

Talking in Tune

**Annual Report and Accounts
for year ending 31 March 2025**



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A message from the Chair of Talking in Tune

Talking in Tune is a musical gem. Those of us fortunate enough to be involved with this small charity are regularly reminded of how singing can inspire and heal us, and that our voices are powerful instruments of change.

There are currently 42,000 choirs in the UK; over two million of us regularly attend a group in order to sing. Raising our voices together not only allows us to express feeling; it can help synchronize our heart rates, breathing and even movement.

Over the past year, Talking in Tune's team of dedicated workers – our committed trustees, musical leaders and volunteers – have enabled hundreds of local people to sing together, many of whom would find it difficult, or impossible, to join a choir.

Despite the last 12 months being a period of significant change, when a number of us – myself included – stepped into new roles for Talking in Tune, we have consolidated our excellent existing projects. Two new singing leaders now lead our groups, Singing for Breathing and Memory Notes; they have both delighted us with their skill and enthusiasm. Those visiting leaders who led our one-day singing workshops brought pleasure and a sense of community to all who attended.

In the year to come, we will continue to explore ways to strengthen this dynamic, unique charity, support our current participants and increase access for local people to this wonderful resource. I look forward to it.

Sally Fenn

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1. Our mission

The mission of Talking in Tune is to make singing and music-making accessible to all members of the community. Our work is based on the knowledge that singing together enhances individual wellbeing and is an effective way to develop and sustain social connection.

We aim to do this by:

- Running singing for wellbeing groups aimed at people with health challenges and others who may not otherwise have opportunities to access the benefits of singing.
- Organising singing workshops which are accessible and welcoming to people of all ages and abilities.
- Supporting local organisations that contribute towards our goal of an inclusive, creative music-making community.

Each year the Trustees review our activities to ensure they continue to reflect our aims. In carrying out the annual review presented in this Report, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Talking in Tune gained charitable trust status in 2004 and developed out of the singing work of Rowena Whitehead and Sue Parlby.

2. The year in brief

Our two funded projects both thrived with their new leaders. Memory Notes continued to support people with dementia and their carers through the joy and community of music; while Singing for Breathing resumed its valuable work bringing the benefits of singing to people living with breathing difficulties.

This year we have received funding from Education Services 2010, the Pye Foundation, the Strangward Trust, Yorkshire Building Society, The Evelyn Trust and Asthma and Lung UK.

We also held two successful singing workshops, open to all, which were attended by a total of 120 people.

3. Funded projects

MEMORY NOTES

Founded in 2014, Memory Notes is a singing group for people living with dementia and their carers. The following report is by Agi Peach, who took over as leader from the group's co-founder Rowena Whitehead in January 2025.

Memory Notes aims to create a warm and welcoming community within which people with dementia and their carers can experience the benefits of singing together, as outlined below.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, we held 43 sessions, with an average of 34 attendees – 13 people with dementia and nine volunteers, with the rest of the group made up of carers and guests. There are currently 22 families on our register.

We have welcomed 10 new families over the past year and sadly lost nine families. It is in the nature of the group that failing health may prevent some members attending, and some members may die or move into care facilities, but overall numbers tend to remain stable.



We have 12 dedicated volunteers supporting the group. One of them, who became a volunteer after many years of attending the group as a carer, has sadly transitioned to be a participant with memory loss.

How we work

Each Wednesday morning, attendees are warmly welcomed by the volunteers, and people sit and chat for half an hour over coffee and biscuits. They share news, experiences and information, and they help one another cope with the many challenges of living with dementia and caring for people living with dementia.



Then we move to the singing circle, centred on a display of flowers and prompts linked to our weekly theme, which is shared in advance by email and WhatsApp. Attendees are encouraged to bring along relevant items and invited to suggest songs, share stories, read poems and sing solos.



