



HLF OH-12-12352

St Mary & St Giles Stony Stratford

Willis Pipe Organ Restoration and Reach-out project

Final evaluation report by the Project Team

March 2017



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Executive summary

The **Willis Pipe Organ Restoration & Reach-Out** project had two equally important aims: to restore a fine piece of Victorian heritage; and to reach out to volunteers to run ongoing programmes of educational visits and musical events with the restored organ at their core, for young people and the local community.

Put simply, it has been a great success. Entirely run by volunteers, the project has delivered all six of its HLF-approved purposes, making a significant difference both to heritage and to people:

- 1. Restoration of the Willis pipe organ in St Mary & St Giles church, Stony Stratford:** The work as defined in our HLF bid has been completed to the satisfaction of the Diocesan Organ Adviser and professional recitalists; along the way we held two Open Days on Heritage Open Days weekend in 2014 and 2015, plus a Works Visit, which enabled over 425 local people to see the restoration work first hand.
- 2. Research into the 135-year history of the organ and interpretation outputs** Research has been undertaken locally and in Edinburgh as the original home of the organ, and been documented and made available as open source on our website. The research was used to inform the development of interpretation banners, flyers, and photobooks, available both onsite and online, and an FAQs briefing for volunteer guides.
- 3. Learning resources** – a 25-minute DVD and lesson plans for Key Stages 1-4 – have been created and made available online for use in education programmes along with the interpretation outputs.
- 4. Visits Programme** – this reached 490 pupils and adults from 9 schools/youth groups in 20 visits made during the project with highly positive feedback from young people and teachers/group leaders. In addition, a **Players Programme** in the eleven months since restoration has enabled five organists to use the organ for regular learning and practice, with over 200 hours of practice and rehearsal use outside of services and events.
- 5. A Community Music Programme** to extend knowledge and appreciation of the organ and its history offered 26 events using the organ, including 4 Beginners' Guides events, in the first eleven months post-restoration, with over 3,000 participants, including young people. In addition, 26 other music events have been held, giving a total participation rate of 4,700 – treble that prior to the project. Feedback has again been highly positive.
- 6. An increased number of trained volunteers** – over the life of the project, 64 of the current volunteers (200% growth) were recruited and mentored and have contributed in 15 defined roles to support Education and Community Music activities. Their feedback is also highly positive and all want to continue.

Concurrently with this heritage project, the project team ran a parallel New Pipes & Casework project to commission the installation of additional pipes to complete the Willis III specification for the organ, and new wooden casework. This involved running a Community Music Programme in 2013-14 and 2014-15 while organ restoration was underway. A total of 115 events were held, raising awareness, building audiences and contacts, and, along with other fundraising schemes, paying for this work to be completed at the same time.

A Maintenance & Fundraising Plan is in place to assure the condition of the organ for the foreseeable future. Heritage documentation, interpretation materials and learning resources will continue to be freely available on site in the church and online, and the Visits, Players, and Community Music Programmes are being taken forward by volunteers.

What began eleven years ago as a fundraising project (Pipe Organ Restoration Action Group) to save a heritage instrument has grown into a vibrant volunteer organisation (Music for All @ SMSG www.musicforallsmg.org), offering both learning opportunities based around the organ but also a much wider programme of music, with and without organ, that is giving enjoyment to increasing numbers of people from a growing area.

1. What we wanted to happen: the aims of the project

1.1 Why we wanted to do the project

Built and developed over fifty years by three generations of the famous Willis organ-building family, the pipe organ in St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford had the potential to be one of the best 3-manual organs in a 35-mile radius, serving a population of 1m living in Milton Keynes and the neighbouring rural counties.

Originally built in 1882 for St George's, Edinburgh, the organ was dismantled after eighty years and purchased by the newly combined parish of St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford in 1967, to replace an organ destroyed by fire. Maintenance was undertaken, but by 2004 a condition survey suggested that the organ would fail terminally over time unless it had a thorough overhaul; piecemeal repairs were no longer an option. If restored, though, it would be unique within the new city of Milton Keynes: there would be no comparable heritage organ of its size and versatility.

Organ enthusiasts who were passionate about this possibility formed a fundraising group, and by 2012 had overhauled the console and raised further funds for restoration. But by this time the organ had become so unreliable that only experienced organists could play a restricted repertoire, and at times the organ failed catastrophically in both services and concerts. It was clear we could not fundraise fast enough to save the organ without grant aid.

Meanwhile, we had run some pilot Open Days, Beginners' Guides sessions and School Visits, which showed us that while there was little knowledge about pipe organs in the local community, young people and adults alike were interested to know more when given access.

Equally, we knew from the experience of running a range of fundraising events that there was interest in classical music, including organ music, within the community; and that by offering 'entry by donation' daytime events we could bring enjoyment to audiences who would not normally buy tickets to attend evening concerts.

We therefore bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund as our most likely source of funding support, in a project designed not only to restore the organ and research its history but also to reach out to wider audiences and support more learners through our Community Music, Visits and Players programmes.

1.2 What we planned to do

The project group set itself six clear aims with associated outcomes and time scales:

1. Commission professional restoration of our rare 1882 Willis pipe organ to excellent working order.
2. Research and document its history for the first time.
3. Create learning resources to enable people of different ages and interests to learn about the sound, technology and social history of this organ.
4. Reach out to people of all ages to extend knowledge and experience of a heritage pipe organ through our Visits and Players Programmes.
5. Reach out to wider audiences through a Community Music Programme, presented by young learners, amateurs and professionals, to extend knowledge and enjoyment of the pipe organ.
6. Build a strong ongoing volunteer organisation to undertake these project activities and long term to maintain both the organ and the programmes so there is a sustained legacy impact of HLF funding.

These were monitored using a regularly updated **Project Plan & Outcomes** excel file (sample for 2015-07-02 uploaded) and **Risk Register** to help us focus on issues and mitigations (sample for 2014-12-04 uploaded).

1.3 The differences we expected to make for heritage and for people

The heritage difference

We expected that the project would make the organ work and sound better than it ever has done, so that we could promote it as an exemplar of its type.

We planned to discover, interpret, and make easily available onsite and online, in a variety of media, its history of eighty years in Edinburgh and fifty years in Stony Stratford, so that locally people would know we have a hidden heritage gem in our midst.

The differences for people

We wanted to enable people - in particular young people - within the new city area of Milton Keynes, most of whom have never heard a real pipe organ, to find out about this heritage gem, and be excited by it.

We also hoped to be able to give new enjoyment from the restored organ, both on its own and in combination with other instruments and singers, as part of a bigger music programme. We planned to double participation of users/visitors/audience compared to pre-restoration years, and extend our geographic reach.

In addition we expected to increase the numbers of organ players.

We expected to build numbers of volunteers who would gain new knowledge and skills, confidence and enjoyment.

2. The 'story of change' behind our project

Our 'story of change' started eleven years ago in 2006, and began with one person: Anna Page, who founded the Pipe Organ Restoration Action Group (PORAG) and initiated the first organ website. She was soon joined by David Scrutton, who, with other organ enthusiasts in the church family, organised events and other fundraising that enabled restoration of the organ console to take place in 2011. By 2012 the organ was deteriorating faster than PORAG could fundraise, and would clearly fail terminally within the decade. With no experience of obtaining grant funding, they sought advice from a contact with bid-writing skills, Jane Wolfson. It was a learning journey for the team but in March 2014, a grant of £82,700 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) allowed the project to proceed.

Driving passion, infectious enthusiasm and deep commitment on the part of a few key individuals, finding the necessary skills and keeping going with dogged determination were thus key ingredients in kick-starting our story of change. Getting the funding was a shot in the arm for the PORAG team. New volunteers came forward; and Lesley Salter, Dave King, Kieran Salter and Matthew Lucas joined the bid team to form the Project Team.

Our story changed gear: the team ambitiously decided not only to deliver the HLF Restoration and Reach-Out Project but also to run a concurrent New Pipes & Casework project, on the grounds that this work would be most efficiently done alongside the restoration. It also undertook to cover any additional project costs and to contribute to the PCC Church Fabric Maintenance Fund's Greater Access Project to improve access to the church building. An additional fundraising goal of £67,000 was set to cover all these costs during 2014-2017.

The Project Team – all volunteers with the professional skills needed for the project – employed project management techniques to ensure the HLF Project outputs were delivered. At the same time it recognised the need to undertake organisational development in order to achieve a wider reach in the community. It rebranded from PORAG to Music for All @ SMSG, with a clear mission to "promote access to a wide range of music performed by a broad range of talent, with a focus on providing performance opportunities for young, developing, and local musicians." It communicated more widely, with a new website, monthly emailing, online ticketing, local posters and flyers. It developed an annual Community Music Programme, blending different strands of delivery targeted at different groups. And it worked hard to develop new volunteers to take up newly defined roles.

