotional CD and arrange a recording session, that can also release a suitable clip for YouTube.
- Seek support from friends and stakeholders especially for events for selling items.
- Review printing to have lyrics in packs or booklet format available from professional printers.
- Review how equipment is stored with a view to having office/storage space.

### What will it cost?

- Commissioning and packaging CDs.
- Design and purchase resources for resale.
- Purchase clothing etc.
- Folders or booklets for the lyrics.
- Office/storage space.

## Rising Voices Wessex Network

- Promote a strategy that supports the development of other choirs within Dorset and Hampshire and forges appropriate musical and cultural links with other like-minded choirs.

### What we would like to achieve by 2022

- Recognised as a beacon of excellence offering a great opportunity to aid recovery for people affected by cancer through music and singing.
- A Network of choirs in Wessex developed on a similar model to current choirs, offering the opportunity to people affected by cancer to enjoy music and singing.
- Performing in the Wessex and wider area to showcase the work of the choirs.
- Performing with live musicians.
- Work with other organisations on researching the benefits of music and singing for people affected by cancer.

### Where we are now?

- A choir at The New Church, Tuckton
- A choir at St Johns Church, Poole.
- One choir with whom some of the initial funding was shared (and who use our logo) in West Dorset with whom we currently have little contact.
- Annual quantitative survey using Survey Monkey.
- Offering cooperation with Tenovus to support research.
- Linked to Arts and Health South West, Living Well Active and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

### What do we need to do next?

- Determine the status of the West Dorset choir and its sustainability.
- Maintain good communication and links Wessex Cancer Choirs in the area.
- Publish a 'How To' guide on the Website.
- Explore working with other choir initiatives such as Tenovus to look at staging a national Big Sing event to raise awareness.
- Explore other areas/avenues that may be interested in developing a choir.
- Develop a contact list of musicians suitable to play with us.
- Be available to work with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in the development of their orchestras for people affected by cancer.
- Work with a local University for a more in depth research including qualitative analysis of the benefits of music and singing for people affected by cancer.

### What will it cost?

- Funding to help other choirs set up and get started.
- Musical Directors/accompanist.
- Funding and organisation of a Big Sing.
- Support in helping other choirs to set up and with the information they need – 'How To' Guide.
- Research costs – University fees.

