



# Warwick A Singing Town

December 2021 | Issue 3

## Dear Friends and Supporters

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### Introducing our Community Ambassadors

I am delighted to introduce our community ambassadors who are all very active in the life of Warwick. I am very grateful to them for their support and their wish to tell everyone about our exciting project.

#### **Richard Nicholson**

*Principal*

*Warwick Independent Schools Foundation*

*“Happiness and  
Health in Harmony”*



## About Warwick – A Singing Town

**Warwick – A Singing Town**, is a unique, philanthropically-funded project to promote singing as part of the artistic and cultural post-pandemic renewal in Warwick. Through free, high-quality singing and choral opportunities in schools, sharing information about local singing and choral opportunities for all town residents, and bespoke partnerships with groups who may benefit from the therapeutic aspects of singing – our goal is for singing to be better understood, promoted, and available to all residents.

[www.warwicksingtown.co.uk](http://www.warwicksingtown.co.uk)

# Introducing our Community Ambassadors

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## Nick Blofeld

*Divisional Director, Warwick Castle*

I always sang at school in assembly and in church when we used to go regularly, and although no good at it myself, I still really enjoy being part of the singing “body” and it does certainly seem to lift my spirits, as I’m sure it does for just about everyone. There has been a lot of research agreeing with my personal view and experience recently, and that is why I’m very happy to support the **Warwick – A Singing Town** project.

We host many musical events at the Castle, including the Christmas Carol Concert, and the joy it brings to thousands of people on the night is always great to see, hear and experience. Participating in a communal “team” event like singing is a great way to bring people and communities together, so I hope the project is a huge success and it should be a key part of the “re-launch” of the town and re-engagement of many people across Warwick after a uniquely tough period in all our lives.



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## Edward Button

*Musician and professional singer  
with The King’s Singers*

I started singing when I was a chorister in the Chapel Choir at Warwick School. The choir was my home from home for ten years from the age of 8 to 18, and really helped shape my life.

When I was appointed as one of the countertenors in The King’s Singers in 2019, I decided to move back to Warwickshire – and what a brilliant decision that was! When the group was grounded during the pandemic there was time to meet some of the many members of the thriving musical community in the area. Amongst many other things, I discovered **Warwick – A Singing Town**. What an incredible project this is – I am delighted to be a part of it.

Over the years I have realised that there are few better things in life than making music; the creativity is limitless, helping people to feel their emotions is exhilarating, and the teamwork has resulted in lasting friendships.



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## Jo Hobbs

*Warwick business owner*

My professional background is in Deaf Education, but I gave all that up 10 years ago, and since then have been running the Thomas Oken Tea Rooms in Castle Street. It has been a joy to get to know our lovely customers and to serve our delicious tea and cake; the therapeutic properties of a cream tea and a chat can't be underestimated! I feel similarly about singing, which is why I am so happy to support **Warwick – A Singing Town**.

We may not be up to much singing on our own, but joining voices together in a group enhances the sound and the experience to another level. I sing in a local community choir 'Songlines' and it has brought me nothing but joy and happiness! Indeed, I would go so far as saying that singing has kept my body and soul together over the recent torrid months!

Singing is good for us! This is why I'm looking forward to seeing this project unfold and to being a small part of such a worthwhile community venture.



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## Simon Hogg

*Musician and former Director of Music,  
Warwick school*

Music is for everyone and the joyous act of singing is its purest and most natural form.

The benefits of singing extend far beyond the beauty of the notes; it is an act of friendship that brings people together.

My earliest musical recollection is playing alongside my father in the local brass band.

This musical journey took me from the National Youth Orchestra to the Royal Academy of Music and Birmingham University. A chance encounter with four other students led to the creation of The Fine Arts Brass Ensemble and we played together for the next twenty-five years around the world.

Music education has always played an important role in my life and I have been privileged to teach at The Royal College of Music, Warwick University and Warwick School. I am honoured to be an ambassador for **Warwick – A Singing Town** and urge you to join with others to promote this wonderful initiative.