The group sing together, enjoy laughter and light-hearted fun, play musical instruments and dance if they wish. Most songs are well known to all, but we provide lyrics for wordier ones and teach some new songs too. The session ends with a song of blessing and a rendition of 'Thank you for the music', everyone in the circle holding hands. A strong sense of community is created by these rituals. People leave with a smile, and many participants choose to extend their time at the church by staying for lunch at the cafe.

The volunteers stay on for a short debriefing session, sharing observations and news. This is a crucial part of the success of the group, both in terms of our care for attendees and also in supporting one another as facilitators.

The group meets weekly, taking a short break at Christmas and Easter and a longer one in the summer.

Benefits

A growing body of evidence shows the benefits of group singing for people living with dementia and their carers. These include:

- improved sense of wellbeing, self worth, accomplishment and belonging
- social inclusion and support
- a positive impact on relationships and communication.



These benefits are clear to everyone who experiences Memory Notes. Singing lifts the spirits, and carers report that the positive effects of the sessions on their loved ones often last throughout the day. Familiar songs evoke mostly happy memories, while singing also encourages people to connect with others through song. The feeling of friendliness and joy is palpable. People with more advanced stages of dementia who find speaking a challenge may find that words of familiar songs still come easily. Carers find respite and benefit from meeting other carers and seeing their loved ones enjoying themselves.

Comments from our members

- *Mum has simply adored attending Memory Notes. To say that it is the highlight of her week would be an understatement. In recent years Mum has struggled more and more to get up in the morning. The only day I could ever guarantee she would get up was a Wednesday! 'It's singing,' I would say. 'I like singing', she would reply and up she would get! That simple!*

- *Just people and singing. The perfect combination.*

- *I just have to tell you. I felt down in the dumps this morning and I wasn't sure about coming, but I'm so glad I did, because I feel so much better now.*



- *If we could do this every day of the week I'd come. I love it.*
- *A big thank you to you and all the team for the kindness and care. It has made such a difference to our life.*
- *It is amazing! It gives people something to look forward to every Wednesday. Everyone gets looked after, even helped outside the building before they come in. Those with dementia have a lovely time singing and connecting with others. Those caring get to chat with others and share ideas and sympathise. It helps everyone and we all leave in a much happier mood than we came in! It is uplifting.*

- *I love to see how much everyone benefits from this group (me included!) The buzz when people are chatting while having their refreshments fosters friendship. The singing is joyous.*
 - *Memory Notes is the highlight of [his] week. He loves the music and playing the drum along to the songs. From a carer's point of view, it is great to relax and see friends and everyone enjoying themselves.*
 - *I like coming here to see all the lovely people. Feeling of happiness and singing. I like to share my songs and poems.*
 - *It is a wonderful opportunity to spend time in a friendly atmosphere with my dad where he can be himself, and we can both enjoy the joint enterprise of singing together - sometimes even dancing!*
- 
- *We have noticed an improvement with words, singing at home and socialising more.*
 - *Music is a big part of my life – I love music. I was in a church choir when I was a little boy. When you live by yourself, it's nice to have company and meet people who like similar things. I feel as though I've had a good time when I've been – I wouldn't come otherwise!*
 - *I like coming with Dad to see him enjoy himself and hear his lovely voice. I love the warm and friendly company. It lifts my heart each week.*
 - *He so enjoys the music (even if he doesn't often sing), but then he sings on the way home.*
 - *On Wednesdays we will come here. That's the last thing we will let go. It's so special.*

What next?

We will continue to lighten the lives of members and build new relationships with families who join us during the year.

SINGING FOR BREATHING

Established in 2016, Singing for Breathing is open to any adult from Cambridge and the surrounding area who is suffering from breathlessness. The following report is by Joanna Burton, who took over as leader in November 2024.

Regular fortnightly in-person and online sessions resumed in January 2025 after a short break following the departure of previous leader Mary Denn. Since then, we have run six in-person sessions and six online ones. Most participants choose to attend either in person or on Zoom, but a few do both, and they really reap the benefit of a weekly rather than fortnightly session.

