NEW MILL MALE VOICE CHOIR

Membership Strategy

1. Background
2. Aim & Objectives
3. Supporting Organization

ANNEXES A - C

March 2024

1.1 Strategy Purpose. To define the choir's membership objectives, provide guidance on how these may be achieved and to set out supporting organisational arrangements

1.2 **Who We Are.** We are a four-part male voice choir with approximately 60 members. Our choir was formed in 1991, at the then Duke of Leeds pub, New Mill, by a group of pub-regulars led by a retired Welsh opera singer. We have since combined strong musical ability with the comradeship rooted in those first days at the Duke of Leeds.

1.3 Our Ethos. Our ethos is to be welcoming and inclusive, irrespective of age, background, belief or identity.

1.4
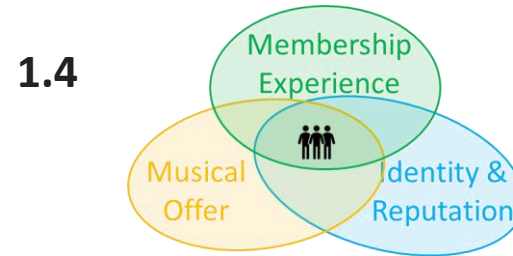
What We Offer Our Members. The health of the choir depends on the strength of what we offer our members.

- **Music.** Our repertoire offers a mix of traditional male voice choir and contemporary music to suit a variety of tastes. Our members sing, with confidence, to a standard which allows us to take the stage with leading artists, performing in a variety of locations.
- **Membership Experience.** Singing together builds a great sense of camaraderie, which extends beyond the concert stage. We encourage a range of non-musical social activities and value the friendships and mutual support which have grown from our shared activities.
- **Identity & Reputation.** Our choir has a strong sense of pride and identity. While members come from beyond New Mill and the Holme Valley, we remain rooted in the village where the choir was formed. The choir enjoys a strong reputation, locally and among the professional artists who we perform with.

2. New Mill Male Voice Choir – Membership Strategy: Aim & Objectives

2.1 Strategy Aim. Putting choir membership onto a sustainable footing now and for the future.

2.2 Strategy Context. The choir is very close to its target strength; however, it needs to balance across all voice parts and over 65% of its members are above 70yrs – a potential issue for long-term viability. These 2 issues should be addressed, in addition to meeting general recruitment requirements.

2.3 Strategy Objectives.

Objective	Description	Target	Gap	Owner	Task
Strength	adequate stage strength and subscription income	total approx. 60	2 additional members	Membership Sec	Induction and retention
Balance	membership distributed equally across voice parts	approx. 15 in ea section	1 Top Tenor 1 Bass	Recruitment Sec	Targeted recruitment
Age Profile	balance across age-groups to ensure long-term viability	50% under 70yrs	15% (i.e. 9 <70s)	Recruitment Sec	Targeted recruitment
Recruitment	meet targets (a) and address membership turn-over (b)	(a) 2 additional members (b) 4 pa	target (a)+(b)	Recruitment Sec	Recruitment planning and delivery

Guidance on achieving these objectives is provided at Annex A

2.4 The Membership Offer. The strength of what we offer members is key to recruitment and retention (see 1.4 above). While not part of this Strategy - We may need to think about the strengths of our offer and any possible weaknesses.

3. New Mill Male Voice Choir – Membership Strategy: Supporting Organisation

3.1 Overview. The following organisational arrangements support the delivery of the Strategy

3.2 Responsibilities. The Membership Strategy is owned by the **Choir Committee**. Responsibility for delivering its objectives is divided between the **Membership Secretary** & the **Recruitment Secretary**, (see 2.3 above).

The **Recruitment Secretary** is a new role whose responsibilities are outlined at <u>Annex B</u>

The handover of responsibility between the Recruitment Secretary & Membership Secretary, takes place when potential members start attending rehearsals and begin the induction process.

The Recruitment Secretary is invited to establish a **working group** to support planning and delivery of recruitment activities

3.3 Annual Reporting.

Q1
Year Start
Target Membership Numbers

Q2
Recruiting Activity Plan

Q3
Mid Year
Membership Update
Recruiting Update

Q4
End Year
Membership Report
Recruiting Report

These are in addition to routine monthly activity updates

3.4 Review. The success of the Strategy & whether it should be updated or concluded to be reviewed by the Committee after $2\frac{1}{2}$ years, at Q4 2026

New Mill Male Voice Choir – Membership Strategy:

ANNEXES

A. Recruiting Activity Guidance
B. Recruitment Secretary: Role & Responsibilities
C. Ten For the Town Hall 2023: Post-project Evaluation

Membership Strategy: Activity Guidance

The following guidance[1] is provided for recruitment planning by the Recruitment Secretary. Some of the suggested activities might be conducted by a standing recruitment working group, convened by the Recruitment Secretary, while others can be undertaken by individual choir members or teams convened for specific activities.