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## Mandy Littlejohn

*Warwick business owner and former mayor*

I have always loved the sound of music but sadly have never been able to sing well! The only child to be removed from a compulsory junior music lesson at school because I put everyone off! Never sit next to me or in front in church as some people will know.

However, I love the community aspect of music and how it brings people together. I have for a long time been passionate about Warwick's Community Band and on rare occasions have been allowed to play the tambourine !

Working closely with the charity 'Kissing it Better' has also allowed me to see the benefits of singing with dementia patients and the elderly in care homes and hospitals.

I am honoured to be asked to be an ambassador for **Warwick – A Singing Town** and look forward to supporting in any way I can, as I have a particular love for all things Warwick!



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## Heidi L Meyer

*Master of the Lord Leycester Hospital*

I cannot sing to save my life but it doesn't mean I don't love singing! Singing makes us feel better. Spending much time in war zones through an international career in foreign policy and defence, I saw how song helped those affected by war and desperate to be home.

I sat waiting in airports for flights home and weary soldiers sat in the departure halls waiting to go home too. Too often flights home were delayed and on hearing the news the soldiers would look at each other and as if by magic would start to sing. The rafters of make shift airports would resonate with their song of lost brothers in arms and loved ones left at home and somehow it made the sting of a delayed return home less unbearable.

Song unites us and lessens pain and sadness; it makes us joyful and rejoice. I am honoured to be an ambassador for **Warwick – A Singing Town** and hope the Lord Leycester Hospital will make a valuable contribution promoting this initiative.



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## Vaughan Roberts

*Vicar of St Mary's & Team Rector of Warwick*

Personally, I delight in many kinds of music and I'm supporting this project because I believe that music contributes to people's wellbeing, health and enjoyment of life. Professionally, I am vicar of a church where musical ministry is a vital part of our worship.

In addition to our flourishing church choirs, St. Mary's is continually in use as a concert venue both for choral and instrumental music and I am delighted that we are able to share our wonderful building with the wider community.

In my view **Warwick – A Singing Town** is a very exciting project that will make a significant and vibrant contribution to the communal life of our town and locality.



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## Clare Sawdon JP DL

*Chair of the Warwickshire County Music Education Trust*

Involvement of young people in activities that bring them together, whether it be sport, drama or music, is vital for their development. Learning to work as part of a team helps them in their working lives and as Chair of the Warwickshire County Music Education Trust, I am keen to promote this activity.

Whilst a pupil at Warwick Prep, a certain music teacher, sadly long passed, wrote in my school report that Clare growls enthusiastically in lessons. Sadly this trait continues but I won't be silenced! Let everyone sing whatever their ability and this project is an opportunity for all abilities and enthusiasm!

**Warwick – A Singing Town** is an amazing concept and I am delighted to support the initiative and wish everyone well whatever age they are. Singing is a huge pleasure to us all whether we are participating or listening to a performance. I would encourage everyone to get behind this amazing opportunity and embrace this amazing new aspect of life in Warwick



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## Matthew Watson

*Headteacher, Westgate primary school*

I have enjoyed being involved in music throughout my life and see music as a critical part of any child's education. I am delighted that we have a wide range of musical activities on offer at Westgate and that this menu has been extended through the **Warwick – A Singing Town** project.



The project offers such a wealth of opportunities for our pupils. There is the happiness that comes from singing with others. Opportunities to sing have been significantly affected by the pandemic and what better way to come out of the restrictions than by launching a project on the scale of **Warwick – A Singing Town**. There is also the development of singing and musical skills that come from working with talented musical entrepreneurs.

We have children checking with me on the gate each Friday morning to make sure that our entrepreneur is working with them in the afternoon. There is a real excitement about being involved in the project – from children and staff – and singing at the launch of the project was a privilege and an experience that the children will remember forever.



WARWICK INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOLS FOUNDATION



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