

# TALKING IN TUNE

## ANNUAL REPORT

**2013-2014**



**Children from Milton Road Primary School enjoy our  
Sing and Swim for WaterAid event in July**

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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 and to weave community singing into the cultural fabric of Cambridge. 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*

- Organising singing workshops and events that are inclusive, accessible and welcoming to people of all ages and abilities. The workshops aim to develop the musical skills and confidence of participants and to develop confidence in creative self-expression.
- Organising performances and workshops led by musicians and singing leaders from different cultures which are educational, fun and nurture a sense of respect for cultural differences. These events are largely self-funding.
- Creating events and performances which are inclusive, participative, community-building and create an enhanced sense of community, often involving the sharing of food as well as song. These events are largely organised by volunteers and the proceeds go to charity.
- Supporting the work of community musicians who are working in similar ways. As a charitable trust, we can support grant applications for projects that fall within our remit.
- Promoting local events that contribute towards our goal of an inclusive, creative music-making community.

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

## 2. The Year in Brief

This year we have received funding from Cambridge City Council and the Pye Foundation to continue to support the work of the Lifecraft Singers, led by Penny Lutoslawska. In April 2014, management responsibility for the group is transferring to the charity Lifecraft.

Street Voices, led by Kay Barrett, has continued to thrive, and received funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Awards for All (The Big Lottery).

Apart from this funded work, we have organised a number of self-funded community events, performances and singing workshops that are outlined in Item 4. We have also supported the development of local arts events in the community by mentoring event organisers and promoting them through our email lists.

## 3. Funded Projects

### *3.1 The Lifecraft Singers*

The Lifecraft Singers is an open-access weekly drop-in singing group for members of Lifecraft, the self-help organisation for people with mental health issues, along with friends and visitors. The group meets each Wednesday throughout the year at The Bath House, Gwydir Street, Cambridge.

The sessions are led by Natural Voice Practitioner Penny Lutoslawska, and on occasion are covered by Kay Barrett and Rowena Whitehead. Visiting musicians are welcomed at the group. During 2013–2014, there were three visiting volunteers.

Weekly attendance was between 6 and 16 people, averaging 12 participants per week, with 20 new singers attending regularly. 49 sessions were held over the course of the year, with a total of 433 interventions.

Cambridge City Council (£750) and the Pye Foundation (£1,000) mainly funded the group. Additional donations to *Talking in Tune* covered the shortfall in running costs.

The focus of the group is to provide a supportive, welcoming creative space which enables participants to have a sense of being part of a singing community and encourages them to gain confidence and have fun, as well as improving their singing skills. Being able to participate in a group where they feel safe and supported helps combat the isolation so often experienced by people in this situation.

From October 2012 to Spring 2014, the Lifecraft Singers took part in the national campaign 'Time to Change' which aimed to raise awareness in society about mental health issues. Singers from the group collaborated with the creative writing and drama group at Lifecraft to develop music, poetry, drama and song writing together.

### **Public performances**

- Early Evening Soirée at Lifecraft, 14 April
- Strawberry Fair Green Stage, 6 June
- The Blue Moon Café at The Box Café, a cabaret evening written by Lifecraft members and the 'Time to Change' group, 21 June
- The Grand Day Out, 6 July
- Lifecraft afternoons of poetry
- The Blue Moon Café at the Black Cat Café, 31 August
- World Mental Health Day, Christ's Pieces, 1 September
- Lifecraft AGM, October
- Mill Road Winter Fair, with members of ReSound Acappella Choir, 7 December



**Mill Road Winter Fair**

- Talking in Tune Christmas Busk for Wintercomfort outside the Guildhall, 21 December



**The Talking in Tune Christmas Busk**

### **Feedback from group members**

- *'This is the highlight of my week'*
- *'This feels like family. I can sing how I feel'*
- *'It's really important to make our voices heard'*
- *'Singing at the Mill Road Fair makes me feel I belong'*
- *Singing has helped me to overcome a deep depression';*
- *'To me , art and music are my soul food and are vital*

### **Management of the group**

This year Rowena Whitehead, Penny Lutoslawska and Frances Sword had several discussions with Andrew Dellar, the manager of Lifecraft to discuss transfer of the Lifecraft Singers to the Lifecraft organisation. For historical reasons, the singing group was set up over ten years ago as a *Talking in Tune* group. However, members of the singing group are all Lifecraft members, the venue is the Lifecraft base and the singing group is perceived by all to be a Lifecraft group. It therefore seems logical for the group to be managed by Lifecraft, where staff are on site, where there are established health and safety procedures and where there are similar arts activities.