We currently have 14 members of the online group, with an average of six or seven at each session, and no volunteers, as none are needed online. The Zoom sessions are also recorded and a link to the recording is shared with members, some of whom may be unable to join us in 'real time' due to medical appointments, hospital stays etc. Recordings also enable members who have attended in person to revisit and practise the sessions, which really benefits them.

We have 13 members of the in-person group, with an average of seven at each session, with five volunteers, Caroline, Claire, Meg, Peter and Stephen, who are warm, welcoming and empathetic.

How we work

The aims of Singing for Breathing include: developing awareness of breathing patterns; changing postural, breathing and vocal habits through exercises; improving capacity, strength and stamina; increasing wellbeing; and reducing social isolation.

In-person sessions begin with half an hour of social time - a cuppa, a biscuit and time to connect in the café entrance forum of Brown's Field Centre. We then move to the Sunshine Hall where we sit in a circle and participate in an hour-long singing session. We start with relaxation and a body scan and then move to physical, breathing and vocal warm-ups, delivered in a playful and creative way.

All exercises are carefully chosen to build towards the aims set out above. Our aim is to make beneficial changes to participants 'by stealth'. Talking to people about feeling breathless can make them unhelpfully self-aware of their breathing and can trigger feelings of breathlessness. Through a sense of fun and by playing games – for example, building and extending the song 'One man went to mow' – we can extend the outbreath and build stamina, putting a smile on everyone's faces.

The songs that we learn and enjoy in each session are also carefully chosen to try to build towards our aims. For example, we might choose songs where line 3 is double the length of line 1 and line 2, so the outbreath is extended.

Sessions always end with a physical and meditative cool down before a check-in with everyone to see how they are doing.

Online sessions follow the same format. We socialise and share stories, especially at the end of the session, when everyone is more relaxed and cheerful.

Benefits

Research has shown that taking part in a singing group has many benefits for participants, including: a reduction in feelings of breathlessness; a sense of being more in control of breathing; improved posture; and an increased ability to manage symptoms.

Participants also report an increase in wellbeing:

- they feel positive during the singing session and their positive mood continues afterwards
- singing helps them if they feel anxious or stressed
- they find it fun, uplifting and joyful
- they appreciate being a participant in a group where everyone shares and understands what it feels like to live with a chronic lung condition
- they look forward to it!

Comments from our members

There are other benefits to the Singing for Breathing class besides the physical ones. I had felt very isolated with my illnesses before I joined the class and it helped my psychological welfare enormously to meet up with people with similar problems. In addition, the fun and non-judgemental aspect of the classes also helps us psychologically, which in turn helps physical wellbeing. Everyone I spoke to after the class yesterday said they felt uplifted.

I find Singing for Breathing very helpful. My voice becomes stronger after we have done the warm-up sounds. The exercises help to expand our lungs so that we can breathe more easily and enjoy the songs. I enjoy the classes. Joanna

is a very good teacher with a lovely voice. I feel better after the classes.

Before joining Singing for Breathing sessions a few months ago, I felt breathless and my voice was very weak, which made me feel embarrassed and frustrated as I could no longer recite the Quran as I used to. Last week my friend persuaded me to accompany her to the mosque and she encouraged me to use my voice. I was worried at first as to how my voice would sound, but I found myself able to recite the Quran again, like I used to be able to, thanks to the exercises and work we have done in Singing for Breathing. It was brilliant!

What next?

Going forward, we will offer the same model of sessions, building on our relationships with Pulmonary Rehab at Papworth and Respiratory and Thoracic Care at Anglia Ruskin University, who are starting to refer patients on to us. We aim to engage more with the respiratory team at Addenbrookes and at primary care level across Cambridgeshire.

4. Singing workshops

Our singing workshops, open to all, give both regular and occasional singers an opportunity to spend a day singing with others, led by some wonderful guest singing leaders. Any surplus made from these events is used to cross-subsidise our special projects.

This year, we held two very successful sold-out events at Storey's Field Centre, Eddington, Cambridge, welcoming new participants as well as many familiar faces for whom our workshops are a valued fixture in their year.