The skills, dedication, and time commitment of the Project Team were critical to project success. Equally critical were the time and skills contributed by all the volunteers who took part in and led the growth activity of 2014-17, where the emphasis has been on providing not just music but also a warm welcome, and engaging young people as audiences, visitors, and performers.

From running 150 musical and other events raising £81,000 over eight years (2006-2013), in the three years of the HLF project (March 2014-February 2017), Music for All @ SMSG ramped up to run 167 music events plus 20 educational visits. We trebled event activity and doubled income compared to pre-project years. Annual user/visitor/audience numbers more than trebled from 1,500 pre-restoration to over 5,000 across the Visits and Community Music programmes in the first season post-restoration. Our contact mailing list also trebled in size and our social media presence is starting to grow. Over these three years we also raised 96% (£64,000) of our additional funding goal, plus over £5,000 for other good causes.

Success breeds success ... A programme of 53 events is in place for the 2017-18 season, starting April 2017. This will complete the restoration fundraising, cover the future Maintenance Plan costs, and allow us to build Music for All @ SMSG activities further, including fundraise for other causes. An Away Day is planned for September 2017 to celebrate our successes and develop the organisational structure and plans for the future.

2.1 Meeting our output targets

Tight project management ensured that we met our output targets. The table below shows the changes we introduced in a 'before and after' view of our project. 'Actual' is mostly the same as 'Planned', sometimes exceeding it, and occasionally for good reason different to plan and/or still in progress.

Element	Before	After - Planned	After - Actual
Restoration	Organ starting to fail No Maintenance Plan	HLF heritage restoration completed to satisfaction of Diocesan Organ Adviser and recitalists Funded Maintenance Plan	As Plan Plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> new pipes prepared for by Willis III and new elegant wooden casework added in separate non-heritage project
Research, documentation, interpretation	No available account of history	History documented in updatable online and onsite interpretation resources Digital policy	As Plan
Learning Resources	None available	25-minute DVD with 100 copies Interpretation resources: Pull up banners, booklet, wall posters Primary & Secondary Schools Visit/Project Packs University level module on the organ	As Plan except that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wall posters not possible so Photobooks created instead Learning Resources held online OU Open Learning module to be developed post-project Plus DVD material also on You Tube
Education Activities	Two pilot projects only	11 schools providing 490 pupils engaged in well-rated visits and/or pipe project 10 university students 3 Beginners Guides events, 90 attendees, 3 scholars recruited	As Plan except that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> young people from a mix of 9 community groups and schools; pipe project not feasible university project still in planning 4 Beginners Guides events serving 113 people; 5 players but no scholars yet
Community Music Activities	20 events pa few using the organ as it had become so unreliable	12 SMSG events, 4 events by others, Festival and Community Gala events all using organ Total organ event attendance 2,400 Total Community Music Programme activity 50 events/3000 attendance Audience Development Policy	As Plan Plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total organ event attendance (incl Beginners Guides) 3,027 – 26% more than plan Total Community Music Programme 52 events/4700 attendance – 57% more than plan Audience Development Policy still in development
Volunteers	32 volunteers No formalised Register or Roles No Recruitment, Retention activities	Beginners Guide to the Organ Volunteer Training Pack 40 new events volunteers 24 trained 'organ guide' volunteers Volunteering Policy	As Plan Plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 69 new events volunteers recruited of which 64 still active 26 Event Leaders; 6 Organ Visit Guides Bi-annual Volunteer Meetings introduced (4 held so far) Volunteer Register & Roles exist but policy still to be formalised

2.3 Performer, visitor and audience feedback

We've talked with audience members at events, invited them to complete feedback cards, and exchanged emails with performers, listeners and visit leaders. Here's what people have had to say about the project:

Performers say it is a quality heritage instrument

"In general the organ is a delight to play, with all stops now in action. The overall effective is now bright and positive, whilst offering a wide range of tonal contrasts. The Waldhorn rank, which provides subtle depth without being obtrusive, is a particularly valuable addition to the Pedal organ. The congregation is noticing and commenting on the high quality of sound, which now supports the sung parts of church services. The overall improvement in the organ's performance will be a great asset to recitals and concerts for many years." (John Neale, Organist at St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford at the time of the restoration)

"The restoration has been a total success; it has given the instrument back its vigour, its life. There is a real meaty bite to it, which is great. It is also lovely to have pistons and buttons that work – no more booby traps! It is certainly wonderful to play, very exciting – and the addition of the prepared-for stops just completes the tonal palette beautifully, so it is absolutely first class." (Jonathan Kingston, recitalist, Musical Director of the Pipe Organ Festival 2016 and incoming Organist at St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford, from September 2017)

(Both organists quoted in Keays, M., St Mary and St Giles Church, Stony Stratford, *Organ Building, Vol 16*, (2016) pp106-111, The Institute of British Organ Building www.ibo.co.uk)

"A super restoration - impressive presence and a wonderful blaze of sound." (Roger Sayer)

"Fabulous! The jewel in the crown of the church and of Stony Stratford." (Donald MacKenzie)

"Splendid organ - Exceptional instrument - Such an interesting visit - Excellent banners - The best refreshments - Thank you for making us so welcome - We would like to come back to play." (Comments from Bucks Organists Association visit in February 2017 - recital now booked for 2018)

Many people across all age groups report a new interest in music and in the pipe organ

"The teacher said she had never seen so many jaws drop with the wonder of the experience. Really enjoyed it, thought it was really good." (Visit Report, February 2016)

"The children just didn't stop talking about their visit. They enjoyed it all and said it was the best trip they had been on, even better than archery or rock climbing." (Group Leader, Beavers Visit May 2016)

"I have never heard a Band played live and I am so glad I came and I will be back." (Elderly gentleman on his first visit, Hooray for Handbells, June 2016)

Our Third Thursdays at Twelve Thirty (TT@TT) free short lunchtime concerts engage growing numbers:

"I am here for the first time to try it out, with a view to coming every month. We will be back!" (Grandparent with toddler in audience, TT@TT, May 2016)

"So glad we were passing and saw the poster I heard the organ from outside and just had to come in." (TT@TT Shanna Hart Organ Recital ,August 2016)

"So good to hear familiar pieces and then something completely new." (TT@TT Joe Laredo at the Piano, November 2016)

"The children who came loved this - excited, calmed, interested, surprised, jumped! - all emotions covered." (TT@TT, Jacob Collins at the Organ, December 2016)

Our Restoration Celebration, Festival and Gala events have offered people new experiences and insights:

"Being able to see what the organist was doing via the screen was enlightening." (Restoration Celebration Inaugural Organ Recital, April 2016)

"It's the first time I've been to a silent movie and it was thoroughly enjoyable and very amusing. The organ pieces played at the beginning were very good too." (Festival, September 2016)

"Jonathan was so informative and interesting and I learnt a lot!" "Ellie was a mine of information about the organ and old photos of Stony Stratford." (Festival Heritage Events, September 2016)

"Both concerts (Friday night & Sunday night) and workshop (beginners guide Friday) were great. I really appreciate the opportunity to play the organ." (Organ player attending 2016 Festival events)

"The highlight for me was hearing the organ play with the handbells ... a completely new and delightful experience!" (MK50 Gala concert January 2017)

We are building, and satisfying, audience demand for quality organ and other types of music

"The Bruckner motets were fabulous especially with the organ, brass and choir in the loud bits." (Restoration Celebration concert by OU Choir, April 2016)

"I liked the wide range of varied sounds coming from the organ, especially the imaginative choice of stops for the works of Duruflé, Vierne and Jongen" (Roger Sayer Classic Masterworks Recital, Organ Festival 2016)

"Bach was beautiful and Lloyd Webber was a first for me - very worthwhile evening." (Roger Sayer Recital, Organ Festival September 2016)

"Fantastic - unbeatable. Not only does Jonathan Kingston play superbly, his introductions are a performance in their own right. He gives you something to listen for and notice in every piece." (Organ Festival 2016)

"The programme was fascinatingly varied and the performances were uniformly excellent. A concert worthy of the South Bank or Wigmore Hall. We were particularly impressed by the young trumpeter, who drew our attention every time he put the instrument to his lips." (Arco Strings, 1 October 2016)

"So good, conductor brilliant, organist brilliant, exhilarating!!" (Singer, Come & Sing, November 2016)

We offer the opportunity for social connection through music, with a warm welcome that's appreciated

"I so enjoyed the coffee morning with organ music, and meeting up with so many people I knew and a nice lady I made friends with. It is such a friendly church, so welcoming." (Musical Bite, March 2016)

"The exciting and dramatic Louis Vierne which I'd never heard before, the cups of tea provided, I loved all of it!" (Audience, 2016 Festival)

"What you have here is very special The people in this place are so welcoming, friendly, caring and considerate. You can feel it as you enter - and that is a rarity." (Roger Sayer, 2016 Festival Recitalist)

"Appreciated the friendly, very warm reception, excellent music, brilliant performance, inspirational." (Audience, 2016 Festival)