Members of the singing group were consulted during the year about whether they would prefer to move the group to a different community space and to open up membership to a wider community. They unanimously felt that they preferred to stay at the Bath House.

It was agreed that Lifecraft would take over the management of the singing group from April 2014. Outstanding funding reserved from *Talking in Tune* funds was transferred to Lifecraft (see Appendix 1). We had a three-year funding agreement with City Council. Rowena discussed it with the City Council lead officer, and she agreed to transfer the funding to Lifecraft. Rowena will continue to support and mentor Penny and *Talking in Tune* can make donations to Lifecraft for the singing group. We have informed the Pye Foundation, who gave £1000 towards the costs of the group in October, of the change in management.

### **3.2 Street Voices (report by Kay Barrett)**

2013–14 has been a busy and rewarding one for the group, with many memorable events and performances. We have seen our regular members continue to build in confidence, both musically and socially. We have been able to support two of our oldest members through quite desperate times, referring them to other agencies for help where appropriate, and have

seen them both return to a happier and more stable state. We have also welcomed visitors and temporary members to the group who enjoyed attending sessions while they were passing through Cambridge.

### **The Team**

In addition to Project Leader Kay Barrett and Support Worker Yvonne Cieslik-Bridgen, we are fortunate to have an excellent team of volunteers. This year we welcomed two new volunteers, Moniek Hopman, who joined us in June, and Kate Meaby, who joined the group at the end of September.

The group continues to be supported by regular volunteers Dick, Neil and Holly, and also Mary and Tess, who come when they can. The team of volunteers did an excellent job covering Yvonne's duties when she was unable to attend due to a broken collarbone. Fortunately, Yvonne was able to resume supporting the group at the beginning of May.

### **Funding**

During this period, we were fortunate to have grant funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and from Awards for All (The Big Lottery). We also received donations from the family of Michael Dwyer, The Small World Dance Club and the Student Rag Fund. The donation from Michael's family helped buy a new guitar for one of our members. Therfield Chapel, Bethel Baptist Church, Saint Martin's Church [Little Downham] and Saint Martin's Centre [Suez Road] all gave generous donations when we visited to give a performance. A very generous collection was held at the Our Lady and the English Martyrs Church concert. The Let Your Voice Play singing group in Girton also had a collection for Street Voices at their 10th anniversary party.

Highlights of our year were the Grantchester Ramble in April, the Irish Session in March and the 100th birthday party at Saint Martin's day centre. These events were great fun. We were amazed by the generosity of our friends at Bethel Baptist Church. After our visit, they decided to hold a collection to buy everything on our wish list of percussion instruments. We especially liked that they came in person to one of our sessions to present their gifts to us. We enjoyed playing in the beautiful surroundings of West Road Concert Hall for a community fundraising concert in March. At the Our Lady and the English Martyrs concert in October, we were delighted when our excellent volunteer sound engineer, Calvin Monk, accepted our invitation to play along with us on his ukulele.

### **Diary of events and performances**

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday 12 April | Grantchester ramble and picnic. We remembered the Mass Trespass of 1932 and group member Michael Dwyer, who died in February. Once again, it poured with rain, but this did not dampen our spirits |
| Friday 31 May   | Visit to Jimmy's (Akeman St closed for decorating)                                                                                                                                                 |
| Friday 7 June   | Food4Food Visit                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Friday 21 June  | African Drumming with Daniela                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Friday 28 June  | New volunteer Moniek Hopman joined the group<br>Presentation of 12-string guitar to Mally, bought with a donation from Michael Dwyer's family                                                      |



**Mally's New Guitar**

Friday 5 July

Wintercomfort Visit



**Wintercomfort Visit**

Saturday 13 July

Friday 19 July

Friday 6 September

Friday 20 September

Therfield Chapel Garden Supper and Performance

Saint Martin's Day Centre for the elderly, Suez Road

Music session and fish and chip lunch

100th birthday party at Saint Martin's Day Centre



**100th Birthday Party**

|                       |                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday 4 October      | Little Downham Saint Martin's Harvest Supper                                                                   |
| Friday 11 October     | Food4Food Visit                                                                                                |
| Friday 25 October     | Our Lady and the English Martyrs Concert                                                                       |
| Sunday 24 November    | Bethel Chapel, Swavesey. We led the singing in a café style service, followed by a short performance and lunch |
| Wednesday 11 December | 'Phil's People', St Philip's Church, Mill Road. Performance and Christmas dinner                               |
| Thursday 19 December  | Informal Christmas performance and sing-along with refreshments at 222 Victoria Road                           |
| Friday 20 December    | Christmas session and festive fish and chip lunch                                                              |
| Friday 7 March        | Community Concert at West Road Concert Hall                                                                    |