Chris Rowbury, 18 October 2024

Chris Rowbury has led many workshops for Talking in Tune and returned to Cambridge to lead a packed room of singers in another superb day of singing, introducing participants to harmony songs from across the globe, sung in a variety of languages.

Rosie Sleightholme, 15 March 2025

We were delighted to welcome Rosie Sleightholme to lead her first workshop for Talking in Tune. She kept her promise to bring people together through singing, teaching the 60-strong group several of her own compositions in four-part harmony.



5. Other events

Talking in Tune Christmas Busk

The annual Talking in Tune Christmas Busk took place on 14 December 2024 at St Benet's Church in Cambridge. Following a concert by Resound choir, people gathered in the churchyard to sing carols and other festive songs together. A total of £1860.69 was collected for Wintercomfort, the Cambridge-based charity that supports homeless people.

6. Financial review

For the year to 31 March 2025, Talking in Tune's total income is £18,331, of which £18,210 was generated income from a mixture of grants, donations and running workshops. Expenditure to deliver our two ongoing programmes, Memory Notes and Singing for Breathing, and a further two singing workshops which are open to all, was £19,213.

In delivering the programmes, Talking in Tune has utilised £4,105 of restricted funds and increased the unrestricted funds by £1,917 due to surpluses generated from the workshops and general donations to the Charity. We trained new project leaders during the year to ensure the longevity of our work, thus generating an overall loss of £882.

We thank all our grant givers and donors for their generosity and continuing support without which this important work would not be possible.

For the annual accounts please see Appendix A.

Reserves Policy

Restricted Funds

Talking in Tune receives grants from third parties from time to time to fund specific activities. We monitor activities and account for the use of funds in accordance with the requirements established from the grant making bodies to deliver our programmes. Any unutilised funds held at the end of the accounting period are carried forward as restricted funds to be utilised in future periods.

Unrestricted Funds

Talking in Tune generates income through charges for activities, donations and running workshops. In order to safeguard the continued delivery of our programmes, the trustees seek to retain a level of funding equivalent to six months' expenditure.

Total expenditure for the year was £19,200; six months' expenditure on this basis would therefore be £9,600. Actual unrestricted funds are £16,300. Although this is higher than the target of six months, the trustees anticipate some utilisation of these funds in the coming year and therefore believe the amount of unrestricted funds held is appropriate.

Summary of reserves at 31st March 2025:

Restricted Funds	£12654
Unrestricted Funds	£16634
Total	£29,288

7. Risk management

As a locally-focused small charity with no assets, no employees and an annual revenue of approximately £20,000, Talking in Tune's Trustees have analysed the risks the charity faces and have drawn up a risk assessment. This identifies each of the key risks and the measures necessary to manage them, many of which relate to financial sustainability, maintaining operational capability and capacity and safeguarding the adults who access Talking in Tune's services.

This assessment is reviewed annually and Trustees are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate all risks identified. Insurance cover is in place, finances are kept under review and appropriate DBS checks are carried out, supported by regularly reviewed policies.

8. Future plans

1. We will continue to support the work of Memory Notes and Singing for Breathing, aiming to increase the membership of Singing for Breathing.
2. We will organise accessible, high-quality singing workshops which are open to all, inclusive and community-building.
3. We will continue to seek sources of funding that support our work and to encourage donations via Local Giving.
4. We will continue to support our volunteers.
5. We will continue to work to 'futureproof' Talking in Tune's activities, in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of our work.
6. We will explore opportunities to build upon the work we have undertaken to bring the benefits of singing to more people.

9. Grateful thanks

Many thanks to the following for their hard work and support:

Agi Peach, leader of Memory Notes

Volunteers: Andrew Bradford, Elaine Brown, Chris Burgess, Paul Christie, Faith Johnson, Jenny Knowleden, Gill October, Pam Scott, Nikki Searle, Jo Thulbourne, Chris West, Rowena Whitehead.

