



# **Rising Voices Wessex**

## **Community Choirs for people affected by cancer**

### **Strategy for 2022 to 2025**

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## Our Mission

- To be the recognised charity in the Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole locality that provides support for people affected by Cancer by means of community choirs that realise the healing power of music.
- To be a beacon of good practice that offers a means of regaining confidence, health and wellbeing to complement rehabilitation during and following treatment for cancer
- To “spread the magic” of the power of music for health and wellbeing

## Introduction

Some 50% of the population in the UK will be affected at some time in their life by cancer – whether as a patient or carer - or through bereavement. With better detection and more effective treatments, cancer survival rates are increasing. This is good news. Nevertheless, a cancer diagnosis has a powerful impact on people’s lives over and above the purely medical issues involved.

Uncertainties concerning the short, and long-term impact of the various forms of cancer, however, create additional pressure on already stretched health services. Not all of these are strictly medical – many such needs can be addressed by a range of community-based supporting services. The fundamental strategy of Rising Voices Wessex is to be a recognised, established part of these services.

There is a need for better support resources in the community that complement medical care and follow up. There are well known associations between music and health - physical, mental and spiritual. Singing is recognized as having benefits for specific conditions, including cancer, neurological disorders and dementia. Being part of a choir also combines the benefits of singing with being part of an empathetic community that is a further benefit to those who take part.

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 (2008-12)

Rising Voices Wessex aims to become that local, sustainable community resource that provides support and recovery for those affected by cancer

## **Top 5 Strategic objectives for 2022 – 2025**

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

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

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

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.

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

Further detail is available in the Rising Voices Wessex Constitution available on [www.risingvoices.org.uk](http://www.risingvoices.org.uk) in the About Us section.

### **Our funding requirement**

To achieve these objectives and deliver the strategy an annual income of around £30,000.00 per annum is required – to cover professional musician costs, venue hire, website management, basic sound equipment and insurance costs

This income will normally be generated from a combination of the following sources:

Donations – from various sources that include:

Weekly from members attending and

Rising Voices Wessex Benefactors:

ad hoc donations:

Legacies and investments:

Philanthropists:

Support, sponsorship from local businesses:

Earned income: From performances and merchandise:

Income from grants or sponsorship - usually ring fenced for specific purposes.

## 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

- Similar Choirs - there are no similar choirs in the BCP conurbation. The Wessex Cancer Trust has selection of small ad hoc choirs in neighbouring Hampshire– Sing For Life - <https://www.wessexcancer.org.uk/sing-for-life>. These choirs differ in the way they are run and managed in comparison to Rising Voices Wessex.
- With an administrative and academic base in South Wales Tenovus Choirs – Sing With Us - <http://www.tenovuscancercare.org.uk/how-we-can-help-you/sing-with-us/> have an ongoing “cancer- choir” project with a similar choir membership; Rising Voices Wessex has contributed data to its ongoing research evaluation on the benefits of singing and is committed to contributing to or supporting further research and data collection wherever possible.

### 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 2025, where we are now, what is needed to achieve these aims and objectives (as per constitution) and what it would cost.

**Categories:** (page per section)

1. Weekly Rehearsals
2. Membership
3. Events
4. Fundraising
5. Communications, Promotion and Marketing
6. Administration
7. Catering
8. Resources
9. Recovery following Covid pandemic
10. Rising Voices Wessex Network

# 1. Weekly Rehearsals

## What we would like to achieve by 2025

- To foster mutual help, co-operation and friendship in an understanding in an empathetic environment for those affected by cancer;
- 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 Directors with professional backup/support.
- Sustained viable attendances at Poole and Bournemouth choirs.
- Members motivated to practice between choir rehearsals with tracks available on What's App.
- A dynamic Steering Group 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?

- Energetic and committed professional Musical Director and Co – Director directing Bournemouth and Poole choirs and public performances.
- Engage secretary to assist in the running of the choirs and events.
- 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 20 members at both choirs
- Good commitment of members to take part in public performances.

## What do we need to do next?

- Annual review of Musical Directors to ensue appropriate cover for both choirs and events.
- 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.
- Work with music directors to manage the repertoire and explore new ideas.
- Continue to promote the choirs and encourage regular attendance of members.

## What costs are incurred?

- Secretary 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.

## 2. Membership of Rising Voices Wessex Choirs

### What we would like to achieve by 2025

- To help post-cancer living by providing support through singing in the community in a friendly environment for people to regain their well-being and confidence and enjoy themselves.
- 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.
- Continue to maintain, 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 20 in both choirs.
- Sporadic recruitment of new members.
- Existing data base for members, stakeholders, media & friends. Maintained to GDP legislation.
- Members are involved in running the choirs through involvement in Steering Group or voluntary assistance with tasks.
- 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, Equity and Diversity, Safeguarding Adults and Grievance Policies and Procedures, 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 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.
- Ensure members are 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.

### 3. Events and performances

#### What we would like to achieve by 2025

- A commitment to at least two concerts by Rising Voices Wessex as core component of activities, 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. Providing space and choral balance are appropriate.
- 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.
- Steering Group and Friends involved in organising and running events.
- An annual 'Big Sing' event that publicises the choir and involves 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, accepted and managed through Steering Group.
- 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.
- Good equipment, PA and staging.
- Application form for events on the website.

**Relevant Policy:** Risk Assessment

#### What do we need to do next?

- Continue to encourage members to seek opportunities for performances locally.
- Further develop event process map and management capabilities.
- Continue to try and establish robust link with other like-minded choirs and organisations.
- Avoid performances that would incur costs for Rising Voices Wessex.
- Use a year planner (on the website) to identify and plan events across the year.
- Add details of donations for performances to the website including Eventbrite links.
- Record thanks from individuals/organisations on the website and social media.