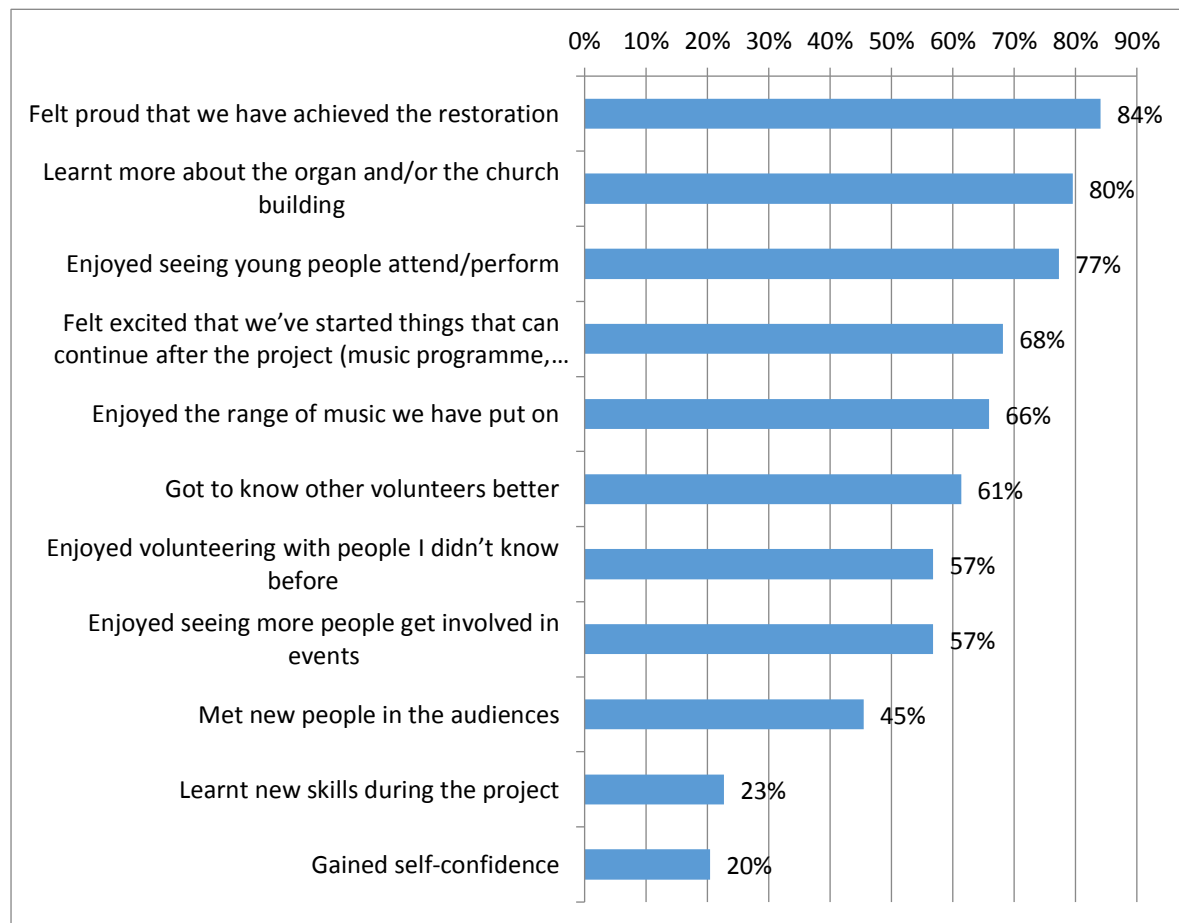
"Excellent choice of music and excellent cakes!" "excellent organisation, very friendly atmosphere." (Singers, Come & Sing, November 2016)

"I loved all the music, but the best thing was the great community feel to the whole event." (Audience, MK50 Gala Concert, January 2017)

2.3 Volunteer views

In an end of project survey (see Section 4) volunteers reported a range of impacts; many of them selected several different response options. The most popular are: feeling a sense of pride in the restoration of the organ, learning more about the organ and the church building as a result of volunteering on this project, seeing young people attend and perform at events in the church, enjoying the range of music we have put on ... and feeling excited that what we have started which can continue.

Social benefits (eg meeting new people in the audiences, getting to know other volunteers better) are also important.



Respondents to the survey said overwhelmingly that they were very likely to recommend Music for All @ SMSG to friends and family as somewhere to go to listen to music (88%), something that is rewarding to volunteer for (78%) and somewhere to go for good company (71%).

2.4 The story of our project in pictures

Restoration of the pipe organ



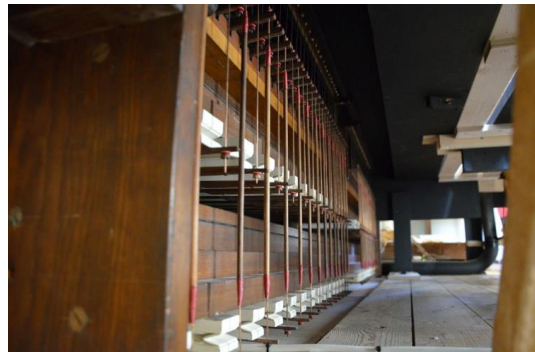
1. Learning about how reed pipes work at the Organ open day September 2014 during restoration



2. Steve Bayley explains about the restoration of the wind reservoirs at Parish visit to FH Browne & Sons Ltd organ building workshops, 20 January 2015



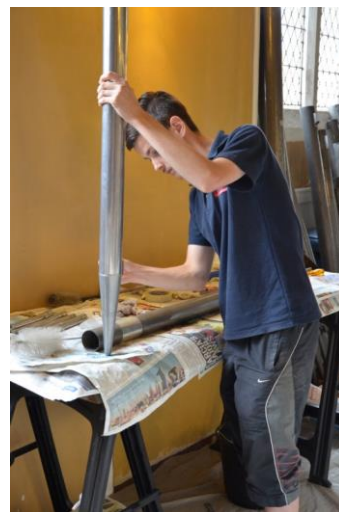
3. Lovely new leather for the next 30-40 years



4. Moving parts checked and repaired or replaced



5. Renovated timber soundboards



6. Pipe repair, cleaning and tuning took many hundreds of hours

Research into its history and production of interpretation and learning resources



7. Researching the history of the organ in Scotland and exploring its original home



8. Reading the information and history banners at the Inaugural organ recital, 30 April 2016



9. Discovering the history and restoration of the organ via the photo books



10. Filming Jonathan Kingston demonstrating the pipe organ for the video, 5 March 2016

Education activities programme



11. 8 year old child walking with Steve Bayley (organ builder) on the Great soundboards learning about slider action, Organ Open Day, June 2015



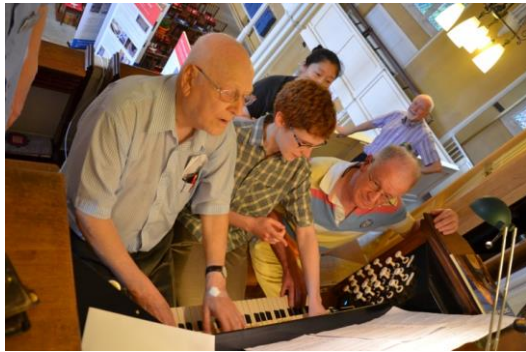
12. Children try the organ at the Teddy Bears' Picnic during the Organ Festival weekend



13. Year 10 visit to learn about the pipe organ on an educational visit, June 2016



14. Primary school children find out how wind gets to the pipes as Mr Salter explains, February 2016



15. Beginner's Guide workshop at the Organ Festival for budding organists of all ages

Volunteer guides in action



16. Volunteer event team



17. Volunteers greet singers at Come & Sing Day



18. Volunteer guide explaining the organ to a visitor

Community music programme 2016-17 –events using the restored organ



19. Inaugural Choral concert with The Open University Choir, Willis organ, brass and percussion, 23 April 2016



20. SMSG Church Band played *Highland Cathedral* with the Willis organ for the Queen's 90th birthday concert, 12 June 2016



21. Donald Mackenzie gave an outstanding accompaniment to the Silent Movie 'Safety Last' which was immensely popular at the Organ Festival weekend



22. Shanna Hart wowed the lunchtime crowd at one of our free lunchtime concerts held every Third Thursday at Twelve Thirty



23. 150 people singing at Come and Sing day with the organ 12 November 2016



24. Jacob Collins played the organ at the MK50 Community Gala Concert 28 January 2017 including a 50th anniversary song written for the occasion

(These 24 images from the project have been provided separately in high-res format for HLF use.)

