

# RISING VOICES WESSEX, COMMUNITY CHOIRS

England & Wales · Charity number 1165053

## Details

---

Other names	COMMUNITY CHOIRS FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CANCER, RISING VOICES WESSEX
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2016-01-05
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a>

## Contact

---

Address	12 Ashley Drive North Ashley Heath Ringwood Hampshire BH24 2JN
Phone	07500 676083
Email	<a href="mailto:admin@risingvoices.org.uk">admin@risingvoices.org.uk</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.risingvoices.org.uk">www.risingvoices.org.uk</a>

## Activities

---

**Objects:** 3.1 RISING VOICES WESSEX HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE THE GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH OR AFFECTED BY CANCER FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY:- 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.

**Activities:** Rising Voices Wessex is a community choir based in Dorset for people affected by cancer. Singing helps people to regain their confidence and improves their health and wellbeing. The choir provides support and encouragement; aiding recovery through singing. Together, we make music that matters. Whether we're pitch perfect or delightfully off beat, we sing with our hearts and that's a real gift.

## Classification

---

- **How:** Provides Services, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Arts/culture/heritage/science, Recreation
- **Who:** Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, The General Public/mankind

## Geography

---

- **Area of benefit:** DORSET, HAMPSHIRE AND WILTSHIRE
- Bournemouth
- Dorset
- Hampshire
- Poole

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£24,721	£21,084	-	-
2024-03-31	£30,981	£26,411	-	-
2023-03-31	£28,606	£29,245	-	-
2022-03-31	£25,266	£26,482	-	-
2021-03-31	£29,602	£23,746	-	-

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
<b>NOELINE ANNE YOUNG</b>	Chair	2013-01-08
Ian Roberts		2023-10-12
Robert Taylor		2017-01-01
Sarah Margarete Schwetje-Kemp		2021-05-24

**RISING VOICES WESSEX, COMMUNITY CHOIRS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1165053

---

# Accounts

---



## Annual Report of the Trustee Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex – 2023-2024

***The Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs presents its annual report, covering the period from May 2023 to May 2024 and the accounting year ending March 2024.***

***Rising Voices Wessex*** supports adults affected by cancer, offering the benefits of making music singing in a community-style choir. It was initially launched on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013 as a project funded by the by the Dorser Cancer Network to determine if there was local demand and whether singing in the choir proved beneficial. Initial assessment showed both to be the case, the choir continued.

***Rising Voices Wessex*** became a registered charity in January 2016 and is a member of The National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Community Action Network

Music communicates with individuals at times of difficulty offering benefits for many chronic medical conditions. ***Rising Voices Wessex***, based in the Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole (BCP) conurbation, was established to support people in the community whose lives have been affected by cancer – whether as patients, those bereaved through cancer or carers. ***Rising Voices Wessex*** promotes the concept of living well “after cancer”.

Over the past 3 years ***Rising Voices Wessex*** has been on a “journey” of recovery following the effects of the Covid pandemic and its associated restrictions. These posed major musical and financial challenges. Choir membership dropped to less than 50% of pre-pandemic levels and income from donations at rehearsal attendance by 67%. Resources from the Lottery Grant awarded in 2019 have, in effect, proved to be crucial to the survival of ***Rising Voices Wessex*** through and following the pandemic.

During pandemic restrictions, the Trustee Board prioritised maintaining the choirs’ activity through Zoom and virtual events in order to sustain the empathetic and supportive network intrinsic to the choir. This provided valuable support during a very challenging time of increased anxiety and social isolation for many. Professional music direction was retained.

This did incur significant expenditure but both the choir members and ***Rising Voices Wessex*** as an organisation benefitted from this decision. ***Rising Voices Wessex*** remained “open” and was able to resume its normal activity directly after restrictions were lifted. Unfortunately, initial post-pandemic membership numbers were low, reflecting a general trend experienced by similar entities in that period. During 2023 it became clear that continuing with both the Bournemouth and Poole choirs was not viable in the short to

medium term. The decision was taken by the Trustee Board to suspend the Bournemouth choir and focus on rebuilding numbers through the Poole based choir at St John's Church in Upper Parkstone. Bournemouth choir numbers were frequently in single figures which was both musically and financially unviable.

Understanding and support in respect of this change by the membership has generally been positive and regular attendance at Poole is now approaching 30 each week – for better financial viability a weekly attendance of 40 is desirable – and potentially achievable.

**Rising Voices Wessex** has performed at various charity events in the conurbation, especially those associated with cancer - further promoting singing for health and wellbeing as a means of living well with or after cancer. Importantly they also demonstrate the power of singing to build improved mental health. Public performances are a key objective and are important in the following respects:

- they demonstrate the benefits of singing for confidence, mental health and wellbeing,
- they help raise funds that enable the choirs to be sustainable,
- they encourage ongoing member recruitment.

Significant past performances that have boosted the choir's profile and sense of achievement include:

- Visiting Cherbourg, to feature at a French cancer awareness event early in 2013
- Being an invited supporting choir for Russell Watson at the Lighthouse in Poole in June 2015,
- Being an invited supporting choir for Blake at the Regent Centre in Christchurch in 2016
- Being an invited supporting choir for the Parry 100 Festival 'Glad Day' with Mike Westbrook at St Peters Church, Bournemouth in 2018.
- Creation of virtual choir recordings during lockdown to continue the spirit of public performance – its recording of "One voice" has been especially well received and has proved emblematic for Rising Voices Wessex.
- Rising Voices Wessex also presented its work publicly during pandemic restrictions in two online virtual choir concerts
- Workshop and performance with Apollo 5 at the Layard Theatre Wimborne in 2022.

**Rising Voices Wessex** has had a busy but effective year in 2023-24 as indicated by the summary of its events below.

### **Rising Voices Wessex events in 2023 – 2024**

- Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023: AGM New Church, Southbourne, Bournemouth.
- Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> July: 'Teach in' – at the Olive Branch in Wimborne.
- Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> August: Summer Live, Bournemouth Square.
- Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> August: Poole Day Care Centre 2- 3pm.
- Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> August: Family and Friend's Night at The New Church, Bournemouth.
- Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August: Family and Friend's Night at St John's Church, Poole.

- Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> October: Extraordinary General Meeting at The New Church, Bournemouth.
- Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> October: Lunch time recital at St Aldhelm's Church, Branksome.
- Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> November: Commodore Club, Poole.
- Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> November: A Friend's and Family night with Bournemouth University – 'Sing out for Health' part of the 'Being Human Festival'.
- Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November: Age Concern Hall on the Hill, Christchurch.
- Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December: St John's Church, lighting of the tree service.
- Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> December: Aranlaw House.
- Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> December: Abbeyfield Event, Romsey Abbey.
- Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> December: Rhinefield House.
- Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> December: Asda at Castle Point.
- Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> December: Bournemouth Christmas hub, Castle Point.
- Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> December: RVW Christmas Concert, St George's Church, Oakdale.
- Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024: Big ABBA Singalong at Talbot Heath School.
- Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> February: Absolute Music Recording Studio.
- Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> March: Spring Concert at St Aldhelm's Church, Poole.
- Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> May: Eco Fair, Ringwood.
- Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May: Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.
- Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> June: AGM.

### Highlights 2023 – 2024 include:

The Abbeyfield Concert at Romsey Abbey, Singing at the Christmas Fair in Rhinefield House, The Christmas Concert, The Big ABBA Singalong and Absolute Music Recording Studio.

Our professional music video is available on YouTube

<https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=fqVgYbZfJKI> and Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/RisingVoicesChoir/videos/932243648901371>

Following nomination by UK Music, Rising Voices Wessex were honoured to receive an invite to attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace to celebrate the Creative Industries. Noeline Young and her daughter Hannah attended on behalf of the charity.

**Rising Voices Wessex** continues to appreciate the support and hospitality of St John's Church, Parkstone, Poole for its weekly rehearsals. It is also appreciative of the equivalent support given by The New Church, Tuckton, Bournemouth where it met for rehearsals prior to the suspension of the Bournemouth choir from October 2023.

### Musical Directors' report 2023-24

This is my third year of directing Rising Voices Wessex and it has been an exciting one that has seen many changes, not least the amalgamation of the two choirs into one super choir! The stronger sound and the confidence gained from our members from having a strong core group has meant the choir is now growing again and we have welcomed quite a few new members in to the fold this year.

It has also been as always, a year of sad news, the loss of one of our founder members, Jean, was a shock to all of us and many members have faced health challenges. It is a testament to the care and commitment of our members that those who face such challenges

are supported and carried through their process and I have witnessed this happen time and time again.

Our outreach into the wider community continued this year as we welcomed Ian Roberts, one of most supportive local musicians, as a trustee. His expertise in business has already helped us make some very needed changes to our structure. We continue to work and invite the local musical community to work and support the Choir and this brings great benefit to all involved.

Christmas is always our biggest time of outreach for the Choir and we surpassed ourselves this year as we were in much demand in many shopping centres and care homes! The highlight was indeed the Christmas Concert which was perhaps a turning point for the Choir in terms of performance, the sound, balance and overall tightness of our delivery was obvious to all and I did wipe a tear or two of happiness at the sheer beauty of it.

Our recording at Absolute Music Studios, who have always been supportive of us, was a tremendously exciting experience for many who had never had the chance to record professionally and we had so much fun in the process.

This Easter saw us invited back to a local church, St Aldhelm's, as part of their lunch time recital series. The sheer professionalism of our performances was obvious to all. We have perfected a core repertoire of songs that communicate and carry the sentiment of our community and this always reached our audiences, but now the delivery has taken that to another level and the feedback we receive affirms the progress we have made.

And now we have the Eco Fair and Summer concert to prepare for. As a director, I can look forward to bringing new material and reworking the old with the trust and communication that takes time to establish, but is always a pleasure to work with when supportive and positive. I believe we have made an effort to maintain the positivity of our community and have overcome those situations that inevitably try to shake us and now we are bearing the fruit of our dedications!

Well done to all of those who continue to give their time and effort to keep the choir alive and kicking!

