

Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs

Trustees and Operational Steering Group

Terms of Reference



Rising Voices Wessex was launched in 2013 as a project to identify the impact of music and choral singing on the wellbeing of people affected by cancer.

Aims and objective of Rising Voices Wessex are:

- providing and promoting music participation through singing as a means of regaining confidence, health and wellbeing to complement rehabilitation during and following treatment for cancer;
- providing support to families and carers of people living with or affected by cancer;
- improving public awareness regarding the problems and circumstances of people living with and beyond cancer as well as their families and carers through information and education;
- seeking to "normalise" post-cancer living by making available support through singing in the community;
- fostering mutual help, co-operation and friendship in an understanding and empathetic environment for those affected by cancer;
- making appropriate representations to relevant statutory bodies and other organisations on behalf of people affected by cancer;
- promoting, conducting, and engaging in research/evaluation as to the benefits of music and singing to those affected by cancer (publishing the useful results of which for the public benefit); and
- promoting a strategy that supports the development of other choirs within the Wessex Region (covering mainly Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire) and forges appropriate musical and cultural links with other like-minded choirs.

Membership of the choir

- Choir membership comprises people affected by cancer such as those recovering from treatment, carers, those bereaved through cancer or health professionals interested in music and singing for therapeutic purposes and as enjoyment.
- Rising Voices Wessex is a registered charity. Governance and objectives of the charity are overseen by a Trustee Board that has a minimum of five Trustees who have these overall responsibilities; they are elected at the AGM for a term of office.

- Week by week management of the choirs is undertaken by an operational Steering Group. It consists almost exclusively of active members of the choirs together with the Choir Director(S); this group reports to the Board of Trustees.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for:

- overall strategic management and governance of the choirs within the framework and objectives of its status as a charity.
- promoting Rising Voices Wessex to the community and informing health care providers of its work,
- accounts and overall funding,
- relevant policies and procedures,
- ensuring availability of appropriate support to enable the choir to run,
- identification and provision of appropriate accommodation for choir rehearsals,
- engaging the Choir Directors and any other person or persons to ensure that the rehearsals and performances are delivered,
- health and safety of its choir members whilst at rehearsals and performances,
- protecting the confidentiality of members and compliance with data protection legislation.
- ensuring that the members can access the choirs and support during a pandemic.

Together with the Trustees the Operational Steering Group will ensure that the choirs:

- Have adequate resources to deliver the weekly rehearsals, performances and events,
- remain in budget,
- are promoted appropriately through local and social media,
- are accessible and able to recruit new members,
- have appropriate venues for events and performances,
- have appropriate health and safety measures in place whilst at rehearsals and performances,
- members are kept informed by maintaining the database, website and other social media such as Facebook and Twitter,
- protect the confidentiality of members and complies with data protection legislation.

Frequency of Meetings

- Each Rising Voices Wessex choir meets regularly at its specific location on Monday and Tuesday evenings.
- Any amendments or cancellations of these rehearsal times will be notified to the members in advance at a previous rehearsal and via email/phone/social media.
- A quorum of Trustees will meet for a minimum of 4 meetings per year and communicate appropriately on matters in between times as required.
- The Operational Steering group will meet monthly, normally on the last Monday or Tuesday of the month. Alternative arrangements will be made for meetings otherwise due to be scheduled on Monday bank holidays.

- In the event of re-imposition of pandemic restrictions all meetings will be held online via Zoom or equivalent on-line programme.

Reporting Arrangements

- Minutes of the Operational Steering Group will be circulated within one week of the meeting to the Trustees and Operational Steering Group members.
- A copy of the Operational Steering Group minutes will be made available on the website – in the members section once approved by the chair.
- A copy of all the minutes of the Operational Steering Group will be retained by the Vice Chair and administrator of the group for further reference.
- An annual report will be made available to the members on request and via the website.
- The annual report will contain details of the choirs' activity during the year, the budget and any appropriate surveys or audits.

Quorate at meetings

The meetings will be deemed quorate if there are four or more Trustees present at Trustees' meetings or half or more members of the Operational Steering Group. Trustees are required to attend a minimum of three of the four meetings in the year, attendance can be virtual where personal attendance is impossible or impractical. Members of the steering group are required to attend meetings regularly throughout the year and send apologies if they are unable to attend.

These terms of reference were reviewed and agreed following the AGM in June 2024

Chair of the Trustees - Noeline Young

Next review date following the AGM in June 2025