1. One-to-One.

- Choir members persuade friends, etc, to sample a rehearsal evening, with the intention that they join the choir subject to a voice test.

- Tools needed by choir members: Choir introduction booklet

Most members join because of direct 'one-to-one' contact with existing members who are friends/ neighbours, etc. This may be sufficient to sustain existing membership levels, but not to build the choir/address age profile, etc. The following are suggested as ways to achieve these.

2. Promotion

- Working group to promote recruitment to support the Choir recruitment plan, including:
    - digital (choir website/Facebook/Instagram/YouTube, other accounts)
    - non-digital (TV/radio/printed banners/printed flyers, etc)

Note. The scope of work by this group could be extended beyond recruitment, to include promoting events & general promotion

- Tools needed by working group:
    - Social media skills
    - social media content approval process

3. Multi-participant/Reward-based Recruitment Project

- Team to undertake a time-limited recruitment project (4-6 months) to assemble and prepare a group of would-be choristers (e.g. 10 or more) to join the Choir in a concert . The intention is that some/all may join the choir.

- Tools needed by project team
    - Supporting Promotion (see 2. above)
    - Choir introduction booklet
    - Project Plan & resources

4. Presentations to organisations/businesses

- Working group to make a series of presentations to organisations/businesses to promote the choir as a rewarding activity that offers both friendships and wellbeing, especially for our target age profile (e.g. empty-nesters, those planning for retirement, or the recently retired).

- Tools needed by project team
    - Choir introduction booklet
    - PC projected ppt presentation
    - Video clips
    - Promotional materials

5. Performing in the Community

- Balanced group of 12 – 20 performing at community festivals, shopping centres, town centre, Stately Homes & Gardens etc. With short set (6 – 8 songs), to promote choir and attract members.

- Tools needed by group
    - Rehearsed songs
    - Musical Direction and accompaniment?
    - Promotional materials

6. Community Sing-along

- Choir members visit a suitable venue (pub or club) to lead a sing-along to promote choir and attract members. Emphasis on well-known or chorus songs, Possibly with an opening and concluding song by choir.

- Tools needed by group
    - Volunteer Compare/Master of Ceremonies
    - Rehearsed songs
    - Promotional materials

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1. Guidance may also be drawn from evaluation of the 2023 'Ten for the Town Hall' recruitment project, which is summarised at Annex C

Recruitment Secretary: Role & Responsibilities

Role

The Recruitment Secretary is a full member of the Choir Committee who leads on all aspects of recruitment to the choir. In doing so, he is responsible for delivery of the Choir Membership Strategy's <u>Recruitment Objectives</u>, working closely with the Membership Secretary, and supported by other Committee members and members of the choir.

Responsibilities

1. Deliver Recruitment Objectives
- Establish annual recruitment targets
- Develop annual recruiting plan
- Oversee delivery of recruiting activities