### **How Rising Voices Wessex makes a difference:**

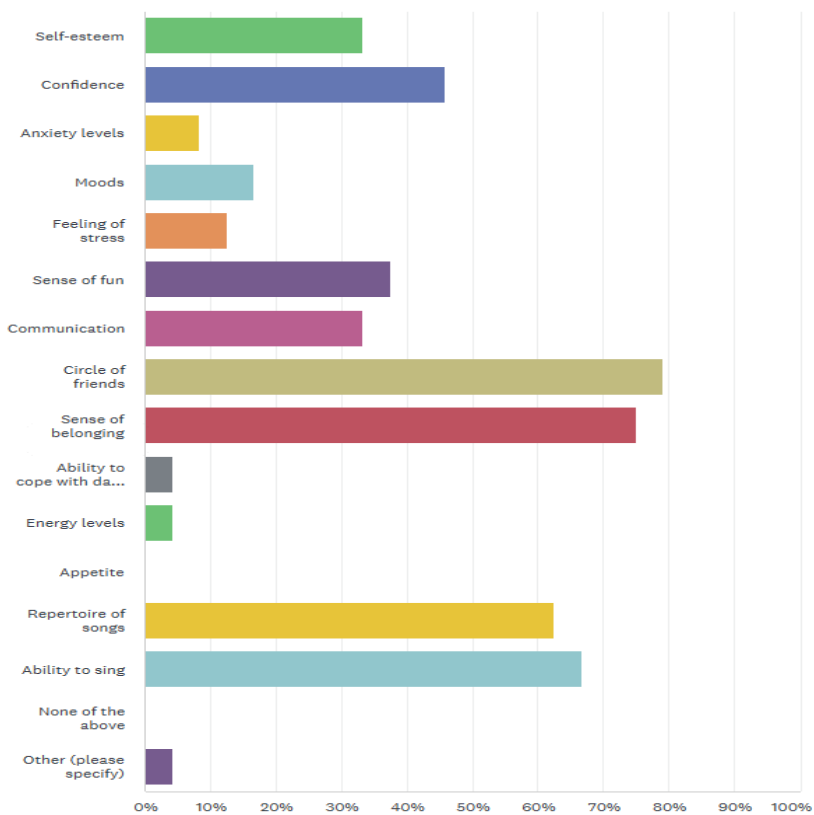
The charity's overall strategy continually aims to try and capture the benefits of being part of the choir through the use of a simple questionnaire. Annual Survey Monkey questionnaires are utilised by **Rising Voices Wessex** to obtain feedback and an indication of how much members benefit from being part of the choir – full results from the survey are available on the website at <https://www.risingvoices.org.uk/about-us/governance-documents>

Key findings from the survey include the following quotes and observations from choir members taken from the March 2024 survey:

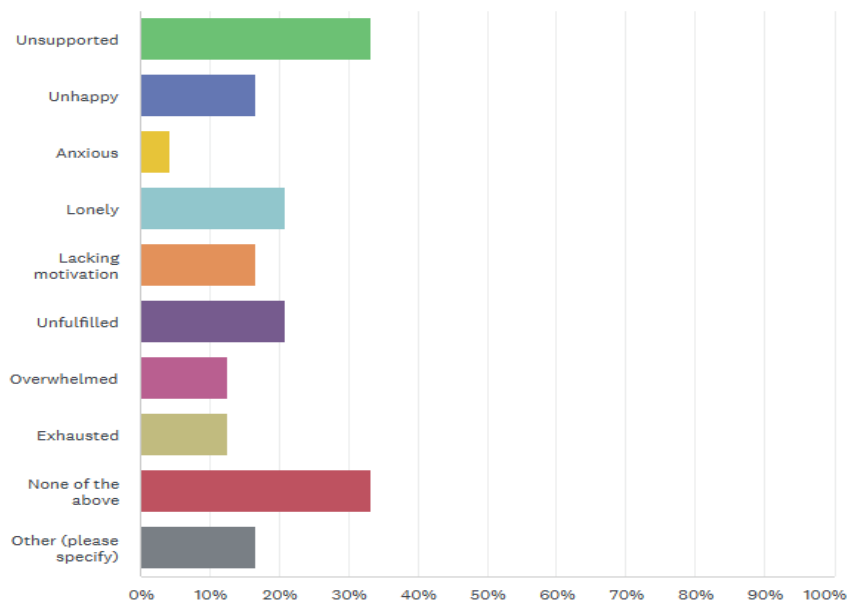
- **What you do well** - *“welcoming people of all standards of singing – massaging them into a reputable choir. A highlight for me was the ABBA singalong - wonderful music, great conductor, and a lovely opportunity to sing with other choirs”.*
- *“The highlight for me was the day spent in the recording studio. It was great fun to see how it all worked, to be in the spotlight and to be singing and socialising with friends. It was also an honour to have Hannah and her colleague there filming it all. A fabulous day!”*
- *“My highlight of the year was singing in Romsey Abbey, followed by Rhinefield House. Also, our Annual Concerts. Every Choir practice is a High Moment for me”.*
- *“Over the last year RVW has had wonderful opportunities and invitations to sing. Particularly of note, at Romsey Abbey in December, 2023 in front of a large and appreciative audience. The Spring Concert, held in March 2024, at St Aldhelm's Church, Poole, including a full programme of new and favourite material. The choir benefits greatly from musical leadership from two professional Directors who both inspire us and take us to greater vocal heights. We are so lucky”*

There were 24 respondents to the online March 2024 Annual Survey Results which show the benefits to both mental health and wellbeing from attending choirs and include the questions and responses below:

**I feel that attending Rising Voices Wessex has improved my...**



**Since attending Rising Voices Wessex I no longer feel...**



The full report can be found here: <https://www.risingvoices.org.uk/about-us/governance-documents/annual-survey-for-rising-voices-wessex-2024>

## Management, Governance and Administration

As a registered charity **Rising Voices Wessex** is managed at a strategic level by a Board of Trustees drawn principally from the community. The Board encompasses a range of professional backgrounds - clinical, musical, finance and business – appropriate to the needs of the charity. The Chairman and other Trustees are appointed (and may be re-appointed) at the Annual General Meeting.

The skill mix of Trustees is subject to review to enable succession planning and optimum balance of expertise. There are currently two unfilled Trustee vacancies which are advertised on the website and locally; the Trustees may also approach suitable skilled and qualified individuals to become Trustees - obtaining new Trustees with the right skills and understanding of the work of **Rising Voices Wessex** is a priority as the board looks to securing its long-term sustainability and ongoing development.

### Executive Trustee Board members are:

- Dr Alastair Smith (Chairman), Retired NHS Consultant, former Clinical Lead NCSI)
- Mrs Noëline Young (Vice chair), Retired Clinical Nurse Specialist/ former NCSI Project Manager.
- Mr Rob Taylor (Treasurer), Chief Financial Officer, Porterbrook Leasing
- Ms Sara Schwetze-Kemp, Businesswoman & Musician.
- Chani Darnell- Retired Midwife
- Ian Roberts – Local businessman and musician.
- Jean Querol retired as a Trustee following the 2023 AGM and sadly died unexpectedly in January 2024. Jean was one of the founders of **Rising Voices Wessex**. Her contribution to its running and success over the past 10 years was substantial – both as a choir member and as Trustee. It was particularly appropriate that a **Rising Voices Wessex** choir was able to sing at her funeral service.

Dr Alastair Smith (Trustee Chair) will be resigning as Chair following the 2024 AGM. Mrs Noeline Young (Trustee Vice-chair) has indicated her willingness to serve as Trustee Chair and to aid transition and engagement of new Trustees. The Trustee Board was delighted to co-opt and welcome Mr Ian Roberts, a local businessman and musician, to the board during 2023-24

**Rising Voices Wessex** aims to continue with a dynamic and active Trustee Board that ensures its continued status as a registered charity. The critical benefit to members of **Rising Voices Wessex** remaining as a charity is that singing is made available to those affected by cancer at minimal cost – there is no subscription required, accessibility thus is a critical part of the project. In this context **Rising Voices Wessex** remains on the lookout for suitable individuals with the necessary skills who would be able to take the charity forward.

**Operational management and administration** continue to be undertaken by a Steering Group that consists of two of the current Trustees with volunteer choir members, capitalizing on the range of skills that members can offer. The Steering Group meets monthly and reports to the board of Trustees. The Musical Director and Co-director are also part of the Steering Group.

**Rising Voices Wessex** aims to present a professional image that highlights its identity in public performance. Members wear black clothing with royal blue accessories for formal evening performances; for informal daytime events members wear **Rising Voices Wessex** badged polo shirts and fleeces.

Members pay a lower than cost price to **Rising Voices Wessex** for these garments; members on joining also receive a folder for music and song lyrics in the choirs' repertoire.

### Financial summary 2023-2024

Presently, overall donated income remains significantly reduced. As numbers at rehearsals start to increase this will provide income through the suggested donation for those attending of £5.00. A Benefactors' scheme has been initiated which has also helped the financial position.

The successful **National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities** application from May 2021 has continued to provide critical support during and in the aftermath of the pandemic restrictions. The award is an ongoing contribution towards running costs over a five-year period – in this past year it has ensured the survival of Rising Voices Wessex in the critical post-Covid recovery period – across the board the profound effect of the Covid pandemic on normal social activities continues to be experienced. It seems likely that recovery will be a slow and steady process.

In 2023 - 2024 **Rising Voices Wessex** has received generous grant support from the Hendy Foundation, towards the costs of the Big ABBA Singalong to which other choirs and the public were invited to take part. There was also a grant, from Dorset Community Foundation to support promotion and publicity for the choir and valuable support from Palm Print and the Douch family in supporting its concerts.

Following initial funding in 2012 by the Dorset Cancer Network, **Rising Voices Wessex** has sought and received ongoing financial support from various other sources, these include:

- Macmillan Cancer Support.
- The Big Lottery.
- The People's Lottery Fund.
- Going for Bust.
- Greggs Foundation.
- Bournemouth Football Club – 'The Cherries'.
- Arts and Health South West.
- Pegasus Life.
- Westbourne Rotary Club.
- Waitrose
- The Hendy Foundation.
- Dorset Community Foundation.

### Financial Review

**Income:** We saw an increase in income in the year, from £28.6k in 22-23 to £31.0k in 23-24. The principal reason for this was an increase in grant income in addition to amounts received from the National Lottery (£12.5k), securing c.£5.5k of additional grant income. Other income relating to choir contributions, regular donations and other activities was c.£13.0k.

**Expenditure:** Expenditure was £26.4k in 23-24, a reduction of £2.8k from 22-23. The primary reason was a reduction in function and support costs. The bulk of expenditure was incurred on professional fees being £18.9k, the cost of venues of £3.3k, storage of £1.1k and admin and other costs of £3.1k.

We expect expenditure to remain at similar levels in 24-25.

The net trading position was a surplus of £4.6k reflecting an operational shortfall of £7.9k, offset by Lottery grant income of £12.5k. In 24-25 we forecast that the operational shortfall will be a deficit of £16.5k before Lottery income of £12k.

**Cash:** The cash position at 31 March 2024 was £20.5k, an increase of £4.6k from £15.9k in March 2023. With known and anticipated income in 24-25, the charity has sufficient resources to continue operations for more than 12 months.

### Thanks, and acknowledgments:

Thanks are due to all those who continue to support the choirs – many have done so since its foundation; the additional commitment of members ‘old and new’ is so important to the ongoing existence of the choir. Help with fundraising, running raffles, support at venues for events and making cakes are all examples of the terrific support given by members.

Thanks also to those involved in the administration of the day to day running of the choirs by the Steering Group.