**Concert Poster**

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday 14 March | Irish Session and lunch with poetry, and visiting musicians Tom Scherin and Dodie Carter                                                                                                       |
| Friday 21 March | African Drumming with Darren Goodale. Toby Peters began filming 'Street Voices, A Sanctuary'. See <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLRyy4rD8qA">www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLRyy4rD8qA</a> |
| Friday 28 March | Visit from members of Bethel Baptist Church, who generously presented a selection of percussion instruments, including a cajon and washboard, and joined in singing with us                    |

#### **4. Tunes for Change Events 2013–14**

Promoted and supported by *Talking in Tune*, Tunes for Change events aim to raise funds for and awareness of the work of other charities. These events have continued to be well supported by volunteers and participants in the local community due to our excellent track record for organising high-quality performances, workshops and events. Participants in all our projects, as well as people of all ages and abilities in the wider community, are welcome to participate in our events which are accessible, welcoming, inspirational and community-building. During the year, we ran workshops for over 400 people of all ages, and put on concerts and performances that attracted over 1300 people. All our events happen thanks to the support of volunteers who give their time and energy – around 50 in all.

### **Sing and Swim, 6 July**

- Sing and Swim attracted an audience of around 500 and raised £2146.25 for Water Aid, including a £350 donation from the Cambridge Water Co. The weather was fantastic again
- Les Ray was the excellent sound engineer and the Andy Bowie Jazz Band played as people swam and picnicked. Pete Towers and Phil Rose came with the wonderful Kitchen Sink Guitar to round the event off.
- Sadly, Arbury School were unable to come this year, but St Luke's and Milton Rd Schools sang under the direction of Anna Louise Lawrence who organised rehearsals and sales of tickets at the schools. Rowena also rehearsed the school choirs
- Singers from the Good Vibrations and ReSound choirs sang a few songs and then sang communal songs under the umbrella name of the Water Choir

### **Sing for Water London, 15 September**

Around 40 singers took part in this celebration under the collective name of Cambridge Community Singers to raise money for WaterAid. Lorraine Mitchell and Sam Wynne from Good Vibrations coordinated the Cambridge singers.

### ***The Talking in Tune* Hot Sing-along at the Fire Brazier, Mill Rd Winter Fair, 7 December**

Over 70 singers came along to sing for an hour in the afternoon. The Lifecraft Singers performed at the Fair alongside singers from ReSound.

### ***The Talking in Tune* Christmas Busk for Winter Comfort, 21 December**

Over 60 people turned up to sing by the Guildhall. We raised £213 for Winter Comfort.

## **5. Richer Mix Workshops**

We regularly invite highly skilled and experienced workshop leaders and teachers to run community singing workshop days of a high quality. These enable local people to experience a variety of music and singing styles from different vocal traditions.

### **This year we hosted:**

#### **Chris Rowbury, 20 April 2013**

Suffolk-based Chris led a workshop featuring the songs of Paul Simon, attended and much enjoyed by around 65 people. The event raised £706 for *Talking in Tune*.

#### **The Dimanta Sisters, 19–20 June 2013**

The Dimanta Sisters visited from Riga, Latvia, on their first UK tour. They ran a singing workshop and performed with ReSound Choir at St Luke's Church on 21 June. The workshop and concert were well attended although it was organised at short notice. The workshop was midweek, with a more limited audience than weekend workshops; however, 25 people came. All the income [after the hall hire and admin costs] went to The Dimanta Sisters (£630).



**The Dimanta Sisters**

### **Tony Backhouse, 6 October 2013**

Tony is a world-renowned Australian teacher of Gospel song and came here as part of his UK tour. The workshop at the Castle Hill Methodist Church Hall was attended by 65 people and was a great success. £468 was raised from the day to support the work of *Talking in Tune*. Thanks to Sue Durham and Sylvia Dannreuther for coordinating the event.



