

Community Music Whickham and Swalwell CIO Registered Charity Number 1162027
Trustees' Annual Report for the year 31st March 2021

Trustees

The trustees are pleased to present this report of Community Music Whickham and Swalwell (referenced hereafter as CMWS) which was registered as a charity on 05/06/2015. The registered office is 3 Washingwell Park, Whickham, Tyne & Wear NE16 4QW. CMWS was formed by a group of people from the local community who wanted to promote and inspire standards of excellence in music, aid fulfilment of personal aspirations and enjoyment in making music and promote performances so that the local population could benefit from these activities.

Lynne Bloxham. Chair
Daniel Binns IT adviser
Jennifer Boynton. Safeguarding and Vice Chair
Alan McBurnie. Treasurer.
Anne Lindsley. Secretary.
David Megginson. Membership lead.
Brian Stoneman. Policy Advisor
Amy Tate. Coordinator of volunteers
John Treherne. Artistic Director

Governance and Management

The governing document is the Community Music Whickham and Swalwell CIO Constitution which was adopted by the Trustees on 17/05/2015 and which became recognised by the Charity Commission when the CIO was registered on 05/06/2015.

All Trustees were briefed on the role of Trustees of CMWS, given copies of the governing documents of the organisation and referred to the detail on the Charity Commission website related to becoming a trustee and to the guidance on public benefit.

The Trustees hold regular, usually monthly meetings throughout the year. Some operational/ planning details were delegated to sub committees made up of Trustees. All meetings are minuted. During lockdown meetings were held on Zoom platform. Some meetings are still held via this medium.

The Trustees work entirely on a voluntary basis.

There were three service providers who work as tutors to the ensembles. Their work is covered by a Service Level Agreement which includes clauses about quality and assessment. Tuition continued on line during lockdown. From October 2021 there was only one tutor with an SLA. CMWS has an honorary partnership with our two local churches, St Mary's Whickham and Holy Trinity Church Swalwell.

Objectives

The objective of the CIO CMWS:

For the public benefit to advance education and appreciation in all aspects of music making, by the provision of tuition, materials, performance opportunities, public concerts, lectures and recitals.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that when planning their activities for the year they have complied with the duty to have due regard for the public benefit in delivering the activities undertaken.

Main activities

We have continued to maintain an emphasis on providing for tuition and performance experience and materials i.e. instruments in good repair for the participants to play.

We lend instruments to students and make no charge for this but ask the user of the instrument or parent or guardian to insure any instrument so loaned. We have several musical groups for which we provide tuition:

A community orchestra, music theory classes, a handbell ringing group and a sing along group, which pre Covid rehearsed in a sheltered housing facility in our community. This allowed easy access for residents and was also open to non-residents.

The viol and cello ensemble referred to in previous reports became non viable due to the pandemic but the remaining groups have continued. In particular the Community Orchestra and handbell ensemble have increased their number of participants.

Everyone is welcome to join one or all of these groups without discrimination and no audition is required. The groups meet weekly during term time.

During lockdown it was not possible for these groups to meet in person. We set up facilities for the continuation or rehearsal and performance. The handbell group continued to meet weekly on Zoom. Theory tuition continued via Skype with students achieving high marks at very high level ie grades 6 and 7. Individual instrumental tuition of members of the ensembles continued via Skype.

When restrictions were lifted we did risk assessments for the ensembles with a view to meeting in person again. The result was that Community Orchestra began rehearsals again in September 2021 (under a new conductor) and handbell group and sing along group in November 2021.

In addition to providing the above all these groups have been given performance opportunities in various on line concerts (see below). As a result of these performances students of CMWS and the public have benefited from a high standard of music making.

These activities and more detail of what CMWS offers is detailed in a handbook which is widely available to the public and on our website www.communitymusicws.com. The website was updated during the period of this report.

We provide facilities for individual examinations/assessments both on performance on musical instruments and also in music theory. These assessments provide markers of quality and progress. This has also continued on line during the period of lockdown and is continuing online or in person depending on the preference of the candidate.

We do not make grants to individuals.

The Trustees are all volunteers and also give freely of their time to tutor ensembles, arrange, advertise, staff and supervise concerts and performances. We can also draw on a core group of other volunteers for large scale events.