The Trustees thank Musical Director, Wendy Morrow, and co-director, Mark Anstead, for their musical and technical support.

Thanks, are also due to Lucia Sanchis and Paul Querol. Lucia has stepped back from the role of administrator as she and her husband Paul have started a new business enterprise. Their support and contribution to **Rising Voices Wessex** has been invaluable. We thank them and wish them every success in their new business.

Signed:

4<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Chair of the Trustee - Dr Alastair Smith

Vice Chair of the Trustees – Mrs Noeline Young



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name Rising Voices Wessex	No (if any) 1165053
--------------------------------------	------------------------

CC16a

## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 01-Apr-23	To	Period end date 31-Mar-24
------------------------	--------------------------------	----	------------------------------

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Choir contributions	4,827	-	-	4,827	11,654
Other donations	5,200	-	-	5,200	3,386
Grants	18,060	-	-	18,060	13,500
Other activities	2,894	-	-	2,894	66
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>30,981</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30,981</b>	<b>28,606</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>30,981</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30,981</b>	<b>28,606</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Professional Costs	18,872	-	-	18,872	18,214
Premises Expenses (Venues)	3,267	-	-	3,267	2,135
Stationery & Printing	727	-	-	727	214
Admin Expenses	2,383	-	-	2,383	3,533
Function Expenses (BS)		-	-		4,143
Premises Costs (Storage)	1,161	-	-	1,161	1,006
Purchase of Merchandise		-	-		-
		-	-		-
		-	-		-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>26,411</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,411</b>	<b>29,245</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>26,411</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,411</b>	<b>29,245</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>4,570</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,570</b>	<b>639</b>
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	15,889	-	-	15,889	16,528
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>20,459</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20,459</b>	<b>15,889</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Current account	20,459	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>20,459</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval

# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A

## Independent Examiner's Report

### Report to the trustees

Charity Name  
Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs

### On accounts for the year ended

31 March 2024

Charity no  
(if any)

1165053

### Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2024.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

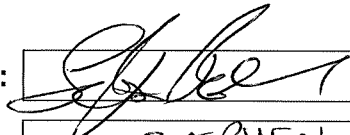
### Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Date:

30/01/25

Name:

STEPHEN BALL

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

ACCA 1302761

Address:

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**

**RISING VOICES WESSEX, COMMUNITY CHOIRS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1165053

---

# Accounts

---



## Annual Report of the Trustee Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex – 2022-23

***The Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs presents its annual report, covering the period from May 2022 to May 2023 and the accounting year ending March 2023.***

Music communicates with individuals at times of difficulty – music making has benefits for many chronic medical conditions thus **Rising Voices Wessex** choirs, based in the Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole (BCP) conurbation, were established to support people in the community whose lives have been affected by cancer – whether as patients, those bereaved through cancer or carers. Singing aids recovery of confidence, mental health and social interaction and promotes the concept of living well “after cancer”.

**Rising Voices Wessex** was launched on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013 and became a registered charity in January 2016 Registration No. 1165053. It celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in January 2023 with a small reception and concert at the Lighthouse, Poole on 28<sup>th</sup> January.

**Rising Voices Wessex** is a member of Arts and Health South West, The National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Community Action Network.

Over the course of the year 2022-23 **Rising Voices Wessex** has focused its “journey” on recovery following the effects of the Covid pandemic and the associated restrictions. The pandemic posed major challenges to the choirs both musically and financially. As regards finance, income over the past 2-3 years has fallen by 67% compared to pre-pandemic levels.

The lack of in-person rehearsals and a marked fall in choir numbers (primarily reflecting Covid risk factors amongst the choirs’ membership) coupled with the absence of public performances have been the main contributory factors for the loss of income. Resources from the Lottery Grant that commenced in 2019 have, in effect, proved fundamental to the Choirs’ survival.

During the period of pandemic restriction, the Trustee Board prioritised maintenance of the choirs’ activity through Zoom and virtual events in order to maintain an empathetic and supportive network provided during a very challenging time of increased anxiety and social isolation for many. Professional music direction was retained, which incurred significant expenditure. However **Rising Voices Wessex** has benefitted from this approach through its continued existence and being able to resume its normal activity reasonable quickly.

During the first few months of the year choir numbers were low but attendance has now improved, however this has not returned to pre-pandemic numbers; it is currently running around 50% of pre-pandemic levels. A positive sign is that there has been an encouraging number of new members joining **Rising Voices Wessex** since the start of 2023.

Word of mouth, posters and leaflets, media support, informal social networking, the website and social media presence all contribute to maintaining a profile for the choirs to encourage recruitment of new members.

With the reduction in numbers, however, it proved necessary to make some cuts to the level of musical direction during the year. Since October 2023, normal rehearsals have been led by a single Choir Director, i.e. with no accompanist. The arrangement is under regular review. It certainly is the intention to have both directors regularly present at normal rehearsals – one conducting and the other accompanying or managing backing tracks etc. but this objective currently remains under review.

Prior to pandemic restrictions **Rising Voices Wessex** performed regularly at various charity events in the conurbation, especially those associated with cancer - further promoting singing for health and wellbeing as a means of living well with or after cancer. Importantly they also demonstrate the power of singing to build improve mental health.

Public performances are a key objective and are important in the following respects:

- they demonstrate the benefits of singing to confidence, mental health and wellbeing,
- they help raise funds that enable the choirs to be sustainable,
- they encourage ongoing member recruitment.

Resumption of such events is a priority following reduction in Covid risk and there has been encouragement in the past year that these opportunities are re-emerging post-pandemic.

It is hoped that the relaxed Covid-19 restrictions will permit choir singing and associated social interaction to continue as it is fundamental to the Rising Voices Wessex.

Concerts put on by **Rising Voices Wessex** during the year 2022-23:

- Christmas concert 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022 Immanuel Church
- 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Celebration at the Lighthouse 28<sup>th</sup> January 2023
- Celtic Night Concert - March 25<sup>th</sup> 2023

Apollo 5 - A "Come and Sing" afternoon followed by a concert with the internationally distinguished a cappella singing group Apollo 5 was set up using the theatre facilities at Canford School on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Musically the event was highly successful, giving the choirs a chance to work with a top professional singing group and to try a new repertoire. The audience numbers for the concert, however, proved disappointing resulting in a financial loss – fortunately **Rising Voices Wessex** received a generous subsequent donation to cover that deficit.

**Rising Voices Wessex** also featured at "Peter's Spectacular Show" on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2023 at Poole Lighthouse. Peter, a longstanding member, established a concert to celebrate his special birthday and engaged **Rising Voices Wessex** to sing along with other choirs with whom he had also been associated. The event was boosted with the support from local musicians. It proved highly successful as a concert and greatly enhanced the morale of those taking part as well as the reputation of **Rising Voices Wessex**.

Other **Rising Voices Wessex** engagements during 2022-23:

- 17<sup>th</sup> April 2022 - Bon Marche, Poole High Street.
- 30<sup>th</sup> April and 1st May 2022 - Chrissy Hedge Workshops Wimborne.
- 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022 - Eco Fair, Ringwood.
- 24<sup>th</sup> May AGM - St Johns Church, Parkstone.
- 28<sup>th</sup> May 2022 - "Sing from The Heart" Concert, Wimborne

- 13<sup>th</sup> August 2022 - Marie Curie, Red House Museum Christchurch
- 24<sup>th</sup> Sept 2022 - Apollo 5 workshop and performance
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December - Poole Shopping Precinct
- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 - Abbeyfield afternoon Concert– Wimborne Minster
- 17<sup>th</sup> December - Southbourne Green
- 8<sup>th</sup> January 2023 - Christmas Party Celebrating 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday of RVW
- 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023 - St Aldhelm's Church, Branksome, lunchtime recital
- 29<sup>th</sup> April 2023 - Peter's Spectacular Show, Poole Lighthouse

Some other key public performances and highlights since the choirs' formation include:

- Visiting Cherbourg, to feature at a French cancer awareness event early in 2013
- Being an invited supporting choir for Russell Watson at the Lighthouse in Poole in June 2015,
- Being an invited supporting choir for Blake at the Regent Centre in Christchurch in 2016
- Being an invited supporting choir for the Parry 100 Festival 'Glad Day' with Mike Westbrook at St Peters Church, Bournemouth in 2018.
- During lockdown Rising Voices created virtual choir recordings to continue the spirit of public performance – its recording of "One voice" has been especially well received and has proved emblematic for Rising Voices Wessex
- **Rising Voices Wessex** also presented its work publicly during pandemic restrictions in two online virtual concerts

**Rising Voices Wessex** continues to appreciate the support of St John's Church, Parkstone, Poole and The New Church, Tuckton, Bournemouth, where the choirs meet for rehearsals. The New Church, Tuckton is currently up for sale – while a rapid sale is unlikely, preparations are in hand to look at alternative venues in the locality for the Bournemouth.

The choirs meet and rehearse on:

Monday evenings - The New Church (Hall), Tuckton, Bournemouth – 7.00 – 9.00 pm

Tuesday evenings - St Johns Church, Ashley Road, Parkstone – 7.00 – 9.00 pm.

The social interaction over tea, coffee or a soft drink creates a supportive environment offering peer support. This was hugely compromised during pandemic restrictions but the choirs adapted by having online social events such as quiz nights and party nights on Zoom and by the use of social media, WhatsApp. Etc.

## **Choir directors' report 2022-23**

*This is my second year of directing Rising Voices Wessex. It has been one of growth and change as we emerged from the more cautious time of the pandemic into a more relaxed and social period. Numbers remained low at the beginning of last April but have been steadily growing. We are particularly excited to see younger members and male members joining the Choir again as we set out to broaden the demographic of the Choir. It has changed the balance of voices for the better and given us opportunity to try more modern material which has refreshed all of our members.*

*We have not only expanded within the Choir, but also into the wider community. Christmas is always a time of outreach for the Choir and we performed in local shopping centres and Christmas Fairs. So many requests that we could not fulfil them all! This Easter saw us invited to a local church, St Aldhelm's, as part of their lunch time recital series.*

*We have also brought in local musicians to sing with us. Their talent has lifted and inspired the Choir and given our concerts a boost of professionalism. Our Christmas concert and our recent Celtic Concert extended our repertoire further as we took on suggestions from the musicians of songs they would like to perform. This included gospel singing and experimental synth folk collaborations as well as originally composed material. We look forward to further collaborations with them at Ringwood Eco Fair next month and also with other local musicians who are requesting to play with us after hearing our concerts.*

*We also had a successful collaboration with Apollo 5. The professionalism of the group and their teaching was a unique and special experience for the whole Choir. One of the songs they brought to us was 'The Lighthouse' and this has become a firm favourite of the Choir ever since. I took the opportunity to work on a piece called 'If' that I had composed for the Choir and it was lovely to have their voices join us on it. Their director has since taken the song to her community choir thus establishing musical connections and collaborations far beyond the day itself.*

*In April we celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of our long-standing members, Peter. Peter is blind but attends every rehearsal under his own steam by using the local bus service. He gifted a concert at The Poole Lighthouse to us and to 3 other choirs as part of his celebration. We sang with over 150 voices at some points. It is a testimony not only to the way the Choir has touched Peter's life, but also to the fact that the Choir has meant so much to him, that he wished to give such a gift back.*

*As always, the Choir is a team effort and it would be remiss not to mention the amazing input of our Trustees, Steering Group and Co- Director Mark Anstead, most of whom have had to deal with personal or health challenges in their private lives as well as keeping the Choir going.*

*We are now at a point where we have committed new members - hopefully they may also help with some of the roles involved in supporting the Choir as they become part of our Choir family. This means we can plan for the future knowing that the choir is well established and growing for our future members who have yet to need our support, but may need to seek us out one day.*

Wendy Morrow, Musical Director, Rising Voices Wessex on behalf of myself and my co-director Mark Anstead.