**Tony Backhouse Workshop**

### **Kirsty Martin, 5 April 2014**

Kirsty, who leads the Hullabaloo Quire in Brighton, led a day of ‘original bluesy tunes, wondrous world harmony and smoky soulful arrangements’. A great time was had by all, and £371 was raised for *Talking in Tune*.

## **6. Wider Ripples**

Rowena Whitehead leads singing projects overseen by other organisations, including Singing for the Brain, weekly workshops for people with dementia and their carers, organised by the Alzheimer’s Society. The group is supported by the work of singing volunteers who are all active in *Talking in Tune*. Participants from the Singing for the Brain group are encouraged and supported to take part in our events in the wider community. This helps combat the isolation so often felt by people and families facing the challenge of dementia. Rowena is often invited to run singing workshops in residential homes for elderly people and volunteer singers from our singing groups support this work.

## 7. Future Plans

1. We will continue to create events and performances which are inclusive, participative and community-building
2. We will continue to promote accessible, high-quality singing workshops and performances. Some of these will be fundraising events for *Talking in Tune* projects
3. We will look for alternative sources of funding for our work
4. We will continue to support volunteers who want to develop singing workshops and activities and to support the work of local singing leaders
5. We will support the work of Street Voices
6. We will continue to organise Tunes for Change and Richer Mix events
7. We will develop a new singing group for people with memory loss challenges

## 8. Grateful Thanks

- To the *Talking in Tune* Committee for all their hard work and support in keeping *Talking in Tune* organised!
- To Kay Barrett, Yvonne Cieslik and Penny Lutoslawska for their work with Street Voices and the Lifecraft Singers and to all volunteers and support workers who contribute their time and skills so generously
- To all the volunteers who give cheerful and practical support to enable the *Talking in Tune* events happen – over 60 people, so thank you everyone
- To Denise Neapolitan for her superb administrative support
- To Sylvia Dannreuther and Sue Durham for their work in organising Richer Mix workshops
- To Anna Louise Lawrence for her support for Sing and Swim, and also to Lorraine Mitchell and Sam Wynne for coordinating our participation in Sing for Water, London.
- To our funders
  - Awards for All (The Big Lottery)
  - Cambridge City Council
  - Cambridge Student Rag
  - The Cambridge Water Company
  - The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
  - The Portland Arms Folk Club, who raised £100 for *Talking in Tune* at their folk music festival in September.
  - The Pye Foundation

## 9. Talking in Tune Committee 2013–14

Frances Sword (Chair)

Simon Watkins (Treasurer)

Sue Durham (Secretary)

Miranda Armour Brown

Anne Chippindale

Sue Mclean

Rowena Whitehead, Musical Director (non-voting member)

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Transfer of the Lifecraft Singers Group to Lifecraft from April 2014**

As discussed by Andrew Dellar, Frances Sword (Chair of *Talking in Tune*) and Rowena Whitehead on Wednesday 5 March 2014

*These points were subsequently discussed and agreed at the Talking in Tune Management Committee Meeting on Friday 7 March 2014*

1. Lifecraft will take on management responsibility of the Lifecraft Singers from the start of the next financial year. Thus, the first session will be 9 April.
2. *Talking in Tune* will make a contribution to Lifecraft for the financial year of 2014–15 of £900, which will be restricted to supporting the Lifecraft Singers on the understanding that the group continues with its original remit, i.e. it is an open access singing group for people with mental health and wellbeing needs who are Lifecraft Members. The group aims to provide a friendly, relaxed and supportive environment where participants can sing and develop their creative skills and confidence.
3. The preferred route into the group, in line with the Lifecraft Adult Safeguarding Policy, is that people attend first for a Lifecraft membership interview, and then will be able to attend a singing session. However, exceptions will occasionally be made at the discretion of the Manager and the Session Leader.
4. Penny Lutoslawska will continue to lead the sessions at the rate paid previously to her by *Talking in Tune*. The sessions will continue to run on Wednesday mornings as this is the preferred time for the current participants.
5. Participants at the sessions will be encouraged to contribute to recording sessions for a Lifecraft CD and radio project.
6. Rowena, Frances and Andrew will keep in contact regarding general funding of the singing group so that if further *Talking in Tune* support is needed, it can be considered.
7. Rowena will liaise with Penny so that the Lifecraft Singers can be encouraged to join in with additional *Talking in Tune* community singing opportunities, and volunteers can be encouraged to support the Lifecraft Singers as needed.

Notes prepared by Rowena Whitehead  
20 March 2014

*Rowena Whitehead*