3. What actually happened: project management

The Parochial Church Council delegated responsibility for the project to a Project Team with seven members:

Member	Background	Responsibility
Anna Page	Educational project leader at the Open University Former organ builder Founding fundraiser	Project Leader Historical research & recording Pipe sponsorship scheme Website, social media, publicity
Jane Wolfson	Retired owner/director of learning & development consultancy Chair of volunteer-run business	Project Management Learning Resources Data Management
Kieran Salter	Churchwarden and member of PCC Head teacher of local primary school	Restoration supplier contract Support for Youth Learning Programme
David Scrutton	Business systems developer Founding fundraiser Event leader	Events Team Leader (first 18 months) Events Leader and team member
Lesley Salter	Primary school teacher Member of PCC	Educational Visits & Organ Players programmes Events Team Leader (second 18 months)
Dave King	Musician Event Leader	Organ Learning introduction Events Leader and Educational Visits team member
Matthew Lucas	Management Consultant	Venue Information and Booking Tariff for use by other event promoters

Members of this team provided well over half of the estimated 618 volunteer days, value £147,500, which powered this project to a successful conclusion. It has been a major commitment for the team and results are due in large measure to their dedication and hard work. The team also organised £4,400 non-cash contributions towards the project. (See **HLF Project MfA Volunteer time & non-cash contributions** excel uploaded).

The Project Team met monthly in the first year and then bi-monthly. It employed the discipline of regular meetings with focused agendas, detailed minutes, regular reports against budget and schedule, quarterly internal evaluation (see section 4 below) and risk register review. Key risks we managed were:

- Impact of unavoidable schedule delay by the restorers, followed by a requirement from the PCC for a 'playing in period' prior to public use of the organ, which led to a 7-month delay in our planned relaunch of the restored organ, from September 2015 to April 2016, and necessitated a project extension and rescheduling of key activities.
- Project expenses exceeding budget due to the amount of work that was done on site requiring travel and accommodation costs; additional fundraising activities had to be arranged to cover these.
- At the outset, too much pressure on key volunteers, which has started to reduce as more volunteers have been recruited and are starting to take up leadership and support roles.

Financial management involved approval by the designated team member, and either the project leader or project manager, for all project purchases. Only the restoration contract exceeded £10,000 and this had been put out to tender and the result reported in our HLF bid. Banking services and finance reports for the project were provided by the volunteer PCC Treasurer.

4. What actually happened: project outcomes

In our bid we identified five key outcomes. We have made significant difference in each of these areas.

4.1 Heritage will be in better condition and better managed

The console of our three-generation Willis pipe organ had already been restored in 2011. This project covered all other restoration needed. All existing pipes were cleaned, repaired and brought to concert pitch, and extensive work undertaken to replace leather, repair wooden action parts, and enlarge the swell boxes. Work was undertaken on site and at the supplier's workshop (F.H. Browne & Sons Ltd in Canterbury).

The HLF-funded project inspired our team to raise funds for a concurrent project to fulfil the specification intended by Willis III by adding new Tierce, Nazard and Piccolo pipes in the Choir, 12 Viol pipes in the Pedal section and replacement of the stolen Waldhorn, bringing total pipes to 1,987. New casework was also added.

The project began in March 2014; the organ restoration started May 2014 and was completed in December 2015, by FH Browne & Sons Ltd. The restored organ first played for a service on 22 November 2015 St Cecilia's Day (patron Saint of Music) with the new pipes and casework fitted by middle of December, just in time for Christmas 2015. The work was inspected by the Diocesan Organ Adviser in January 2016 and considered good, and good value for money. (See *PCC letter re Completion of Pipe Organ Refurbishment*, uploaded).

Restoration Celebration Inaugural Concerts took place on 24 April 2016 (choir & organ), 30 April 2016 (organ solo) and 2 July 2016 (orchestra & organ) followed by the Organ Festival in September 2016 on Heritage Open Days weekend. At a Community Gala Concert on 28 January 2017 we celebrated both Milton Keynes' 50th birthday and 50 years of the organ in Stony Stratford, with a song written for the occasion and performed with organ accompaniment.

In the eleven months from April 2016 – February 2017 the organ has been used in 26 separate events, involving over 3,000 participants local, regional and national/international organists. The organists' feedback on the condition of the restored organ has been overwhelmingly positive regarding the quality and range of sound, and the robustness of the instrument. Audience feedback is equally enthusiastic.

One of those performing, Jonathan Kingston, was so impressed not only by the instrument but also by the lively development of the 'Music for All @ SMSG', that he applied for, and has been appointed to, the post of Director of Music from September 2017.

We have applied for the organ to be included in the British Institute of Organ Studies Historic Organ Listing register and we will know in May 2017 whether the organ has been accepted and what grading it will be awarded. In the meantime the restoration has been featured in an article in their annual publication "Organ Building" (vol 16, 2016).

We have established a Maintenance Plan that allows for three routine tuning sessions each year. A record is kept of minor faults also to be corrected at these sessions. We estimate the annual routine maintenance cost to be £2,000 pa. In addition, we are committed to raising £2,000 pa to be held in a restricted fund for periodic maintenance that occurs typically every 20-40 years (eg replacement of leather parts, cleaning of pipes). In this way, we will keep the organ in excellent working condition for the foreseeable future, without further need for grant support or major fundraising.

4.2 Heritage will be identified, recorded, and better explained

The construction, development and use of our Willis pipe organ was researched and recorded systematically for the first time as part of this project.

Records for St George's, Edinburgh (for which the organ was first built) were examined and contact made with those who knew of its use there during 1882-1962. In this way we have been able to identify both changes to the instrument and a number of key organists, who were celebrated in the programme for the Inaugural concert.

Local parish and community records in Stony Stratford were examined to trace work done and use of the instrument here since it was purchased by the PCC in 1967. Local residents were interviewed and members of the community have come forward with historic photographs and stories which have been captured in our learning materials.

Summaries of the history and restoration of our Willis pipe organ have been developed and published in a range of media:

- Pages of the Music for All @ SMSG website dedicated to the history and restoration work, including both overviews and pdfs of historic artefacts and detailed records
- A short free pamphlet available in the church and as a pdf online
- Two photo albums kept in the church which focus on visual elements of the history and restoration
- Seven illustrated pull-up banners for use at Music for All @ SMSG events in the church and also events for volunteers, with content also available online in A4 pdf format
- A 25-minute professional DVD for use in schools and in talks, with each section also available online in You Tube; a copy has also been lodged with the Living Archive organisation, which collects, preserves and shares the heritage and history of Milton Keynes
- An FAQs with answers list for volunteers, covering common questions about the organ and the church

Learning resources for Key Stages 1-4 have also been developed to provide a range of example lesson plans across the National Curriculum subjects. These are held online for use by learning groups planning visits; they guide teachers/group leaders to learning activities based on or around the heritage, restoration, workings and the use of pipe organs in general and this one in particular and its setting.

These have been and will continue to be adapted, adopted or personalised to meet individual schools' needs and will continue to grow in the future as updated examples are added. We already have lessons that cover each subject area as well as primary overview mind-maps showing the breadth of curriculum that can be addressed (such mind-maps are not applicable for National Curriculum expectations in Key Stages 3 and 4).

4.3 People will have learnt about heritage

4.3.1 Learning visits by young people

During the project 20 learning visits to the church have been made by a total of 490 pupils spanning Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4, and their accompanying adults and from 9 different local schools and community organisations. (See *MfA Visits List* excel uploaded.)

The sessions have introduced pupils to the pipe organ and also to other instruments in the church (bells, hand Belleplates, grand piano) and have received very positive feedback from pupils and teachers/group leaders alike.

A typical visit

Young people are divided into small groups and they rotate around four stations, with activities and explanations adjusted by the volunteer guide team to their age group. The stations are:

Organ - seeing, hearing (Jacob playing, Kieran talking) going inside the organ and looking at the stops, blowing a pipe (small ones donated by Browne's)

Piano - seeing inside, touching strings, playing notes, using pedals, talk and playing by Dave.

Belleplates - quick talk about them and demonstration of how to play. Then group play something which they can sing and play, for example 'Twinkle, Twinkle' or the National Anthem. Lesley.

Tower Bells - climb to the ringing chamber - see the ropes, hear a bell rung. Kieran.

Visit ends with all children going up to watch Jacob play Widor's Toccata; a massed ring and sing with all children and all adults; question time; and Dave playing songs to sing along to on the piano.

Young people's visits – survey findings (February 2017)

We invited teachers/youth group leaders to give feedback on their visit experience (9 teachers/group leaders in total: 1 Secondary school, 2 Infant schools, 3 Junior schools, 1 Guides, 2 Beavers). Six responded, from across all groups; their responses are summarised below.

Responses about arrangements for the visits were overwhelmingly positive.

None of the groups knew about pipe organs before their visit. Five of the teachers/group leaders considered that their group learnt a lot about the pipe organ during the visit (and the sixth made clear it had been a visit for pleasure in music, which they had gained).

All the respondents said their group had enjoyed the visit and that the visit was pitched at the right level for their group. All elements of the visit were considered to be very useful, with 'how the pipe organ works' and 'how bell ringing is done in the tower' coming out as most popular.

Two thirds of those who responded did not follow up their visit with any other learning activities about the organ. The two groups which did were Infants (key stage 1) and the Secondary (key stage 3 & 4). However, 5 said they would use the [newly published] Music for All @ SMSG learning resources after their visit.