## **How *Rising Voices Wessex* makes a difference**

The charity's overall strategy continually aims to try and capture the benefits of being part of the choir through the use of a simple questionnaire. Annual Survey Monkey questionnaires are utilised by **Rising Voices Wessex** to obtain feedback and an indication of how much members benefit from being part of the choir – full results from the surveys are available on the website at <https://www.risingvoices.org.uk/about-us/governance-documents>

Key findings from the survey include the following quotes and observations from choir members taken from the March 2023 survey:

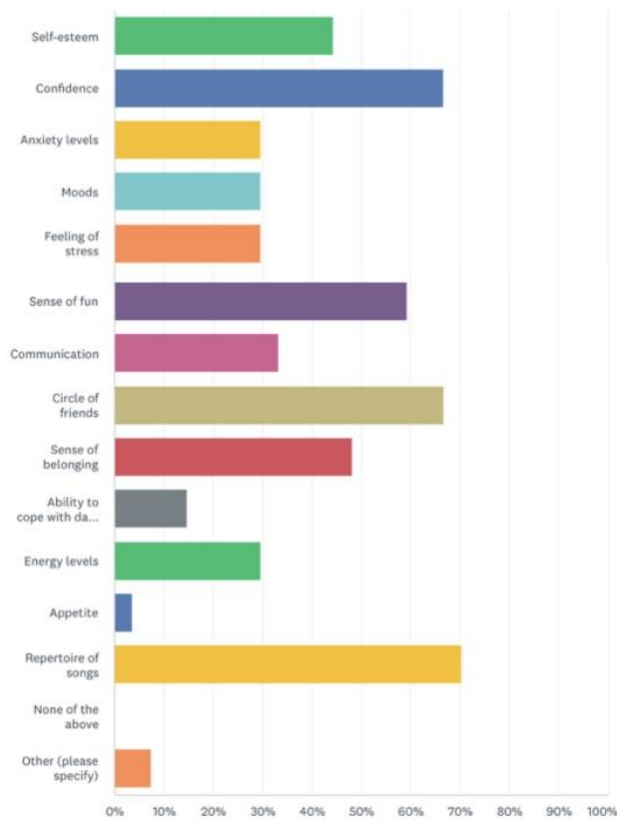
- **“Good company - a friendly, happy and fun choir to be in, enjoy singing and learning new songs”**

- **“A caring choir family - positive feeling of being supported with a circle of friends who have understanding of living with cancer”**
- **“Love singing and enjoy the health benefits of singing - feeling less stressed, more confident and improved self-esteem - a happy retreat every week and an escape from life’s worries”**

The March 2023 Annual Survey Results show the benefits of both mental health and wellbeing from attending choirs and include the questions and responses below:

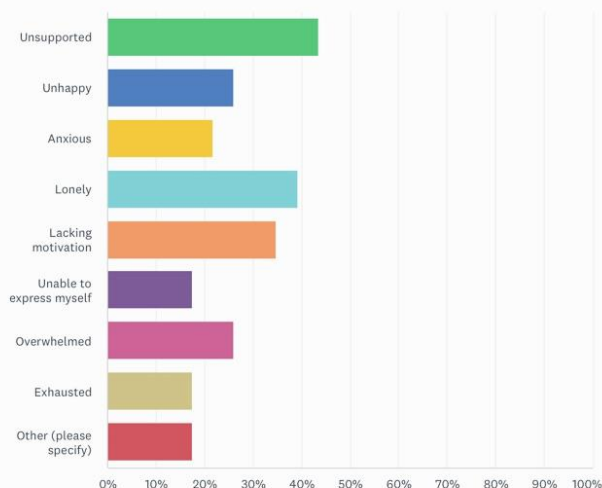
I feel that attending choir has improved my ..... (tick as many as appropriate)

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



Since attending Rising Voices Wessex, I no longer feel ..... (tick as many as appropriate)

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



Full information from the surveys are available on the website - <https://www.risingvoices.org.uk/about-us/governance-documents>

## Management, Governance and Administration

As a registered charity **Rising Voices Wessex** is managed at a strategic level by a Board of Trustees drawn principally from the community. The Board encompasses a range of professional backgrounds - clinical, musical and financial – appropriate to the needs of the charity. The Chairman and other Trustees are appointed (and may be re-appointed) at the Annual General Meeting.

The skill mix of Trustees is subject to review to enable succession planning and optimum balance of expertise. There are currently two unfilled Trustee vacancies which are advertised on the website and locally; the current Trustees may also approach suitable skilled and qualified individuals to become Trustees - obtaining new Trustees with the right skills and understanding of the work of **Rising Voices Wessex** is a priority as the board looks to securing its long-term sustainability and ongoing development.

### Executive Trustee Board members are:

- Dr Alastair Smith (Chairman), Retired NHS Consultant, former Clinical Lead NCSI (will retire May 2024).
- Noëline Young (Vice chair), Retired Clinical Nurse Specialist/ former NCSI Project Manager.
- Rob Taylor (Treasurer), Finance Director, Porterbrook Leasing Company Ltd.
- Jean Querol, Retired therapy radiographer and practice manager – retires May 2023.
- Chani Darnell, Retired Community Midwife.
- Sara Schwetze-Kemp, Businesswoman & Musician.

Jean Querol is retiring as a Trustee with effect from the AGM. Jean is one of the founders of **Rising Voices Wessex** and her contribution to its running and success over the past 10 years has been invaluable – managing the week-by-week finances, dealing with its banking and being a welcoming presence at rehearsal venues, especially Bournemouth. Prior to the pandemic her hospitality for in-person Trustee meetings and other key meetings to do with the running of the choirs was extremely helpful. The Board thanks her and wishes her well as she will continue to be a choir and Steering Group member – freed a little from administrative and management worries!

The Board is actively seeking potential new Trustees – in the first instance to replace Jean Querol but also in anticipation that Alastair Smith (Trustee Chair) will retire in 2024 and Noeline Young (Trustee Vice-chair) has given her clear intention to reduce her commitments from 2024 as a step towards eventual retirement. **Rising Voices Wessex** will be seeking to identify and interview motivated and skilled individuals capable of taking the Charity forward.

In the current environment finding suitable volunteers to take on such roles may not be easy, but every effort will be made. As a registered charity the key benefit to members is that singing is available to those affected by cancer at minimal cost – there is no subscription required, accessibility thus is a critical part of the project. In the absence of being able to appoint suitable Trustees **Rising Voices Wessex** would need to give up its charitable status and become a subscription choir.

**Operational management and administration** continue to be undertaken by a Steering Group that consists of three of the current Trustees (Noeline, Jean, Chani) with volunteer choir members (Adrian, Jacky, Sue, Heather), capitalizing on the range of skills that members can offer. The Steering Group meets monthly and reports to the board of Trustees. The Choir Director and Co-director are also part of the Steering Group.

**Rising Voices Wessex** aims to present a professional image that highlights its identity in public performances. Members wear black clothing with royal blue accessories for formal evening performances; for informal events members wear **Rising Voices Wessex** labelled polo shirts and fleeces.

Members are asked to pay a half price (50%) of the cost charged to **Rising Voices Wessex** for these garments; members on joining also receive a folder for music and song lyrics in the choirs' repertoire.

## **Financial Summary 2022-23:**

Presently, overall donated income remains significantly reduced. As numbers at rehearsals start to increase this will benefit income through increased numbers of the suggested donation for those attending of £5.00. A Benefactors' scheme has been initiated which has also helped the financial position.

The successful **National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities** application from May 2020 has continued to provide critical support during and in the aftermath of the pandemic restrictions. The award is an ongoing contribution towards running costs over a five-year period – in this past two years it has ensured the survival of Rising Voices Wessex during the pandemic restrictions. It will continue to be critical in the post-Covid recovery period – across the board the profound effect of the Covid pandemic on normal social activities continues to be experienced. It thus seems likely that recovery will be a slow and steady process.

In 2022 – 2023 **Rising Voices Wessex** received generous grant support from Choralis Fiscus and valuable support from Palm Print and the Douch family in supporting its concerts.

Following initial funding in 2012 by the Dorset Cancer Network *Rising Voices Wessex* has sought and received ongoing financial support from various sources, these include:

- Macmillan Cancer Support.
- The Big Lottery.
- The People's Lottery Fund.
- Going for Bust.
- Greggs Foundation.
- Bournemouth Football Club – 'The Cherries'.
- Arts and Health South West.
- Pegasus Life.
- Westbourne Rotary Club.
- Waitrose.

## Financial Review

**Income:** £28,606, (21-22: £25,266) made up of grants from the National Lottery Community Fund of £13,000 (21-22: £16,500), choir contributions including Just Giving, Amazon and SumUp of £11,654 (21-22: £8,100) and other donations and income of £3,952 (21-22: £666). This is an increase from 2021-22 primarily as a result of increased choir contributions and other donations.

**Expenditure:** £29,245 (21-22: £26,482), made up of professional costs £18,214 (21-22: £21,341), property and storage costs £3,141 (21-22: £1,956), admin costs of £3,533 (21-22: £3,185), stationery and printing costs of £214 (21-22: £0) and function expenses of £4,143 (21-22: £0). The increase in expenditure is as a result of more in-person events compared to the previous year.

**The net trading position** was a loss of £639, reflecting an ongoing operating shortfall of £13,639 which is largely cancelled out by £13,000 of income from the National Lottery. It is worth noting that the 23-24 Lottery Grant reduces to £12,500 and for the 24–25 financial year to £12,000. There will be no Lottery Grant for the 25-26 financial year.

**Cash:** The cash balance remains healthy, with £15,889 (21-22: £16,528) in the bank at 31 March 2023. There are no ring-fenced income streams or expenditure commitments.

## Thanks, and acknowledgments

Thanks are due to all those who continue to support the choirs – many have done so since its foundation; the additional commitment of members 'old and new' is so important to the ongoing existence of both choirs. Help with fundraising, support at venues, events, making cakes are examples of the terrific support given by members.