**Relevant Policy:** Health and Safety.

#### What will it cost?

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



## 4. Fundraising

### What we would like to achieve by 2025

- Ensure sufficient funding per annum to be able to sustain, continue to grow, provide training and develop Rising Voices Wessex.
- 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 quiz night.

### Where we are now?

We receive funds from:

- Weekly donations via Just Giving, Bank transfers, SumUp and cash.
- Enhance and develop the Benefactors scheme.
- Standing orders.
- Limited donations coming in from performances.
- Donate page on the website linked to Just Giving.
- We will continue to control our cost base and monitor the overall funds of the charity.

We have received and continue to seek funding from supportive organisations.

See Appendix 1 for details.

**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 and sign off hints and tips for fundraising.
- Develop and sign off a 'Wills' policy and details for the website.

### What will it cost?

- Marketing and promotion

## 5. Communications, Marketing and Promotion

### What we would like to achieve by 2025

- Improved 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).
- 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/downloadable track that shows what Rising Voices Wessex has achieved.
- Prepare further YouTube video clips 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.

## 6. Administration

### What we would like to achieve by 2025

- 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.
- 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, AHSW and CAN.
- 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.
- Online newsletter for members, friends and stakeholders.
- AGM and Annual Report.

### Where we are now?

- Registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales 1165053.
- Five 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, etc.
- Ensure clear audit trails and annual audit is in place and functional.
- Maintain indemnity and public liability insurance.
- Annual reviews with Musical Directors and administrator.
- 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.

## 7. Catering

### What we would like to achieve by 2025

- 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 £5.00 pp per week do not cover all the cost of 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 food 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.

## 8. Resources

### What we would like to achieve by 2025

- 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.
- 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 Directors.
- Office/storage base.

### Where we are now?

- Further work needed to achieve an appropriate standard for sale/distribution of a CD.
- Videos available on the website and YouTube.
- **Rising Voices Wessex** pens, Pin badges, bags, scarves, folders and ties for sale.
- Stock of clothing available (St John's).
- RVW Printer for Lyrics stored with Jacky Adams & Adrian Bennett.
- Lyrics and backing tracks available in the members section of the website and WhatsApp.
- All PA equipment and staging stored in a lockup and available for performances.
- iPad to store backing tracks (MA & WM).
- Projector and Laptop for presentations stored with (NY).
- Percussion instruments - tambourines, hand bells and maracas (St Johns).
- Two banners (NY. JQ) and two A frame board signs stored at (St Johns Church)
- Collection buckets and boxes stored in the lockup.
- Two large catering flasks stored in the lockup.

### 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.

### 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.

## 9.Recovery from Covid Pandemic

### What we would like to achieve by 2023

- Increase in attendance at both choirs
- Recovery of financial stability
- Improved ability to network with other organisations and choirs.
- Return to events and performances in order to promote the choirs.
- 'Phone Friends' discontinued, replaced by WhatsApp.

### Where are we now?

- The pandemic has affected the number of members attending both choirs, particularly Bournemouth.
- The number of donations from live rehearsals has reduced.
- Mondays and On Tuesdays we continue to run live.
- Small choir for events and performances.
- Loss of confidence and enthusiasm from some members.
- Increased running costs for venues etc.
- WhatsApp and 'Phone Friends' established during the pandemic.
- Use of Zoom established during the pandemic.

**Relevant Policy:** Covid Risk Assessment Developed.

### What do we need to do next?

- Reestablish connections with other organisations in the area including in the health sector.
- Promote and advertise the choirs, the benefit of the choirs and events and performances.
- Support members to regain confidence in live rehearsals.
- Review of structure of Trustees Board and Steering Group.
- Review and sign off relevant documents.
- Continue to develop the changes made during the pandemic including the use of Zoom and WhatsApp.

### What will it cost?

- Energy and enthusiasm to maintain and recruit new members.
- Funding for advertising including new leaflets and posters.

## 10. Rising Voices Wessex Network

### What we would like to achieve by 2025

- Promote a strategy that supports the development of other choirs within Dorset and Hampshire, with appropriate musical and cultural links with other like-minded choirs.
- 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) Arts and Health South West (AHSW) and Community Action Network (CAN).

### What do we need to do next?

- Maintain good communication and links Wessex Cancer Choirs in the area.
- Explore working with other choir initiatives such as Tenovus.
- 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 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/administration
- Funding and organisation of a Big Sing.
- Support in helping other choirs to set up and with the information they need.
- Research costs – University fees.

## **Appendix 1.**

Thank you to the following organisations for their help and support over the past 10 years.

- Start-up funding from Dorset Cancer Network.
- Macmillan Cancer Support development funding.
- Big Lottery, People's Lottery, and Lottery Community Grants for equipment, (PA and staging) development and core running costs.
- Funding from Going for Bust for equipment – Medium boom box for outside events.
- Support from Bournemouth Football Club for laptop and projector.
- Fund- raising challenge funding from Arts and Health South West.
- Pegasus Life.
- Churchill Retirement Living.
- Aviva.
- Greggs funding for a Big Sing.
- Choral Ficus funding for two concerts, Christmas and Spring.
- Waitrose
- Tesco
- Palm Print.
- The Douch Family
- The Lighthouse, Poole.
- Community Action Network
- Creative Lives Awards
- St John's Church Parkstone
- The New Church