Two thirds of the respondents said they would book a return visit for their group in the same academic year, to do a related activity/expand into another subject area/provide a performing opportunity. Most would also bring the same group back again in a year's time, with one (key stage 2) choosing 2 years' time.

Two thirds of the respondents said they would certainly add this visit to their annual visit programme, with the other third responding they would probably put this on their visit programme. No respondent said that they would not consider future visits.

Overwhelmingly the respondents said they would recommend Music for All @ SMSG to colleagues/friends or family as a good place for an educational visit, for a fun visit about music in church, for information about churches, and/or somewhere to go to listen to music. This seems to be as a result of the visit, since attendance at Music for All @ SMSG events was mixed, with one third of the respondents never having attended a concert there, and only one-third of respondents on the monthly emailing list.

4.3.2 Community learning during restoration

During the restoration we held two Open Days (on Heritage Open Days in 2014 and 2015) so that local people could see restoration work first hand and talk with the restorers and project team. These were attended by a total of 400 people. In addition, we arranged a coach party visit for 27 people to the restoration workshop to see the work on leather, tuning, wood and action repairs being undertaken there.

4.3.3 Learning by visitors to the church and to Music for All @ SMSG events

All visitors are able to access the pamphlets, photo albums and banner information about the pipe organ. Volunteers are badged so that it is easy to find someone to talk to, and 'meet & greet' (and say goodbye) has become an established team role. Volunteers have a FAQs briefing sheet and copies of the interpretation banners to hand so that they can answer the most common questions.

We note that visitors are also interested in the Grade 2* listed church building in which the organ is housed, and in the wider context of Stony Stratford as one of the old parishes in the new city of Milton Keynes. We have timed our annual Willis Pipe Organ Festival to coincide with Heritage Open Days in September so that we can stimulate interest not only in the organ but other local heritage. For example, in 2016 we staged a well-received exhibition of photographs of the church and its setting. We hope in future to link with other heritage sites and organisations in the town, so that Stony Heritage as a whole can become better known.

4.3.4 Learning by volunteers

'Finding out about the organ, its history and restoration' was a motivating factor for two-thirds of all volunteers. All those who have been involved in the project report anecdotally that they have learned significant amounts about the heritage of our Willis pipe organ and what makes it special.

4.3.5 Learning from the website

Our website www.musicforallsmg.org combines information about the history and restoration of the organ with information on all our events, visits and other programmes. Since February 2017 we have been running an open-ended survey on the website; so far twenty people have responded.

Website visitors' views

Key reasons for visiting the site at the time of the survey were to find out about forthcoming musical events (67%), about the restoration of the organ (55%), and the history of the organ (50%). Of those responding, 70% thought it was easy to find the right information; comments showed that most difficulties related to locating surveys (which we have since relocated). 16 comments were made about the site; 12 of these were positive (eg "clear, well structured, easy to use"; "very informative – there was a lot more here than I was expecting, I thought it was just going to be about fundraising but I got hooked into reading all about the history"). The remainder suggest that the amount of information can be overwhelming; upcoming events are not obvious, the first page is too busy, and a search function would be useful.

90% of respondents attend Music for All @ SMSG events and 85% are on our monthly mailing list. Two-thirds are members of a choir, orchestra or band and almost all have some connection with the world of music. 68% fall into the 50-70 age group, and a further 26% are over 70. Geographically, only 53% live in Stony Stratford itself, 10% within Milton Keynes, and 32% within a 35 mile radius, showing the value of the website to attract and maintain contact with people outside the immediate vicinity. However, we need to think further about how to use the website to attract new, and younger, audiences.

From the 2014-15 season onwards, we have been systematically evolving the Community Music Programme into specific strands with different purposes, as follows (this system is still evolving as we learn what works to bring people in):

Strand	Activities
1	<p>Music for All @ SMSG events: concerts we choose to organise ourselves; largely free and often in the daytime, this strand has a focus on social engagement and providing opportunities for young people. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Thursday at Twelve Thirty: described as “45 minutes of fun and popular music. Bring your lunch and enjoy as much tea and coffee as your lunchtime will allow. All ages welcome – bring a friend or work colleague, someone who would otherwise be eating alone, or a parent and child who would welcome some lunchtime entertainment!” • Come & Sing day: normally a major musical work in a day on Remembrance Saturday; regularly attracts 150+ singers, with many repeat attenders, and in 2016 was for the first time held with organ. Ticketed to serve as a key fundraising event as well. • Concerts by our own performing groups: Church Band and Handbell groups, Parish Singers, music groups at the church school. • First Friday Organ Recitals: new from June 2017, bi-monthly short recitals with the emphasis on light music and the option to enjoy soup and a roll beforehand.
2	<p>Events organised by other groups, using the church as venue for suitable music performances on a tariff that contributes to our funds while sharing the risk with promoters. These broaden awareness of the organ and our wider programme, provide diversity and give a showcase to musical talent in the wider Milton Keynes area. We are targeting, and achieving, 12 events each year in this category.</p>
3	<p>Annual Pipe Organ Festival Held over Heritage Open Days weekend with a large number of free events and two or three ticketed evening events to ensure we cover costs and raise funds towards maintenance. Includes some 8-10 activities events targeted at different audience groups.</p>
4	<p>Community Gala events which use and celebrate local musical talent; planned to be biennial. The first was held at the end of the HLF project, celebrating the 50th birthday of Milton Keynes and 50 years of the Willis organ in Stony Stratford.</p>
5	<p>Outreach activities which take music out onto the streets and squares of the town and also into care homes and community groups across the city and neighbouring area. We also support singing in a local sheltered housing scheme and provide regular musical entertainment there.</p>
6	<p>Visits by primary and secondary schools and community groups, and a range of ‘Beginners Guides’ events for novice players and organists new to our Willis organ.</p>
7	<p>Fundraising events and activities with no, or only incidental music: these include 6 winter coffee mornings, a ‘golden spot’ tombola at Christmas Lights Switch-On day, a pipe sponsorship scheme, and – new for 2017 – a buffet dinner at a local Indian restaurant</p>
8	<p>Volunteer events: tea parties, coffee mornings, update and review meetings</p>

4.4.2 Players Programme

Four 'Beginners Guide' sessions for novices and for players new to our organ (one targeted at school pupils, one illustrated talk at the keyboard, one 'open house' hands on session, and one visit by the Bucks Organists Association) have enabled 113 people to access the organ post-restoration so far.

A 'Getting Started on the Willis Organ' guide has been developed to help new players get to grips with our organ's technology.

The organ is now used regularly by five learners, for both lessons and individual practice. In the eleven months since restoration the organ has been used for over 200 hours of private practice and rehearsal – the equivalent of half a day a week.

Now the main project is finished, volunteers are keen to raise funds to support organ scholarships in future for young people (see section 5).

One player describes the difference the Players programme makes:

A player's progress

"I learned to play the organ at school, but not particularly well or confidently. I wasn't associated with a church so my first attempts at service playing were during my first job. I gave up playing when I was 25 and starting working overseas.

I started to try to get back into it about 4 years ago after moving to Whitchurch, near Aylesbury. Inevitably I got roped into playing for occasional services long before I was ready. Aylesbury itself is a pipe organ desert. Joining the Buckinghamshire Organists' Association has been very helpful in broadening my experience, but it is rare to get more than about 15 minutes playing time on any instrument during one of their 'organ crawls'. So I contacted SMSG via the excellent website to see if I could book some practice time.

Practising at SMSG has been enormously helpful for several reasons:

- I've never had regular access to a 3 manual instrument before. Getting used to the Great as the middle manual rather than the lowest one, as well as being able to use the Choir division, has been very good experience.
- I've never played electro-pneumatic action from a detached console before. It has a different 'feel' to the Victorian tracker action I'm used to.
- I've never played to an echo before. When I started, I wasn't sure whether it was me playing or the echo coming back to me!
- The range of tone colours available is really good for experimenting with different registrations. The new Choir upperwork, the Swell strings, the contrasting flutes across the three manuals, the soft reeds, and the diapason choruses on both Swell and Great are all very fine. The bigger reeds, a Willis speciality, are magnificent. The Swell Cornopean is just right for trumpet solos, but I must admit I still find the Great Trumpet and Pedal Trombone quite startling and use them with care!

I'm now playing more frequently for services at Whitchurch and have started to get my nerves under control. I still have the occasional disaster, but it is slowly getting better (I think!)."

(Bryan Moseley, participant in the Players Programme)

4.5 People will have enjoyed volunteering and our organisation will be more resilient

4.5.1 Recruitment

Currently 96 volunteers are 'live' on our register. Of these, one-third were volunteers in the fundraising project prior to the HLF project starting; the other 64 have been recruited during the project, with a clear increase in this final 10 months (27 compared to 18/19 in the previous two years) when the restoration was complete and the visits and music programme in full swing. This is a 200% increase in volunteering and way beyond our target of 40 new volunteers.