Thanks also for the administration for the day to day running of the choirs by the Steering Group.

The Trustees thank Musical Director, Wendy Morrow and co-director, Mark Anstead, for their musical and technical support.

Thanks, are also due for the ongoing technical support of Lucia Sanchis in the organisation and administration of the Zoom rehearsals, social events on Zoom, editing and refining the online virtual choir recordings and at Steering Group meetings. Lucia has stepped back from this role as she and her husband have started a new business enterprise. Her support and

contribution to ***Rising Voices Wessex*** has been invaluable. We thank her and wish her and her husband every success in their new business ventures.

### **Trustees 2022-2023**

Chair - Dr Alastair Smith – Founder Member

Vice Chair - Noeline Young – Founder Member

Finance Manager - Jean Querol – Founder Member

Rob Taylor – Treasurer

Sara Kemp

Chani Darnell



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name Rising Voices Wessex	No (if any) 1165053
--------------------------------------	------------------------

CC16a

## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 01-Apr-22	To	Period end date 31-Mar-23
------------------------	--------------------------------	----	------------------------------

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Choir contributions	11,654	-	-	11,654	8,100
Other donations	3,386	-	-	3,386	666
Grants	13,500	-	-	13,500	16,500
Other activities	66	-	-	66	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>28,606</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>28,606</b>	<b>25,266</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>28,606</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>28,606</b>	<b>25,266</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Professional Costs	18,214	-	-	18,214	21,341
Premises Expenses (Venues)	2,135	-	-	2,135	950
Stationery & Printing	214	-	-	214	-
Admin Expenses	3,533	-	-	3,533	3,185
Function Expenses (BS)	4,143	-	-	4,143	-
Premises Costs (Storage)	1,006	-	-	1,006	1,006
Purchase of Merchandise		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>29,245</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,245</b>	<b>26,482</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>29,245</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,245</b>	<b>26,482</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>- 639</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 639</b>	<b>- 1,216</b>
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	16,528	-	-	16,528	17,744
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>15,889</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,889</b>	<b>16,528</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Current account	15,889	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>15,889</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval



**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name  
Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31 March 2023

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1165053

**Set out on pages**

1 to 2  
(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2023.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:** 

**Date:** 31/01/2024

**Name:** Stephen Ball

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants 1302761

**Address:**

3 Philip Bent Road  
Ashby de-la-zouch

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**

**RISING VOICES WESSEX, COMMUNITY CHOIRS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1165053

---

# Accounts

---



## Annual Report of the Trustee Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex – May 2022

The Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs presents its annual report, covering the period from May 2021 to April 2022 and the accounting year ending March 2022.

The past year for *Rising Voices Wessex* has continued to be dominated by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the steps taken to adapt and keep the choirs and the long-term project sustainable. Happily, these efforts have so far proved successful but the next year or two will pose a challenge, especially financially, to the choirs as they look to recover from the pandemic effects

The changes adopted at the close of the previous year continued. The Musical Director and her Associate used Zoom technology to keep members involved in singing “virtually”. Each week some 30 – 40 members engaged with the Zoom sessions on either of the rehearsal evenings – maintaining both musical and social contact.

Sara Schwetze-Kemp, a local businesswoman and professional musician, was appointed at the AGM in May 2021 as a Trustee in keeping with the aim of ensuring an appropriate range of professional and musical skills are represented on the Trustee board. Dr Suzi Caesar and Sarah Cully stood down from the board and we thank them for their work over the past few years.

Wendy Morrow was appointed as Choir Director at the beginning of 2021 and took over at the end of March 2021 following the planned retirement of Ali Sharpe. Wendy will be supported by Mark Anstead who is continuing his association with the choirs as Musical Co-director.

Music has the power to communicate with individuals at times of difficulty – music making has benefits for many chronic medical conditions thus **Rising Voices Wessex** choirs were established to support people whose lives have been affected by cancer - patients, carers and those bereaved through cancer.

Singing aids recovery of confidence, mental health and social interaction, as well as promoting the concept of living well with and after cancer. Most members of **Rising Voices Wessex** choirs come from the communities in the Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole (BCP) conurbation.

**Rising Voices Wessex** was launched on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013 and became a registered charity in January 2016. **Rising Voices Wessex** is a member of Arts and Health South West and The National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Community Action Network.

Public performances are a key objective and are important in the following respects:

- they demonstrate the benefits of singing for confidence, mental health and wellbeing,
- they encourage ongoing member recruitment.
- they help raise funds that enable the choirs to be sustainable.

Some key public performances and highlights since the choirs' formation include:

- Visiting Cherbourg, to feature at a French cancer awareness event early in 2013
- Being an invited supporting choir for Russell Watson at the Lighthouse in Poole in June 2015,
- Being an invited supporting choir for Blake at the Regent Centre in Christchurch in 2016
- Being an invited supporting choir for the Parry 100 Festival 'Glad Day' with Mike Westbrook at St Peters Church, Bournemouth in 2018.
- During lockdown Rising Voices Wessex created virtual choir recordings to continue the spirit of public performance – its recording of “One voice” has been especially well received and has proved emblematic for Rising Voices Wessex.
- **Rising Voices** Wessex also presented its work publicly during pandemic restrictions in two online virtual choir concerts: Christmas concert - available on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ofUddHZqiM&t=4s>; Online Spring Concert excerpts available on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/RisingVoicesChoir>.

Prior to pandemic restrictions **Rising Voices Wessex** has performed at various charity events in the conurbation, especially those associated with cancer - further promoting singing for health and wellbeing as a means of living well with or after cancer. Importantly they also demonstrate the power of singing to build and improve mental health. Resumption of such events is a priority following relaxation of Covid

Rising Voices Wessex resumed live rehearsals in July 2021 but had to suspend them over the Christmas & New Year period in line with Covid risk concerts and government advice.

**Rising Voices Wessex** continues to appreciate the support of St John's Church, Parkstone, Poole and The New Church, Tuckton, Bournemouth where it meets for rehearsals

Monday evenings - The New Church, Tuckton, Bournemouth – 7.00 – 9.00 pm

Tuesday evenings - St Johns Church, Ashley Road, Parkstone – 7.00 – 9.00 pm.

The social interaction over tea, coffee or a soft drink creates a supportive environment offering peer support. This was compromised during pandemic restrictions but the choirs adapted by having online social events such as quiz nights – utilising social media, WhatsApp and Zoom. A supportive “Phone Friends” network was also established. In these ways the ethos of the charity has been sustained through this difficult period.

**Rising Voices Wessex** has managed to recruit new members during the past year – word of mouth, informal social networking websites and social media presence have all contributed to maintaining a profile for the choirs enabling recruitment of new members.

### **Music director's report 2021-22**

I took over as Musical Director in April 2021. I felt welcomed and encouraged by Choir members as I found my own feet in a new role in the midst of a challenging time for everyone.

The past year has seen the choirs go through many challenges, with the Covid 19 pandemic affecting rehearsals quite unpredictably. We did manage to sing live at Ringwood's Eco Fair in the spring of 2021 which was a highlight in 2021.

The Choir has persevered in spite of the challenges of zoom rehearsals, low numbers at live rehearsals due to the understandable hesitancy of our vulnerable members to socialise, wearing masks and visors whilst singing and social distancing. These challenges included the cancelling of our Christmas concert due to rising cases of Covid. An event which the choirs had worked extremely hard towards. All those involved took it with good grace and we ended up with a Christmas online singalong instead.

The technical expertise of our co- director, Mark Anstead, and online assistant, Lucia Sanchis, enabled the online sessions to run and also connect those who were unable to attend live rehearsals to the choir via a zoom link - a lifeline for those stuck at home.

I am pleased to say that the Choir has not only survived the challenges but it has grown from them and we are now reaping the benefits of having supported each other through a crisis. We are now relaxing our protocols in line with government guidance for those who feel able to and we have seen the number of attendees rise once again alongside a renewed enthusiasm in our live rehearsals.

We have just performed our Spring Concert live at the Freemasons Hall, a collaboration between the Choir and well-known local musicians, who gave their time for free to support and raise our profile. The concert was a huge success. Not only did we sell out of tickets but the feedback from the audience was overwhelmingly positive and this has given a real boost to the Choir.

The excitement of our recent Spring Concert is still palpable. The current mood of the Choir is jubilant and positive; we now look forward to performing at Ringwood's Eco Fair, the Wimborne Allendale Centre, the Poole Dolphin Shopping centre and our autumn Apollo 5 workshop and concert.

Each week we see members returning to us as they feel more confident to sing "live" - this has given a new lease of life to everyone. It has been such a joy to witness this and is a testament to the commitment of core members and Trustees such as Noeline and Jean who work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly. Our music printers, Jacky and Adrian, attend almost every rehearsal in spite of their own life challenges and commitments in order that we have spare copies for everyone. It is this kind of dedication that keeps the choir steadfast and reliable for all involved, which is extremely important when members are facing personal or health challenges.

I have really enjoyed being able to share my love of live music performing and my local connections to give the Choir a new direction this year. I hope to expand upon this in the coming year and bring the choir back into the heart of the local musical community so that it

is both visible and accessible to those who may need its support.

Many thanks to all those who support the choir from their various diverse roles, be they big or small.

*Wendy Morrow, Musical Director, Rising Voices Wessex.*

### **How *Rising Voices Wessex* makes a difference:**

The overall project strategy continually aims to try and capture the benefits of being part of the choir. ***Rising Voices Wessex*** has contributed questionnaire data to research run by Tenovus Cancer Care on the benefits of music and singing for people affected by cancer. Current resources are insufficient to fund formal peer-reviewable research

Annual Survey Monkey questionnaires are utilised by ***Rising Voices Wessex*** to obtain feedback and an assessment of how much members benefit from being part of the choir – results from the surveys are available on the website at (<https://www.risingvoices.org.uk/about-us/governance-documents>) – key findings from the survey include the following:

There are also some key findings from the survey of the benefit of the choirs. It is also clear from the questionnaires that the personality and approach of the Musical Directors is very important to the success of the choirs.