Joanna Burton, leader of Singing for Breathing

Volunteers: Caroline Fletcher, Meg Clarke, Stephen Davies, Claire Bright, Peter Scourfield.

All the other volunteers who give cheerful and practical support to enable Talking in Tune events to happen.

Our funders: Education Services 2010, the Pye Foundation, Yorkshire Building Society, The Evelyn Trust, Strangward Trust, Asthma and Lung UK.

Friends and supporters who have given financial aid.

10. Talking in Tune committee

Sally Fenn (Chair)

Jane Kershaw (Secretary)

Lynsey Newbury (Treasurer)

Rowena Whitehead (Musical Director - non-voting member)

Anne Clark

Val Worcester

Talking in Tune

7 Fitzwilliam Rd, Cambridge CB2 8BN

Talking in Tune is governed by a Trust Deed and constituted as a Registered Charity, number 1105061, regulated by the Charity Commission. Trustees are appointed by a resolution of the trustees.

Appendix A

Talking in Tune Financial Statement for year ending 31 March 2025

 CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES	Charity Name: Talking In Tune		Charity No (if any)	1105061			
	Annual accounts for the period						
	Period start date		01/04/2024	To	Period end date	31/03/2025	
Section A Statement of financial activities							
Recommended categories by activity			Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year funds
			£	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources			F01	F02	F03	F04	F05
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies			1,686	8,500	-	10,186	10,400
Charitable activities			3,293	4,732	-	8,025	8,175
Other trading activities			-	-	-	-	-
Investments			120	-	-	120	126
Separate material item of income			-	-	-	-	-
Other			-	-	-	-	-
Total			5,099	13,232	-	18,331	18,701
Resources expended							
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds			-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities			1,876	17,337	-	19,213	18,558
Separate material item of expense			-	-	-	-	-
Other			-	-	-	-	-
Total			1,876	17,337	-	19,213	18,558
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)			3,223	- 4,105	-	- 882	143
Net gains/(losses) on investments			-	-	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)			3,223	- 4,105	-	- 882	143
Extraordinary items			-	-	-	-	-
Transfers between funds			-	-	-	-	-
Other recognised gains/(losses):							
Gains and losses on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use			-	-	-	-	-
Other gains/(losses)			-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds			3,223	- 4,105	-	- 882	143
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward			13,515	16,658	-	30,173	30,031
Total funds carried forward			16,738	12,553	-	29,291	30,173

Charity Name: Talking in Tune		Charity No		1105061		
		Company No				
Annual accounts for the period		Period start date: 01/04/24			To period end date: 31/3/25	
Section B						
Balance sheet						
		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted income funds £	Endowment funds £	Total this year £	Total last year £
Fixed assets		F01	F02	F03	F04	F05
Intangible assets		-	-	-	-	-
Tangible assets		-	-	-	-	-
Heritage assets		-	-	-	-	-
Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Total fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-
Current assets						
Stocks		-	-	-	-	-
Debtors		-	-	-	-	-
Investments		-	-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand		16,637	13,330	-	29,967	30,173
Total current assets		16,637	13,330	-	29,967	30,173
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		676	-	-	676	-
Net current assets/(liabilities)		15,961	13,330	-	29,291	30,173
Total assets less current liabilities		15,961	13,330	-	29,291	30,173
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year		-	-	-	-	-
Provisions for liabilities		-	-	-	-	-
Total net assets or liabilities		15,961	13,330	-	29,291	30,173
Funds of the Charity						
Endowment funds		-			-	-
Restricted income funds			13,330		13,330	16,658
Unrestricted funds		15,961		-	15,961	13,515
Revaluation reserve					-	
Fair value reserve						
Total funds		15,961	13,330	-	29,291	30,173

The company was entitled to exemption from audit under s477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP.

Signed by one or two trustees/directors on behalf of all the trustees/directors

Print name
Signature

Date of approval
dd/mm/yyyy

Signed by director authenticating accounts being sent to Companies House

Print name

Date of approval
dd/mm/yyyy