Achievements and Performance

CMWS aims to encourage performance opportunities for musicians. Our diary of events had decreased in number and variety since the last report due to restrictions because of the Covid pandemic. However thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of its Trustees it has found innovative ways to fulfil its aims and objectives during this difficult time, and part way through the year we were able to organise live events once more.

Over the twelve months since the last report CMWS has supported the following:

Continuation of theory classes remotely.

Performance assessments - similar to examinations to assess progress of individual students online or in person depending on the preference of the candidate.

Weekly rehearsals of handbell group Bells Up - "air ringing" remotely in line with other groups who are members of the Handbell Ringers of Great Britain and after November 2021 meeting weekly in person again.

From September 2021 weekly rehearsals during term time for the Community Orchestra in preparation for concerts and other events.

Online concerts for soloists and ensembles - duets, trios and handbells. Students of all ages and organised with appropriate safeguarding in place. This enabled performance experience to continue until live concerts were allowed again.

Bells Up video recording of carols which was shown online at Community Carol Services and on the church website. Enabling the public to enjoy this performance.

Because of postponement of the live William Shield Festival CMWS provided a William "Shielding" Festival. A grant from the Sir James Knott Trust was obtained to enable CMWS to engage professional opera singers to give doorstep recital of popular songs and arias for people who were shielding. As this was outdoor it was allowed during the pandemic when partial restrictions were lifted later in the year. Most of these events took place year ending March 2021 but due to popular local demand there were two more concerts at the sheltered accommodation during July 2021. These were partly subsidised by the charity. They enabled residents and also NHS workers in the next door GP Practice to hear famous operatic arias and other songs performed by professional opera singers.

The number of beneficiaries for each of these events was approximately 65.

We set up and financially supported 2 live streamed concerts just before restrictions were completely lifted. These were free of charge to access and so were entirely for public benefit and for the education thereof. One concert was performed by John Treherne (CMWS artistic director) and was a lecture recital on harpsichord of music from Italy and France. The second was a performance of Vivaldi Four Seasons by a quartet formed from Northern Sinfonia players and John Treherne on harpsichord.

The William Shield Festival which had to be postponed in 2020 due to the pandemic took place from 5th- 28th October 2021. The events were very varied and included a local folk group The Peabodies, Countertenor Larry Zazzo and harpsichord (John Treherne) recital of Amore Uccellatore, Songs by Handel Mozart and other arias by singers from Rocket Opera, Cello (Gordon Dixon) tenor (Andrew Fowler) and harpsichord (John Treherne) recital, lecture on the life and times of William Shield by Andrew Everett, Viol and harpsichord recital, Schlussconcert- amateur performers and support for a concert in aid of Children's Foundation in Newcastle.

The final event was the first complete performance of William Shield's forgotten opera Poor Soldier. This had been researched and the musical parts completed by John Treherne (Artistic

Director CMWS). It was performed by the William Shield Festival Orchestra and singers from Rocket Opera. There was also a lecture by Amelie Addison about the works of Shield.

The community Orchestra played at Holy Trinity Church carol service in December.

It is clear that our aims and objectives have been met despite the restrictions due to Covid pandemic and once these were lifted live performances for the public benefit and their education flourished. As well as this we were able to give performance opportunities to professionals and amateur musicians. Our artistic director is a Trustee and all his work and performances were not paid they were done on an entirely voluntary basis.

Financial Review

During the year CMWS has continued to support and tuition of the ensembles remotely and purchased and repaired instruments for anyone who wishes to borrow one without charge thus supporting the objectives of the charity.

We have a fixed set of charges for membership of the ensembles which are publicised on our website. These charges are reviewed annually. In September 2019 we introduced a new set of charges to allow for discounts for family members. These have not been increased. Ideally we would like to attract enough funding to provide all our services without charge.

Plans for next year

We aim to continue to attract more participants to all our ensembles. This would enable growth of CMWS but would also enhance the health and wellbeing of our local community. We will continue to participate on local events and support other charities in the area with our music making.

In addition we plan to deliver another William Shield Festival to a public which now has high expectations of performances. We plan to resurrect more of Shields work which has not been performed for many years. This will take place in October 2022 subject to funding.

These plans are to ensure that we continue to provide ease of participation in events and concerts and a high quality of experience and performance for all those taking part and their audience, the public, thus fulfilling our charitable aims.

Lynne Bloxham (Chair)

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