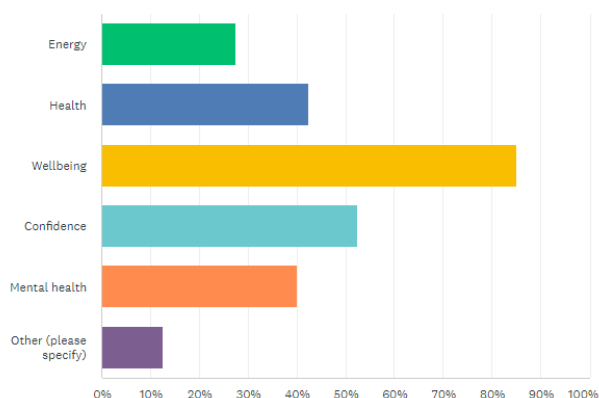
### **Quotes and observations from choir members taken from the spring 2022 Survey**

- *Good company - variation of music. Inspiring conductor and mentor, lack of inhibition concerning cancer ailments - great support from fellow singers.*
- *Everyone has fun whilst benefiting from an uplifting experience as part of a group.*
- *The friendliness of the group and it just always sends me home feeling better than when I got there.*

### **2022 (Spring) Annual Survey Results show the benefits on both mental health and wellbeing from attending the choirs and include:**

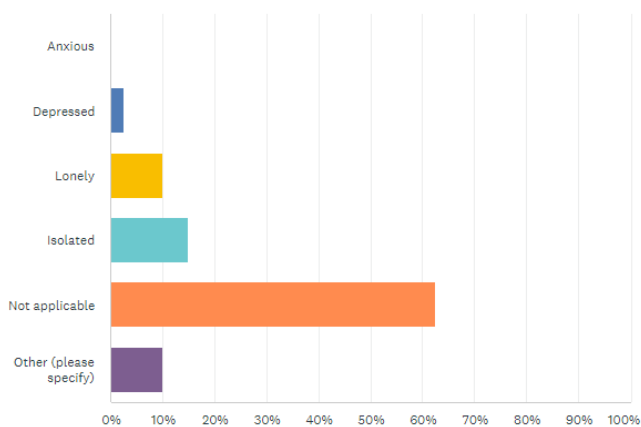
I feel that attending choir has improved my: (Tick all that apply)

Answered: 40 Skipped: 0



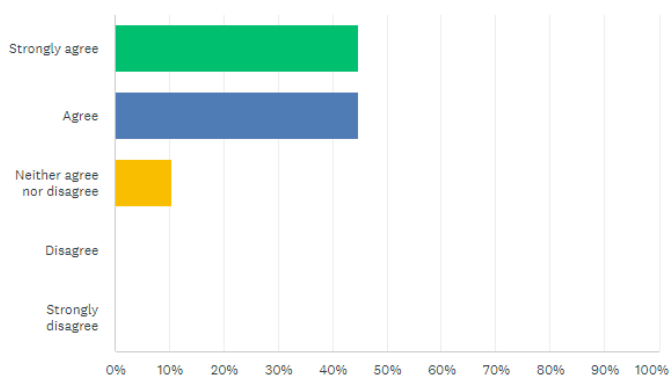
### I no longer feel... (Tick all that apply)

Answered: 40 Skipped: 0



### I get support from other choir members:

Answered: 38 Skipped: 2



As a registered charity **Rising Voices Wessex** is managed at a strategic level by a Board of Trustees drawn principally from the community. The Board encompasses a range of professional backgrounds - clinical, musical and financial – appropriate to the needs of the charity. The Chairman and other Trustees are appointed (and may be re-appointed) at the Annual General Meeting.

The skill mix of Trustees is subject to review to enable succession planning and optimum balance of expertise. There are currently two unfilled Trustee vacancies which are advertised on the website and locally; the Trustees may also approach suitable skilled and qualified individuals to become Trustees - obtaining new Trustees with the right skills and understanding of the work of **Rising Voices Wessex** is a priority as the board looks to securing its long-term sustainability and ongoing development.

### Executive Trustee Board members are:

- Dr Alastair Smith (Chairman), Retired NHS Haematology Consultant, former Clinical Lead NCSI)
- Mrs Noëline Young (Vice chair), Retired Clinical Nurse Specialist, former NCSI Project Manager.
- Mr Rob Taylor (Treasurer), Finance Director, Trenitalia c2c.
- Mrs Jean Querol, Retired therapy radiographer and practice manager.
- Ms Sara Schwetze-Kemp, Businesswoman & Musician.

Rising Voices Wessex is grateful to the Trustees for all the work they do to keep the choirs running.

### Operational management and administration

This is undertaken by a Steering Group that consists of two of the current Trustees with volunteer choir members, capitalising on the range of skills that members can offer. The Steering Group meets monthly and reports to the board of Trustees. The Choir Director and Co-director are also part of the Steering Group.

**Rising Voices Wessex** aims to present a professional image that highlights its identity in public performance. Members wear black clothing with royal blue accessories for formal evening performances; for informal events members wear **Rising Voices Wessex** labelled polo shirts and fleeces.

Members pay a reduced price to **Rising Voices Wessex** for these garments; members on joining also receive a folder for music and song lyrics in the choirs' repertoire.

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2021-22:

During the pandemic restrictions **Rising Voices Wessex** has experienced drop in income of around 67% through loss of regular weekly donations that contribute to running costs – see financial report below. Presently overall donated income is around 30% of normal levels mainly due to loss of the regular weekly member contributions at rehearsal sessions. Recovery of retrospective gift aid and funeral donations has offset some this reduction helped also by having no venue hire costs while the choirs have been meeting online.

The current suggested members' donation of £4.00 goes towards running costs and would normally be collected at live rehearsals and some members have continued to support the choirs via Just Giving and online banking.

Following initial funding in 2012 by the Dorset Cancer Network **Rising Voices Wessex** has sought and received ongoing financial support from a number of sources, these include:

- Macmillan Cancer Support.
- The Big Lottery.
- The People's Lottery Fund.
- Going for Bust.
- Greggs Foundation.
- Bournemouth Football Club – 'The Cherries'.
- Arts and Health South West.
- Pegasus Life.
- Westbourne Rotary Club.

- Waitrose.

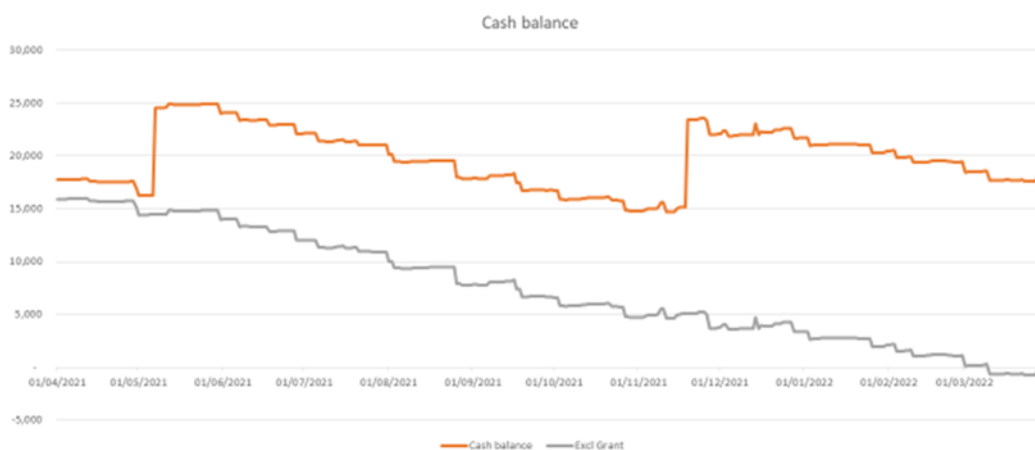
The successful **National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities** Application from May 2021 has continued to provide critical support during the pandemic restrictions.

The award is an ongoing contribution towards running costs over a 5-year period – in this past year it has ensured the survival of Rising Voices Wessex during the pandemic restrictions and will greatly help to re-establish in-person rehearsals and a return of associated social activities as and when pandemic restrictions permit.

## Finance Report

The graph below indicates the income for Rising Voices Wessex over the past year. The orange line represents the cash balance including the Lottery grant. The Lottery Grant has two further years to run, but at an annually decreasing rate. The grey line indicates the cash balance from donations, which has decreased significantly due to the covid pandemic.

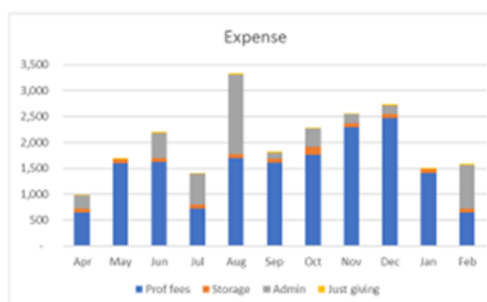
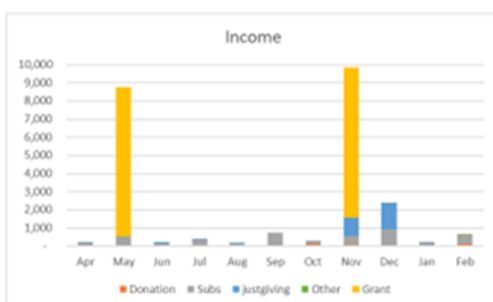
Cash remains steady, but income is predominantly from grants or one-off income



## Costs remain steady – income yet to return

	Income						Expense					Net
	TOTAL	Donation	Subs	Grant	Justgiving	Other	TOTAL	Prof fees	Storage	Admin	Just giving	
Apr	186	55	126	-	5	-	995	650	77	250	18	- 810
May	8,771	55	429	8,250	37	-	1,695	1,600	77	-	18	7,075
Jun	239	55	96	-	88	-	2,200	1,620	77	485	18	- 1,962
Jul	365	35	325	-	5	-	1,411	720	77	596	18	- 1,047
Aug	170	35	116	-	19	-	3,327	1,700	77	1,532	18	- 3,157
Sep	732	39	693	-	-	-	1,822	1,610	77	117	18	- 1,090
Oct	316	111	205	-	-	-	2,283	1,760	155	350	18	- 1,967
Nov	9,821	80	459	8,250	1,032	-	2,564	2,289	77	180	18	7,257
Dec	2,363	35	861	-	1,458	10	2,734	2,470	77	169	18	- 371
Jan	244	35	172	-	37	-	1,508	1,405	77	-	25	- 1,263
Feb	624	135	475	-	5	9	1,581	649	77	836	18	- 957
Mar	1,436	115	1,149	-	5	168	4,361	4,003	77	262	18	- 2,924
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,266</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>5,105</b>	<b>16,500</b>	<b>2,690</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>26,482</b>	<b>20,476</b>	<b>1,006</b>	<b>4,777</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>- 1,216</b>

Opening cash 17,744  
 Movement 1,216  
 Closing cash 16,528



## Looking forward to 2022 - 2023

### A review of the 22-23 year identifies a solvency risk if revenue does not recover

Projection				Comment
	21-22	Noeline 22-23	Based on outturn 22-23	
<b>Income</b>				
Grant	16,500	13,000	13,000	
Subs	5,105	3,264	6,876	Average of the subs from Sep 21-Mar 22
Donation	785		589	Apply prudence - 25% off 21-22
Justgiving	2,690		2,017	
Other	187		140	
	<b>25,266</b>	<b>16,264</b>	<b>22,622</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Prof fees	20,476	22,440	22,440	
Storage	1,006	928	928	
Admin	2,144	270	1,144	inc £1000 cheques - admin possibly?
Premises	950	3,360	3,360	£950 from September to March, but bottom up sounds sensible
Insurance	405	450	450	
IT	1,278	3,500	2,000	£1278 billed in year, expect 31 Mar 2021 was also relevant, so suggest £2k
Just giving	223	216	216	
	<b>26,482</b>	<b>31,164</b>	<b>30,538</b>	
<b>Net</b>	<b>- 1,216</b>	<b>- 14,900</b>	<b>- 7,916</b>	
Opening cash	17,744	16,528	16,528	
	- 1,216	- 14,900	- 7,916	
Closing cash	<b>16,528</b>	<b>1,628</b>	<b>8,612</b>	

- Noeline has projected income and expense forward – deficit of £14.9k in 22-23 and no cash thereafter
- RT reviewed the projection and suggested amendments based on the outturn I&E in 21-22 – a deficit of £7.9k.
- Both projections show deficit but sufficient cash to operate 22-23.

