From street busking to Wells Cathedral...

AS SHE sang for an audience of shoppers while busking in Glastonbury, Charlotte Akenhead could never have imagined she would one day perform at some of the UK's most iconic sites and venues.

On a warm summer afternoon, the young soprano attracted a sizeable crowd while performing choral music in Glastonbury.

Among those listening was Rollo Maughfling, Britain's Archdruid, who has spent decades leading ceremonies at Stonehenge and is known around the country.

As the performance in Glastonbury came to an end, Charlotte mentioned she would be busking again the following day in Wells.

Rollo travelled to Wells to hear her perform once more and afterwards, the pair met for lunch at The Crown.

With Wells Cathedral visible above the city skyline, Rollo asked Charlotte what her greatest ambition was.

Pointing towards the Cathedral, she replied that her dream was to sing there. His answer was simple: "Done."

What followed was an unlikely friendship and a lasting source of encouragement. Rollo became a valued supporter, helping nurture Charlotte's ambition of one day performing at the cathedral.

The story later took an unexpected turn when Charlotte was invited to sing at a Stonehenge Equinox gathering.

While these experiences helped make her story unique, Charlotte continued to build an impressive professional career.

Beginning in a south-east London church choir at the age of nine, she went on to undertake specialist opera training in Portugal, perform internationally, sing with the London Philharmonic Choir,



appear at the BBC Proms and, more recently, perform alongside renowned tenor Paul Potts at Blackpool's Winter Gardens Opera House.

Now, the dream first spoken aloud in Wells is becoming reality.

On November 27, Charlotte will return to the city to present Callas Candlelight Christmas at Wells Cathedral, celebrating the music and legacy of legendary soprano Maria Callas in the atmospheric surroundings of one of Somerset's most treasured buildings.

"For Charlotte, the concert represents far more than another performance date," a spokesperson said.

"It is the fulfilment of a long-held ambition and a reminder of how unexpected encounters, encouragement and community support can help turn dreams into reality."

■ *Callas Candlelight Christmas, featuring soprano Charlotte Akenhead, takes place at Wells Cathedral on November 27. For more information, and to book tickets, visit www.wellscathedral.org.uk/whats-on?event=139292528.*

SOUTH SOMERSET GREEN PARTY invites you to our monthly meetings, held on the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 7pm in the Speedwell Hall, Crewkerne, TA18 7HY