Two-thirds of our volunteers are women. Largely, but not exclusively, they are active retired people with time to give, in the over-50 age range. They are united in a passion for music, its contribution to wellbeing, and a desire to support the mission of Music for All @ SMSG: to promote access to a wide range of music performed by a broad range of talent, with a focus on providing performance opportunities for young, developing, and local musicians.

Recruitment to date has been largely by word of mouth, although we also have publicity in the church, on the website, and at events. Most (85%) of our volunteers come from within the church, which is gratifying in that prior to the project we were told there was no more volunteer time to be had, but clearly the project has inspired many more people to donate both time and money.

Some 15% of our volunteers are not part of the church family; this is a small but growing proportion, demonstrating the start of a wider reach into the community.

4.5.2 Deployment and development

In the life of this project, there have been 844 episodes of volunteering across 167 events ie average 5 volunteers per event. Each volunteer on average supports 4 events per year, but the range is wide: during the last eleven months 12 have volunteered monthly, 14 bi-monthly, 48 occasionally, and 17 have not done so in this period although they have been active in previous years.

During the life of the project we have been able to define a range of different roles; some volunteers fulfil only one, others fulfil several, according to their time, skills, and interests. We have seen growth in numbers in all roles – for example, at the start of the HLF project we had 11 people prepared to lead events; now we have 17.

Role		Role	
Leader	17	Organ explainer	6
Meet & greet	26	Performer	5
Kitchen crew	16	Blog	8
Cake maker	26	Photos	8
Server	18	Publicity	8
Furniture mover	4	Box Office	4
Technical team	4	Management team	6
Money counter	4	Other	6

Volunteer support learning resources have been developed and tested and are now in place: an Event Leader's Guide, a Venue Guide to assist with bookings by other organisations, a Counting Sheet, and FAQs briefing to enable volunteers to answer common questions about the organ and the church.

4.5.3 Retention

Growing numbers of volunteers during the project prompted us to initiate some regular volunteer update and review coffee mornings and tea parties; these were held in July 2015, April 2016, July 2016, September 2016 and February 2017. They are attended by about one-third of volunteers.

There is an open invitation to become part of the Events Team monthly meeting; currently 18 volunteers are on this list and meetings are attended by around ten people each month.

It is felt that regular contact face to face is most useful in communicating volunteering opportunities, achievements and requirements. However, particularly if we are to recruit more people from the community as volunteers, we may need to review both written communications and meeting opportunities to ensure we are equally inclusive to all volunteers.

Over the three years of the project, 13 volunteers have left the register: half due to changing interests, half to moves away, illness or death, Volunteer turnover is running at under 5% per year, which seems reasonable.

4.5.4 Time donated

This project has been entirely run by volunteers. An estimate of time for the different elements is summarised as follows; when costed at HLF rates this totals 618 days at value £147,500. This far exceeds the days/value we expected when we compiled our bid (400 days/£102,000):

Aspect	Days	%
Project management and leadership	184	30%
Restoration management	12	2%
Historical research and recording	18	3%
Development of learning resources	80	13%
Visits programme	20	3%
Recruitment and training of volunteers	45	7%
Community Music programme with organ (April 2016-February 2017)***	259	42%

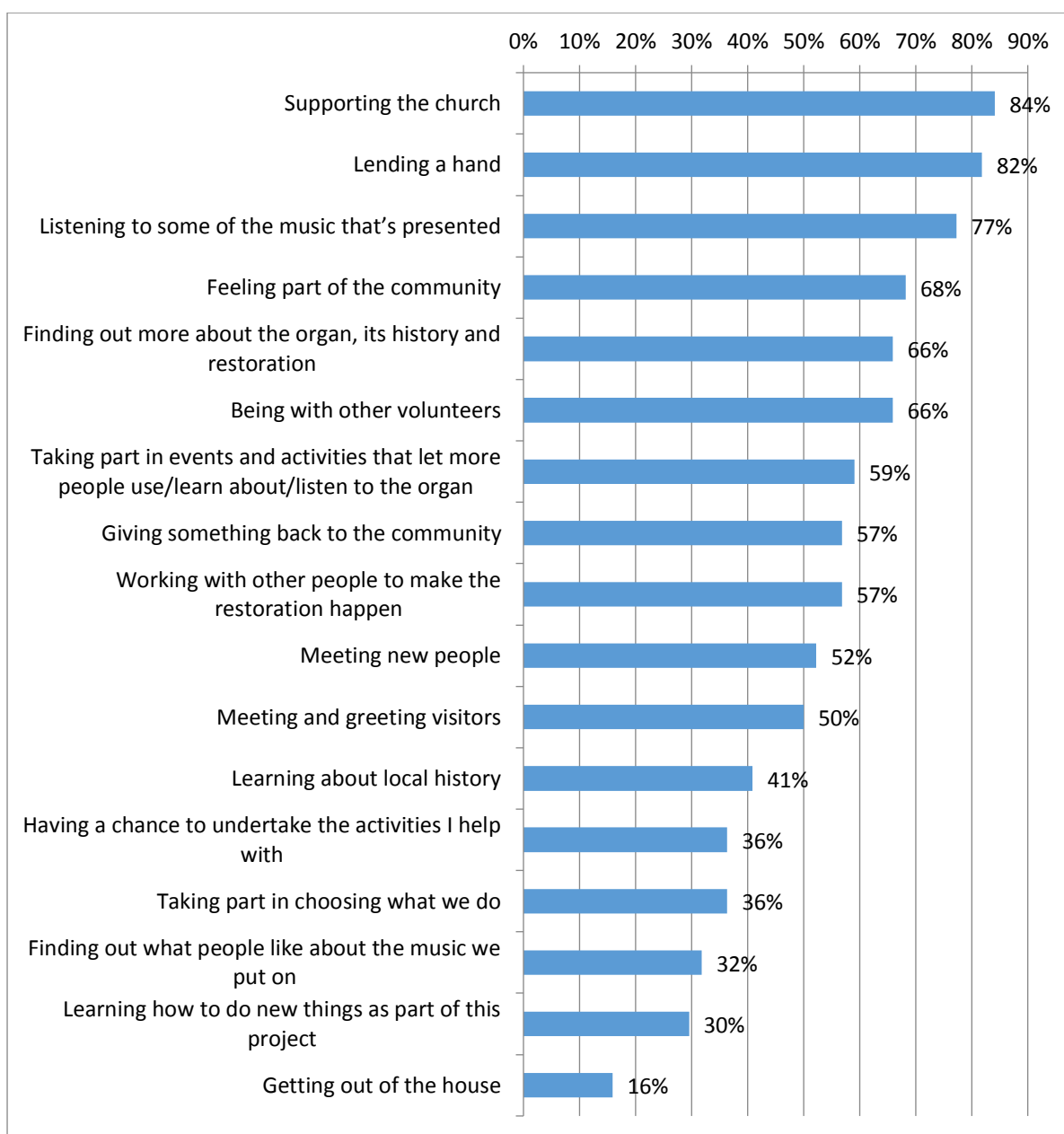
*** **Note:** a similar level of volunteer involvement each year additionally went into the Music for All @ SMSG fundraising programme during 2014 and 2015, while the organ was being restored, in order to raise funds for the New Pipes & Casework and other projects

4.5.4 Enjoyment and gain from the experience

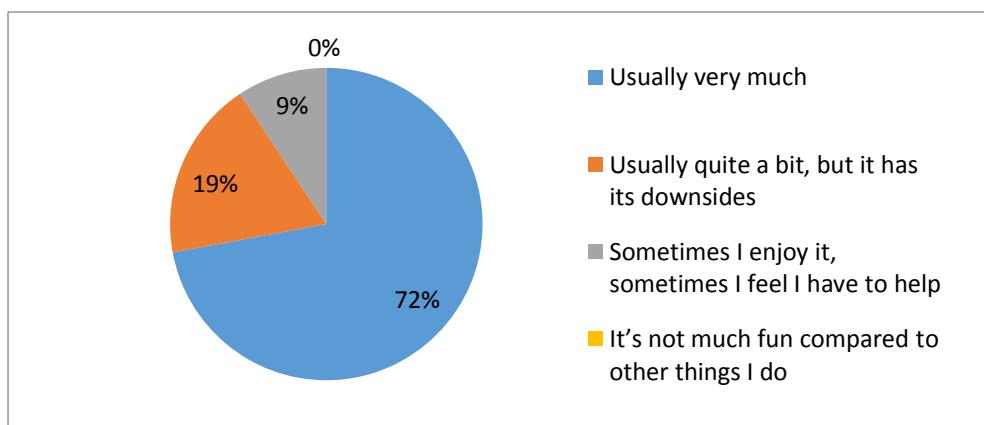
We received 44 responses (from 96 volunteers) to a survey in February – March 2017 offered in online and paper format. Key points emerging from the survey are:

Roles: volunteers participate in a wide variety of roles, with the most often performed roles including serving refreshments, meeting and greeting at events, moving furniture at events and baking cakes. A much smaller percentage participate in technical support for events, running the box office, explaining the organ at school visits and events, leading events and organising rotas, taking photos and blogging events. Over a third of volunteers who responded have also performed at events.

