



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 8th 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.

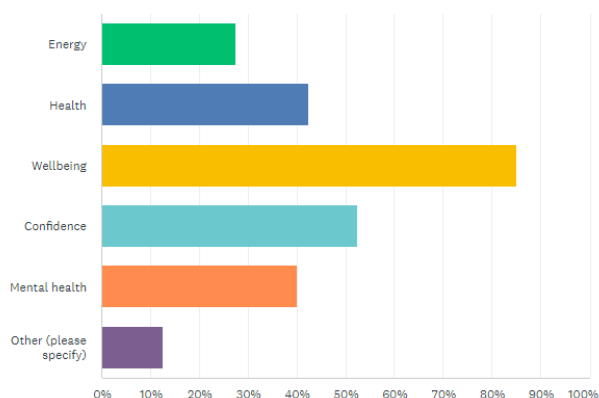
Quotes and observations from choir members taken from the spring 2022 Survey

- *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:

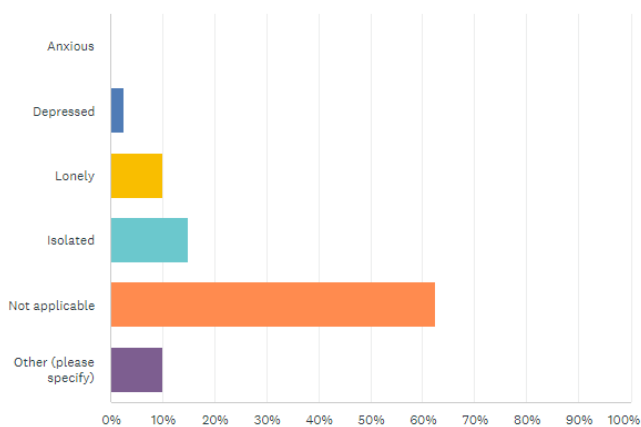
I feel that attending choir has improved my: (Tick all that apply)

Answered: 40 Skipped: 0



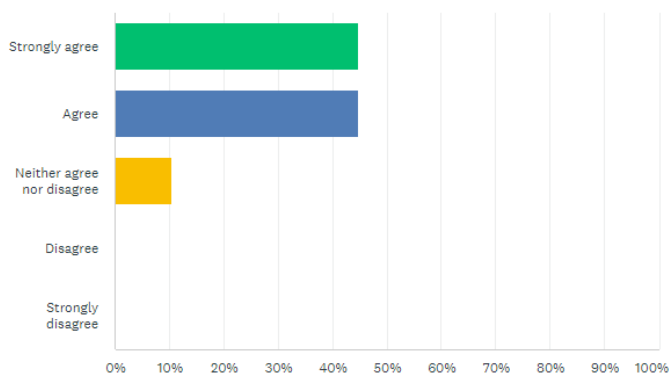
I no longer feel... (Tick all that apply)

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.

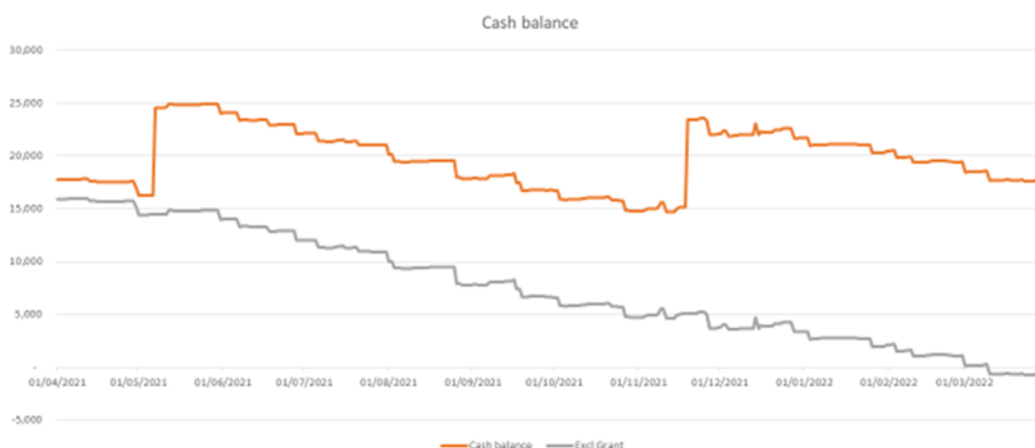
The successful **National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities** Application from May 2021 has continued to provide critical support during the pandemic restrictions.

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.

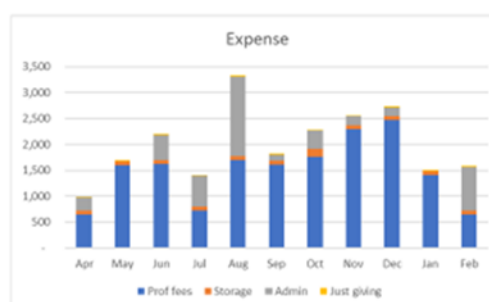
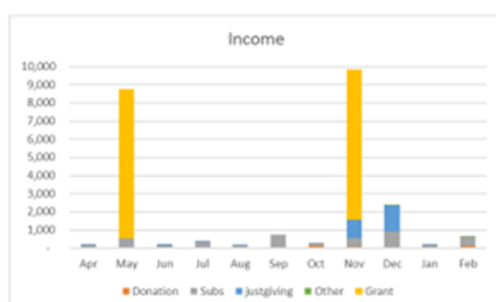
Cash remains steady, but income is predominantly from grants or one-off income



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
TOTAL	25,266	785	5,105	16,500	2,690	187	26,482	20,476	1,006	4,777	223	-	1,216

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
	Noeline	Based on outturn		
	21-22	22-23	22-23	
Income				
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	
	25,266	16,264	22,622	
Expenditure				
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	
	26,482	31,164	30,538	
Net	- 1,216	- 14,900	- 7,916	
Opening cash	17,744	16,528	16,528	
	- 1,216	- 14,900	- 7,916	
Closing cash	16,528	1,628	8,612	

- 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 £
A1 Receipts					
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
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	25,266	-	-	25,266	29,602
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	25,266	-	-	25,266	29,602
A3 Payments					
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	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	26,482	-	-	26,482	23,746
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	26,482	-	-	26,482	23,746
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 1,216	-	-	- 1,216	5,856
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	17,744	-	-	17,744	11,888
Cash funds this year end	16,528	-	-	16,528	17,744

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 £
B1 Cash funds		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	-	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
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.