#### Options

- Reduce the cost base – cheaper accommodation, storage etc
- Reduce the number of choirs
- Identify more grants
- Increase subs

The solution is likely to be a combination of the above measures

The Trustees are fully aware of and recognise the current challenging financial circumstances that Rising Voices Wessex is experiencing; while optimistic that there will be a gradual return to a more normal environment that, in turn, will enable and encourage new members to join and previous members to re-join they are working on strategies to manage the charity's finance and generate income appropriately during the next year in keeping with its strategy of achieving long-term sustainability.

**Thanks, and acknowledgments:**

Thanks are due to all those who continue to support the choirs – many have done so since its foundation; the additional commitment of members 'old and new' is so important to the ongoing existence of both choirs. Help with fundraising, support at venues, performances and events, are examples of the terrific support given by members.

Thanks also for the administration for the day to day running of the choirs by the Steering Group.

The Trustees thank Musical Director, Wendy Morrow, and co-director, Mark Anstead, for their musical and technical support.

Thanks, are also due for the ongoing technical support of Lucia Sanchis in the organisation and administration of the Zoom rehearsals, social events on Zoom, editing and refining the online virtual choir recordings, social media and website support.



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name Rising Voices Wessex	No (if any) 1165053
--------------------------------------	------------------------

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date 01-Apr-21	To	Period end date 31-Mar-22
------------------------	--------------------------------	----	------------------------------

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Choir contributions	8,100	-	-	8,100	5,030
Other donations	666	-	-	666	2,112
Grants	16,500	-	-	16,500	19,000
Other activities	-	-	-	-	3,460
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>25,266</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>25,266</b>	<b>29,602</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>25,266</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>25,266</b>	<b>29,602</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Professional Costs	21,341	-	-	21,341	15,674
Premises Expenses (Venues)	950	-	-	950	846
Stationery & Printing	-	-	-	-	-
Admin Expenses	3,185	-	-	3,185	7,194
Function Expenses (BS)	-	-	-	-	32
Premises Costs (Storage)	1,006	-	-	1,006	-
Purchase of Merchandise	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>26,482</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,482</b>	<b>23,746</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>26,482</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,482</b>	<b>23,746</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>- 1,216</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 1,216</b>	<b>5,856</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>17,744</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17,744</b>	<b>11,888</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>16,528</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,528</b>	<b>17,744</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	-	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval



**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name  
Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31 March 2022

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1165053

**Set out on pages**

1 to 2

*(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)*

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2022.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

**Signed:**

*B Hallett*

**Date:**

25/01/2023

**Name:**

Bradley Hallett

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

Chartered Accountant with ICAEW

**Address:**

60 Sandhill Road

Leigh on Sea, Essex

SS9 5BY

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**

**RISING VOICES WESSEX, COMMUNITY CHOIRS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1165053

---

# Accounts

---



## Annual Report of the Trustee Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex – May 2021

The Executive Committee of Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs presents its sixth annual report, covering the period from May 2020 to April 2021 and the accounting year ending March 2021.

The past year for *Rising Voices Wessex* has been dominated by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the steps taken to adapt and keep the choirs and the long-term project sustainable. Happily these efforts have so far proved successful.

Supported by the Trustees and Steering Group the changes adopted at the close of the previous year continued with the Musical Director and her Associate using Zoom technology to keep members involved in singing virtually. Each week some 40- 50 members engaged with the Zoom sessions on either of the rehearsal evenings – maintaining both musical and social contact.

During the year the charity lost the support of one of its Trustees, Roger Preston, who sadly passed away. Sara Schwetze- Kemp, a local businesswoman and professional musician, was co-opted as a Trustee to ensure an appropriate range of professional skills and backgrounds is maintained on the Trustee board. As planned the Choir Director Ali Sharpe, retired at the end of March 2021.

Through online processes of advertising, interviewing and auditioning ***Rising Voices Wessex*** was delighted to appoint Wendy Morrow as Choir Director. She will be supported by Mark Anstead who is continuing his association with the choirs as Musical Co-director.

***Rising Voices Wessex*** choirs have been established to support people whose lives have been affected by cancer - patients, those bereaved through cancer or carers. Music also has power to communicate with individuals at times of difficulty – music making has benefits for many chronic medical conditions. Through singing, the choirs aid recovery of confidence and social interaction as well as promoting the concept of living well with and after cancer. Most members of ***Rising Voices Wessex*** choirs come from the communities in the Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole (BCP) conurbation.

***Rising Voices Wessex*** was launched on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013 and became a registered charity in January 2016. ***Rising Voices Wessex*** is a member of Arts and Health South West, The National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Living Well Active.

Public performances are a key objective and regular feature for **Rising Voices Wessex** choir members (on Zoom during the pandemic). They are important in the following respects:

- they demonstrate the benefits of singing to confidence and wellbeing,
- they help raise funds that enable the choirs to be sustainable,
- they encourage ongoing member recruitment.

Some key public performances and highlights since the choirs' formation include:

- Visiting Cherbourg, to feature at a French cancer awareness event early in 2013
- Being an invited supporting choir for Russell Watson at the Lighthouse in Poole in June 2015,
- Being an invited supporting choir for Blake at the Regent Centre in Christchurch in 2016
- Being an invited supporting choir for the Parry 100 Festival 'Glad Day' with Mike Westbrook at St Peters Church, Bournemouth in 2018.
- **Rising Voices Wessex** has been called upon to perform at other charity events in the conurbation, especially those associated with cancer further promoting singing for health and wellbeing as a means of living well with or after cancer.
- Its last in-person public appearance was at a "Sing from The Heart" concert in Wimborne in February 2020 prior to the Covid - 19 pandemic restrictions that subsequently suspended choir activities nationally.

Performances by **Rising Voices Wessex** predominantly take place in the locality and demonstrate the power of singing to build confidence and wellbeing as well as offering the educational message locally of "living well with cancer".

**Rising Voices** Wessex has continued its aim of presenting its work publicly since the onset of pandemic restrictions through a combination of online virtual choir productions and concerts:

Online Christmas concert - available on YouTube  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ofUddHZqiM&t=4s>

Online Spring Concert excerpts available on Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/RisingVoicesChoir>.

**Rising Voices Wessex** continues to appreciate the support of St John's Church, Parkstone, Poole and The New Church, Tuckton, Bournemouth.

In "normal" times **Rising Voices Wessex** meets for rehearsals at these locations:

- Monday evenings - The New Church, Tuckton, Bournemouth
- Tuesday evenings - St Johns Church, Ashley Road, Parkstone.

**Rising Voices Wessex** looks forward to resuming these choirs in autumn 2021 when it is to be hoped relaxed Covid-19 restrictions will permit choir singing and associated social interaction – so fundamental to the **Rising Voices Wessex**.

Social interaction over tea, coffee or a soft drink creates a supportive environment that strengthens with the support provided through the choirs. This however has not been possible through the pandemic, however the choirs have adapted by having online social events, using social media, WhatsApp and having Phone Friends as well as Zoom evenings of social interaction and quiz nights.

During the pandemic restrictions **Rising Voices Wessex** has experienced drop in income of around 67% through loss of regular weekly donations that contribute to running costs – see financial report below. The suggested members' donation of £4.00 goes towards running costs and would normally be collected at live rehearsals and some members have continued to support the choirs via Just Giving.

Notwithstanding the effects of the pandemic **Rising Voices Wessex** has recruited new members during the past year – word of mouth, informal social networking websites and social media presence have all contributed to maintaining a profile for the choirs during the difficulties of the past year and helped recruitment of new members.

**How Rising Voices Wessex makes a difference:** the overall project strategy continually aims to try and capture the benefits of being part of the choir - available resources are currently not sufficient to fund formal academic evaluation of benefits; instead simple questionnaire and feedback surveys are undertaken annually via Survey Monkey. These continue to indicate that members derive significant benefit from **Rising Voices Wessex**. Full results from the most recent survey can be found on the website <https://www.risingvoices.org.uk/about-us/governance-documents>

There are also some key findings from the survey of the virtual choir. It is also clear from the questionnaires that the personality and approach of the Musical Directors is very important to the success of the choirs.

**Rising Voices Wessex** has also contributed in the past to questionnaire research run by Tenovus Cancer Care into the benefits of music and singing for people affected by cancer.

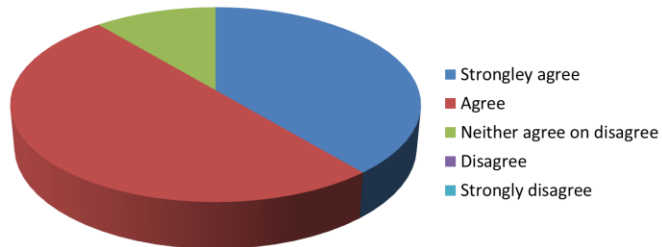
#### **Quotes and observations from choir members taken from the 2020 (September) survey of the Virtual Choir:**

- *“Yes, thank you to all those involved in the thankless task of trying to do things online, with all the problems that involves.”*
- *“Keep up the good work and thank you all so much it means a lot.”*
- *“Thankyou team RVW for fun evenings that have been even more important during Winter.”*
- *“I think EVERYONE involved in the organisation is AMAZING.”*
- *“A life saver in these troubled times! Thank you for all your hard work.”*
- *“Without dedication and enthusiasm RVW would have come to a temporary grinding halt!”*
- *“I am so pleased I found the choir, it’s been a huge help to me throughout my cancer treatment and beyond, I will be forever grateful for the friendships I’ve made and the support I’ve received from the other members. It’s a brilliant inspiring group I always feel happy after I’ve been to choir. Thank you, Rising Voices”*