Reasons to volunteer: Volunteers had a variety of reasons why they volunteer for MfA@SMSG with many of them selecting several different options. The top five are 'supporting the church' (84%), 'lending a hand' (82%), listening to the music' (77%), 'feeling part of the community' (68%), and 'finding out about the organ, its history and restoration' (66%), 'being with other volunteers' (66%). The full list is shown in the chart below:



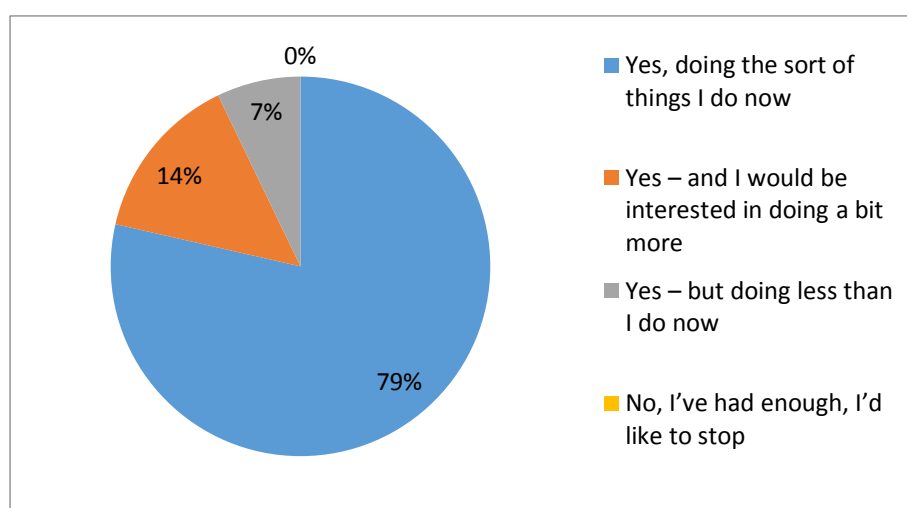
Enjoyment: Overwhelmingly the volunteers who responded enjoy volunteering at SMSG very much, with a small number feeling obliged to help, as by responses to the question: How much have you enjoyed the volunteering you have done?



Improving the volunteering experience in future: of the options offered in the survey, 25% of volunteers wanted more meetings with other volunteers to find out what is going on; 20% wanted to be able to influence what we do next; 18% wanted more chance to do things. More training and mentoring and written updates or project progress were each requested by 14%. Only 9% said there should be less to do.

Looking ahead – future fundraising goals: Volunteers were asked what future goals they would support, over and above the need to fundraise to cover organ and piano maintenance. The most popular choice is to raise funds for improved access to the church building (55%), closely followed by organ scholarships for young people (50%). General restoration of the church building is also important to 41% of respondents, closely followed by raising funds for local charities, with Willen Hospice being the most popular suggestion.

Looking ahead – continued participation in volunteering: Encouragingly, the vast majority of volunteers are happy to go on doing the sort of things they already do for Music for All @ SMSG, with an encouraging 14% willing to do more and no-one wishing to stop entirely, as the chart below shows:



Free-form feedback comments in the survey were overwhelmingly positive about the 'Music for All @ SMSG' volunteering experience so far, but gave some useful reminders about issues that some feel need addressing, including succession planning, reaching out further into the community, and ensuring good volunteering opportunities for each individual.

4.5.5 Organisational resilience

Ongoing recruitment has meant that the load of running events is now much better shared and volunteers are more upbeat and positive about future plans. Achieving the restoration has given a huge impetus to the long term plans for Music for All @ SMSG and an Away Day is booked for September 2017, to devise an organisational structure and development plan for the next three years. We are keen to develop further our visit, community music and players programmes. There is also excitement both about being able to extend the range of events we undertake that do not necessarily need to raise funds, and about being able to use organ and other musical events to fundraise for causes other than the organ.

The further recruitment, development and support of volunteers, particularly those willing to undertake leadership roles, both for events and for the organisation as a whole, and to undertake regular administration and communications activities, will be important to maintain momentum.

Succession planning is important too; we successfully weathered a change of Events Team Leader mid-project, but we need to focus on team-building to create a talent pool for the future.

5. Review: what worked well (or not) and why

This section reviews our achievements against our five outcomes. In some cases we identify work still to be done beyond the HLF project timeframe.

5.1 Heritage condition and management

What worked well and why

The procurement process provided a supplier that was cost-effective and competent, and the restoration work is agreed to be of quality.

When during dismantling we discovered walls that needed cleaning and repainting behind the organ to avoid dust getting into the restored pipes, and organ frames that needed repositioning to facilitate future maintenance – things that could not have been known before the work started. Our HLF case officer was helpful in assuring us that budget sums could be vired to cover these extra works.

Conscious of the need to responsibly maintain the restored organ, the Project Management Team prioritised the need to have a Maintenance Plan in place from the outset of the project and this has been actively delivered since the end of restoration and the start of the 2016-17 programming.

What didn't work well and why

Contract management was challenging due the supplier not providing schedules in advance or keeping to agreed timescales (due to the pressure of other projects); we had an unexpected lull, which caused the cancellation of the 2015 Festival plan and its replacement with an Open Day. This lull, coupled with a new requirement from the Diocesan Organ Adviser for a significant bedding in period before the organ was used for public performance, required us to seek a project extension of six months, with a temporary knock-on effect on volunteer energy.

We did not fully explore where the works contracted would be undertaken, and found that we were presented with bills for expenses, on which VAT could not be reclaimed, which were higher than we had anticipated in our budget. We would have expected the supplier to make these clear at the outset, based on their extensive experience of carrying out restorations.

5.2 Heritage recording and explanation

What worked well and why

One member of the project team took responsibility for the research activity, and two others for the development of community and school learning resources respectively. Each had a professional background and interest and relevant skills to bear. In this way there was highly focussed delivery.

We successfully built support teams to work with us to prepare the interpretation and learning resources (DVD, banners, schools materials), where in each case we worked not only with colleague volunteers but also with specialist advisers and suppliers (DVD company, museums expert, learning design expert, teachers).

What didn't work well and why

However, we were less successful in building a heritage research team and the load fell heavily on our one volunteer and the work ran later than schedule, putting some pressures on interpretation resource

completion. We did not do as much as we intended originally to gather oral history and involve local people in the research; however, the web pages are updateable and we can deepen our records over time.

5.3 Heritage learning

What worked well and why

All the main strands of our learning programme – visits by young people, community learning during and post-restoration, post-restoration visitors to the church, volunteer team learning – have been well received anecdotally, with positive comments and excitement about seeing, and finding out, about aspects of the organ that people knew little or nothing about.

What didn't work well and why

We found it more difficult than expected to recruit schools for the visit programmes – though those that do come clearly find their visits enjoyable and instructive (see Section 4.3 above). The key barriers seem to be the need for expensive coach transport, the 'competition' we face from other school visit locations in the area, such as Bletchley Park, and the demands of other areas of the curriculum. Many schools have a regular pattern of visits which they repeat each year – so despite our 'free' offer there is significant resistance to accepting a new visit venue. Despite this, and the complications of timetable restrictions in getting secondary pupils out for a visit, when visits have taken place, schools have re-booked and come again. We understand that pipe organs will be included in the revised GCSE syllabus and this may help us reach pupils more widely across the city in time; but we think that the best recruitment tool in the coming years will be sharing information about the successful visits we have provided, and the messages passed from one teacher to another.

5.4 Heritage engagement and enjoyment

What worked well and why

The work we are doing in the Visits Programme show that we can engage young people from all backgrounds.

The work we are doing on the Players Programme shows that the organ has a growing reputation as a resource for developing new skills, with a teacher or as a self-taught adult, relevant to playing a Victorian pipe organ.

HLF support for publicity and promotion for the Community Music Programme enabled us to experiment with more and different media for attracting audiences, in particular for the Pipe Organ Festival. The new poster display boards and banners around the building clearly do draw people in. For the Festival we also invested in:

- distribution services so that we could print and circulate more flyers
- online Box Office services
- Advertisements in local music event and national organ magazines.

Where online ticket customers for the Festival told us where they'd heard about it, it was clear that the flyers had had the biggest impact, followed by word of mouth, which clearly we need to encourage:

- Flyers: 33%
- Word of mouth: 25%
- Other (eg our monthly enews): 17%
- Posters: 10%
- Advertising, press, social media, each accounted for only 5%

Overall we have trebled our annual participation numbers since the pre-restoration years, and trebled our monthly events email list. Anecdotally we are, slowly, bringing in audiences who have not been into the church before, or who rarely, if ever, go to classical music concerts; and we are starting to widen our audience base beyond the local community, as is evident from post-codes for people booking online for our major ticketed events (the Inaugural Concerts, Festival evening concerts, Come & Sing day).