2. Develop Recruiting Capacity
- Establish Working Group to support delivery
- Improve comms in support of recruitment
- Encourage & support recruitment by members
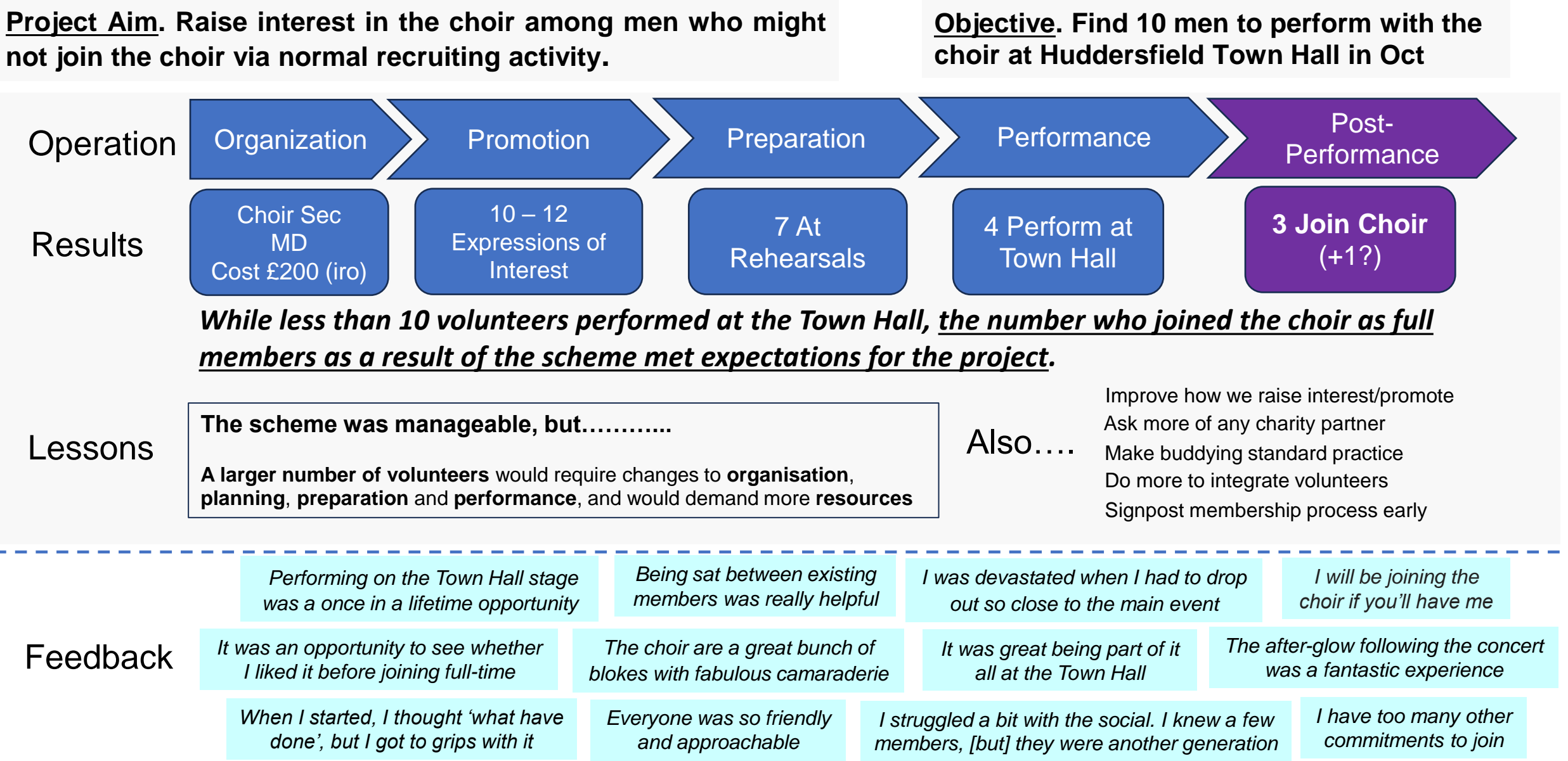- Learn lessons from activities & other groups

3. Support Induction Process
- Identify leads for follow-up by Membership Sec
- With Membership Sec, establish effective recruitment/induction handover process

Deliverables
- Q2 Annual Recruiting Plan (April)
- Routine Activity Updates (Monthly)
- Q3 Mid-Year Progress Report (July)
- Q4 End-Year Progress Report (December)

TEN FOR THE TOWN HALL 2023: POST-PROJECT EVALUATION[1]

Project Aim. Raise interest in the choir among men who might not join the choir via normal recruiting activity.

Objective. Find 10 men to perform with the choir at Huddersfield Town Hall in Oct

Operation

Organization → Promotion → Preparation → Performance → Post-Performance

Results

| Choir Sec MD Cost £200 (iro) | 10 – 12 Expressions of Interest | 7 At Rehearsals | 4 Perform at Town Hall | **3 Join Choir (+1?)** |

While less than 10 volunteers performed at the Town Hall, <u>the number who joined the choir as full members as a result of the scheme met expectations for the project</u>.

Lessons

The scheme was manageable, but………...

A larger number of volunteers would require changes to **organisation**, **planning**, **preparation** and **performance**, and would demand more **resources**

Also….
Improve how we raise interest/promote
Ask more of any charity partner
Make buddying standard practice
Do more to integrate volunteers
Signpost membership process early

Feedback

Performing on the Town Hall stage was a once in a lifetime opportunity

Being sat between existing members was really helpful

I was devastated when I had to drop out so close to the main event

I will be joining the choir if you'll have me

It was an opportunity to see whether I liked it before joining full-time

The choir are a great bunch of blokes with fabulous camaraderie

It was great being part of it all at the Town Hall

The after-glow following the concert was a fantastic experience

When I started, I thought 'what have done', but I got to grips with it

Everyone was so friendly and approachable

I struggled a bit with the social. I knew a few members, [but] they were another generation

I have too many other commitments to join

1. The full report is available from the Choir Secretary