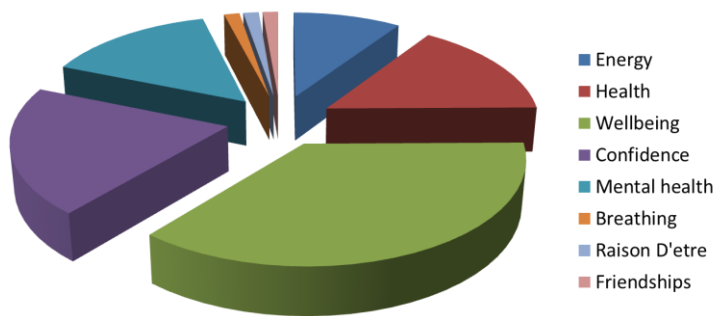
2020 (January) Annual Survey Results include:

### I get support from other choir members

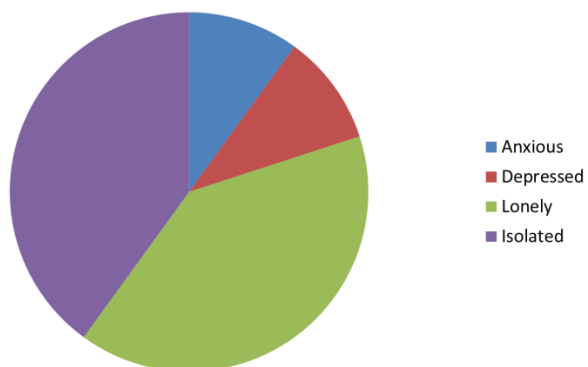
Support



### I feel that attending choir has improved my:



### I no longer feel:



**Rising Voices Wessex**, as a registered charity, is managed at a strategic level by a Board of Trustees drawn principally from the community. The Board encompasses a range of professional backgrounds - clinical, musical and financial – appropriate to the needs of the charity. The Chairman other Trustees are appointed (and may be re- appointed) at the Annual General Meeting.

The skill mix of Trustees is subject to review to enable succession planning and optimum balance of expertise. There is currently one unfilled Trustee vacancy and a process of advertisement to find a suitable candidate with experience and skill in appropriate areas has been initiated.

**Executive Committee members (Trustees) are:**

- Dr Alastair Smith (Chairman), Retired NHS Consultant, former Clinical Lead NCSI.
- Mrs Noëline Young (Vice chair), Retired Clinical Nurse Specialist/ former NCSI Project Manager.
- Mr Rob Taylor (Treasurer), Finance Director, Trenitalia c2c.
- Mrs Jean Querol, Retired therapy radiographer and practice manager.
- Dr Susi Caesar, GP – retiring from the Trustee board May 2021
- Sarah Culley, Choir Member.
- Ms Sara Schwetze-Kemp, Businesswoman & Musician – Co-opted December 2020.
- Mr Roger Preston, BSO Cellist (until his sad death in November 2020).

Rising Voices Wessex is grateful for work of the Trustees.

Operational management and administration of the choirs is undertaken by a Steering Group that consists of the Musical Director, Co-Director, two of the current Trustees with volunteer choir members, capitalizing on the range of skills that members can offer. The Steering Group meets monthly and reports to the board of Trustees.

In public performance **Rising Voices Wessex** aims to present a professional image that highlights its identity. For formal evening choir performances members wear black clothing with royal blue accessories and for informal events members wear **Rising Voices Wessex** labelled polo shirts and fleeces. Members pay a small donation for **Rising Voices Wessex** for these garments; members on joining also receive a folder for music and song lyrics in the choirs' repertoire.

**Fundraising and grant applications:**

Following initial funding in 2012 by the Dorset Cancer Network **Rising Voices Wessex** has sought and received ongoing financial support from a number of sources, these include:

- Macmillan Cancer Support.
- The Big Lottery.
- The People's Lottery Fund.
- Going for Bust.
- Greggs Foundation.
- Bournemouth Football Club – 'The Cherries'.
- Arts and Health South West.
- Pegasus Life.
- Westbourne Rotary Club.
- Waitrose.

The successful **National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities** Application from May 2020 has provided invaluable support during the pandemic restrictions. The award is an ongoing contribution towards running costs over a 5 year period – in this past year it has ensured the survival of Rising Voices Wessex during the pandemic restrictions and will greatly help to re-establish in-person rehearsals and a return of associated social activities as and when pandemic restrictions permit.

Presently overall donated income is around 30% of normal levels mainly due to loss of the regular weekly member contributions at rehearsal sessions. Recovery of retrospective gift aid and funeral donations has offset some this reduction – along with the fact that there have been no venue hire costs during the year.

### **Rising Voices Wessex Co Musical Director Mark Anstead Report:**

The past year for **Rising Voices Wessex** has been a challenging one for all involved due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The choir has not sung at a live event or concert since February 2020 and the final time everyone was in the same room together was in March 2020 – over a year ago. Since March 2020 the choirs have ‘met up’ virtually on the Zoom platform. This has proved to be very important for many people’s mental well-being as well as for the continuity and sustainability of the choirs.

The sessions have been led by Ali Sharpe and myself with technical expertise from Lucia Sanchis, utilising her computing expertise. Combined with my music technology knowledge it has been possible to optimise equipment use to obtain the best quality sound by using mixing desks and audio interfaces to connect microphones, keyboards and backing tracks all to create adequate musical support for the sessions on Zoom.

During the year Rising Voices Wessex produced two virtual concerts; these included five choir songs alongside performances from around a dozen guest artists. Choir members acquired new skills whilst making their individual audio/video recordings for these productions. *Rising Voices Wessex* is extremely appreciative of the efforts of Paul Querol, Lucia Sanchis and Hannah Young using their computing and sound engineering skills to produce the final virtual choir videos that are now accessible on the website. We thank them for the many hours of work involved in creating these productions.

As **Rising Voices Wessex** Co-Director, I would like personally like to thank each and every choir member, steering group member and Trustee for their support over the past challenging year. I would especially wish to give personal thanks to Musical Director, Ali Sharpe, for her efforts working with me to overcome the challenges presented by leading choir sessions on Zoom – as well as for her fine work with the choirs during the past six years.

**In April 2021 Rising Voices Wessex** welcomed its new Musical Director, Wendy Morrow. I look forward to working alongside her as her co-director. Above all, like everybody else connected with the choirs, I look forward to the time where we are meeting together in person as choirs, singing, having fun and performing together.

*Mark Anstead Rising Voices Wessex Co-Director 24.4.21*

## Financial Review

Maintaining the financial stability of the charity has been paramount during the pandemic and we are pleased to report that, whilst the cost base has remained broadly constant, income has increased, leading to an improvement in available cash. In 2021-22 we expect costs to increase modestly (mostly premises expenses as choirs return) but income to increase also.

Rising Voices' policy is to maintain cash reserves of at least 6 month's normal trading.

At 31 Mar 2021 we have approximately 9 months of reserves at current expenditure rates, assuming no further income. We expect the reserves to increase to approximately 12 months by 31 Mar 2022.

### Income:

Income of £29,602 (2019-20: £16,121) was made up:

- £5,030 (2019-20: £10,019) of contributions from the members of the choir, including Just Giving contributions.
- £19,000 (2019-20: £2,496) from the National Lottery Community Fund, which has allowed us to continue online despite a reduction in receipts from choirs. In 21-22 we expect to receive £16,500 from this fund.
- £3,158 (2019-20: £nil) for historic gift aid claims.
- £2,414 (2019-20: £3,606) from donations and other activities.

### Expenditure:

Expenditure of £23,745 (2019-20: £23,292) was made up:

- £15,674 (2019-20: £13,523) of professional fees.
- £7,194 (2019-20: £3,754) of admin expenses, including IT costs and the organisational strength review
- £877 (2019-20: £4,521) for merchandise, storage and function expenses. Only the storage costs have remained at pre-lockdown levels.
- £0 (2019-20: £1,494) for venues and printing. We expect this cost to increase in 21-22 as lockdown eases.

**The net trading position was a surplus of £5,857** this, however, reflects the benefit of support from the Lottery Fund without which the financial position would be somewhat more precarious.

**Cash:**

The cash balance remains healthy, with £17,744 in the bank at 31 March 2021 (Mar 2020: £11,888). There are no ring-fenced income streams or expenditure commitments.

**Thanks and acknowledgments:**

Thanks are due to all those who continue to support the choirs – many have done so since its foundation; the additional commitment of members ‘old and new’ is so important to the ongoing existence of both choirs. Help with fundraising, support at venues, events, making cakes are examples of the terrific support given by members.

Thanks also for the administration for the day to day running of the choirs by the Steering Group.

The Trustees thank Musical Director Ali Sharpe, for her committed and enthusiastic choir direction.

The Trustees also thank Mark Anstead for his musical and technical support.

Thanks must also be recorded for the ongoing technical support of Lucia Sanchis in the organisation and administration of the Zoom rehearsals, social events on Zoom, editing and refining the online virtual choir recordings and at Steering Group meetings.

The Trustees also wish to place on record their thanks to David Marshall for his volunteer musical support and expertise over many years in deputising for the Musical Director when needed and also for leading some of the choirs’ performances.



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name Rising Voices Wessex	No (if any) 1165053
--------------------------------------	------------------------

## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 1-Apr-20	To	Period end date 31-Mar-21
------------------------	-------------------------------	----	------------------------------

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>				
Choir contributions	5,030	-	-	5,030
Other donations	2,112	-	-	2,112
Grants	19,000	-	-	19,000
Other activities	3,460	-	-	3,460
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>29,602</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,602</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>29,602</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,602</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>				
Professional Costs	15,674	-	-	15,674
Premises Expenses (Venues)	846	-	-	846
Stationery & Printing		-	-	-
Admin Expenses	7,194	-	-	7,194
Function Expenses (BS)	32	-	-	32
Premises Costs (Storage)		-	-	-
Purchase of Merchandise		-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>23,746</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,746</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>23,746</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,746</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>5,856</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,856</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>11,888</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,888</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>17,744</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17,744</b>

# Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-
			-
			-
			-
			-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-
			-
			-
			-
			-

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name

**CC16a**

**Last year**  
**to the nearest £**

9,883
1,250
2,496
2,492
-
-
-
-
16,121

-
-
-

16,121
--------

13,523
1,244
250
3,754
2,790
1,144
587
-
-
23,292

-
-
-

23,292
--------

-	7,171
-	-
-	-
-	7,171



**Endowment funds to nearest £**

-
-
-
-

OK

**Endowment funds to nearest £**

-
-
-
-
-
-

**Current value (optional)**

-
-
-
-
-

**Current value (optional)**

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

**When due (optional)**


**Date of approval**




**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name  
Rising Voices Wessex Community Choirs

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31 March 2021

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1165053

**Set out on pages**

1 to 2

*(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)*

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

**Signed:**

*B Hallett*

**Date:**

24/01/2022

**Name:**

Bradley Hallett

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

Chartered Accountant with ICAEW

**Address:**

60 Sandhill Road

Leigh on sea, Essex

SS9 5BY

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**