Reviewing this growth in participation numbers, we think our key success factors are:

- the varied nature of our music programming
- offering many events as free entry, with donations invited
- putting on events during lunchtimes or afternoons
- ensuring music is introduced
- providing a warm welcome (if not always a warm church building!)
- combining organ with voice, other instruments, and film
- offering a range of concert types
- providing excellent refreshments
- giving opportunities for young people to perform
- encouraging young people to attend (eg local school lunch time attendance, free entry for children to ticketed events)
- actively promoting the use of the venue, with a risk-sharing fee structure, by other promoters during the course of each season, thereby getting to know their followers too
- providing information about events through posters, leaflets, website, monthly enews mailing
- using online ticketing to encourage people living within our 35-mile target radius (the area within which we believe we have the best example of a Willis pipe organ).

Of 22 separate events involving the organ, 11 events were recitals only: average attendance 70 (which our recitalists tell us is typical, though to us it seems small). The other 11 combined the organ with singing, band, handbells, orchestra, or film: average attendance 190. This suggests that reaching out with the organ may best be done as part of an event rather than being the sole focus. However, in the 2017-18 season we are testing 'First Friday' lunchtime organ recitals to see whether we can build audiences for organ only events.

What didn't work well and why

Advertising produced extremely disappointing returns for the money spent and we would invest in other media in future.

While we have introduced more people to the heritage, many of them are the same type of audience as pre-restoration (older, white, local) and we need to work on developing programming that reaches out more widely, to families, working age audiences, and people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The numbers on the Players Programme are still small and we have not yet had the time or resources to develop ongoing outreach activities such as 'open play' sessions or organ bursaries for young people. However, the latter is clearly something that volunteers would be motivated to achieve (see section 4.5).

5.5 Volunteer time, enjoyment and resilience

What worked well and why

Personal contact in recruitment, mentoring into identified roles that volunteers feel confident to take on, and appreciative volunteer leadership have been crucial success factors in building volunteer numbers year on year. Bi-annual volunteer meetings and regular monthly event meetings open to all have also helped to bond

volunteers and deepen commitment. The risk of volunteer fatigue has receded as, on the one hand the project has come ever closer to successful completion, and on the other, there are more people clearly willing and wanting to share in the ongoing development and delivery of the Learning and Music programmes.

When we first asked volunteers to wear badges in 2015, a common response was ‘why, we know each other’ - but it quickly became clear how much visitors appreciated the badges so they could pick out people who could help them, and badges are now routinely worn by all members of the team.

The volunteer survey (see Section 4.5 above) shows a high level of satisfaction and commitment; we think this is not least because many of our ‘lessons learnt’ (see Section 6 below) have been about volunteer management and developing this as we went along.

What didn’t work well and why

Written attempts to broaden recruitment from a wider range of people within the community (eg calls for volunteers in articles, notices, mentions at events and on feedback cards) have had a low response rate.

There are signs that ‘bring a friend or family member’ may be more successful (9 new volunteers this year compared to 3 in each of the previous periods). However, this risks not diversifying our volunteer team.

We still need to put a new organisational structure and three-year plan in place to follow on from the HLF Project Team. This will include succession planning, recruitment that helps us to diversify our team, deployment that uses everyone’s skills and offers opportunities to those who want to do more, plus retention planning. Volunteer management is key to our long-term success.

5.6 Project management

What worked well and why

Having a small Project Team of volunteers with professional experience in all the relevant disciplines (contract management, project management, organ building and repair, organ performance, learning resource development, event management, volunteer management) meant that there was effective leadership on all aspects of the project and clear responsibilities for delivery of the different elements.

The use of project management disciplines and tools (see Section 3) enabled us to focus on activities needed to keep the project on track.

The relationship with our HLF project officer was helpful and positive at all times, so that we were confident that changes to plan and to expenditure were acceptable before they were implemented.

What didn’t work well and why

The one schedule delay was due to supply chain issues for the restoration company which were unforeseeable and beyond our control. Working within the volunteer-based PCC finance system meant that at times finance payments and reporting were slow, due to other demands on the Finance Officer’s time; however this too was beyond the control of the project team.

The workload for the Project Team was heavier than we anticipated and at times was a struggle for individuals working largely on their own. In retrospect we could well have spent longer at the outset trying to set up a slightly larger Project Team with sub-groups in key areas.

5.7 How much of the difference would have happened anyway?

The short answer, we believe, is 'None'.

None of the 'after' differences we describe on page 5 would have happened.

As stated in our bid, the organ was deteriorating faster than we could fundraise to save it. In the three years covered by the project we might have continued the small community music programme we were running and raised at most £30,000 based on previous track record; but we would have had to pay for urgent repairs to keep the organ playable and in the meantime restoration costs would have risen as a result of both inflation and further deterioration. There would never have come a point at which we would have raised enough on our own to restore the organ.

Without the HLF grant we would not have been able to restore the organ, research and publicise its heritage, and help people learn about it; we would not have had a suitable instrument with which to run our visits programme, the organ-related elements of our community music programme, or the organ players' programme. There would have been no inspiration for more volunteers to become active/more active and engaged in what has clearly been rewarding activity both individually and collectively.

Equally, without the stimulus of HLF funding to enable the restoration to go ahead, we would not have risen to the challenge of tackling the concurrent New Pipes & Casework project, which has also been completed successfully. Nor would we have raised funds to cover extra project costs and first year maintenance, and support the church building Greater Access Project. Thank you, HLF.

6. Summary of lessons learnt

6.1 Learning and improving as we went through the project

The Project Team decided to review progress in a quarterly evaluation report, which we shared with our HLF case officer. After the first report we asked for her feedback and she suggested that we were covering the ground that we would need for this final report but that we should consciously capture 'lessons learnt'.

By the end of the project we had captured, and acted on, 66 'lessons learnt'. These can be grouped under the following six headings. As a project team we had more experience in project, visit, and event management than in volunteer management, music programming planning and marketing, and our learning curves in the latter areas are illustrated by the example points below. We are still, surprising ourselves with what we learn on a monthly basis and will maintain this 'reflective practice' to help us improve what we do as we go along.

Volunteers (20 items) eg: *"Volunteer Coffee Mornings are a good thing to do! We've had so many positive comments and thanks for our 'Thank you Volunteer Coffee Morning' in February. They help volunteers see who else is involved. Keep them going!" "Wearing badges has become 'part of what we do' and it is clear at events that this helps audience members seek out 'someone who knows'." "The acquisition of a small team willing and able to turn the church chairs through 180 degrees for organ concerts has been momentous." "Generally it is more efficient if one person has overall charge of the event (or if, having booked the event and then can't be there, then a deputy is assigned who knows exactly what has been done and what is left to do)."*

Programme planning (18 items) eg: *"Our new tariff system has worked well and we are fully booked for this season (though more organ usage is always welcome)." "Although the Third Thursday @ Twelve-Thirty concerts were 'a leap of faith', we do have them booked already right through into 2016 and people already want to return to have another go!" "Ensure that events are not also performed locally only a few weeks before."*

Marketing (13 items) eg: *"Online booking definitely brings in people from the wider 30 mile radius that we cannot reach by local publicity and word of mouth alone." "Advertising doesn't pay! But leafleting probably does."*

Management (6 items) eg: *"The need for tight supplier management throughout the contract so that issues are understood sooner and impacts can be discussed at appropriate times".*

Events (5 items) eg: *"We are beginning to turn chairs to face the west door for 'organ only' performances. It is nice to see the performers when they are introducing a piece, and to face the source of the sound, also to see the organist in action."*

Visits (4 items) eg: *"Being able to see inside or get inside the organ has a 'wow' factor." "We need to train up some other presenters for visits, to avoid one person running two activities."*

6.2 What might we do differently next time?

Beyond these practical lessons learnt during the project, there are some structural issues which, on reflection, we would tackle differently another time and/or still need to implement. These are:

1. Run a procurement process with a fuller assessment of supplier project management and budgeting capabilities, drawing on the skills of a specialist procurement adviser and project manager. (We passed this suggestion to our colleague restoration team for our Greater Access Project, and they have adopted it for that project. We also gave feedback to the supplier about scheduling and expenses costing.)

2. Build a slightly bigger Project Team, so that, for example, Fundraising & Finance, Evaluation, Volunteer Leader are separate roles, rather than being entwined with Project Management and Events Leader roles.
3. Build support teams around each 'area lead' on the Project Team from the outset, so that the management workload is shared and there is less strain on individual team members – for example, develop Refreshment Team Manager, Publicity Manager, Data Manager, Communications Officer, and other defined support roles.
4. Set up better systems for routinely gathering quantitative, as well as qualitative, evidence of learning gain, and for gathering demographic data on audiences so that we can better assess and review 'reach' into the community and our designated 35-mile radius.
5. Develop more and different recruitment and involvement/support strategies to diversify our volunteer team.
6. Give more attention to strategies for engaging with schools and community groups right across the city area to encourage more of them to access what we can offer, not just our local schools.