

TALKING IN TUNE

ANNUAL REPORT

2014-2015



Cycle of Songs project

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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 and engaging with local events that contribute towards our goal of an inclusive, creative music-making community.
- Training and mentoring singing leaders.

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

September 2014 saw the start of The Memory Notes, our new weekly singing group for people with dementia and their carers, which has gone from strength to strength.

Management responsibility for the Lifecraft Singers, for people facing mental health challenges, passed to the Lifecraft Charity on 9 April 2014 and we continue to liaise with the group and the leader Penny Lutoslawska and to involve them in our activities.

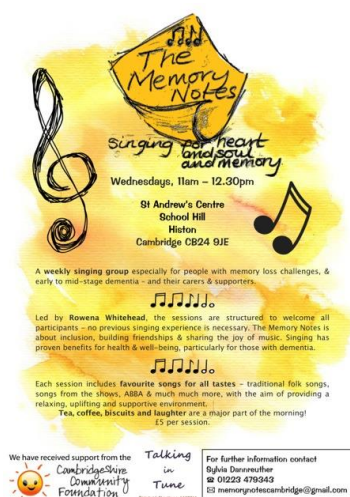
In March 2015, Street Voices came to an end when Kay Barrett retired from running the group after seven years of dedicated and inspirational music work with people experiencing homelessness.

This year we have received funding from a number of Charitable and other organisations (see p. 8). We have organised our own fundraising events and we ran a very successful campaign to encourage donations via the web-based Local Giving scheme.

3. Funded Projects

3.1 The Memory Notes: Singing for Heart, Soul and Memory

During the spring and summer of 2014 we were fundraising and planning a new weekly singing group for people with dementia and their carers. The Memory Notes started in September 2014 at the Stables Centre, St Andrew's Church, Histon, led by Rowena Whitehead and coordinated by Sylvia Dannreuther with the support of a skilled and enthusiastic team of eight volunteers. The group started with an average attendance of 14 people, but this has steadily increased and we now have an average of 25–35 people coming each week.



On 18 March 2015 we moved to St Andrew's Community Centre in Histon, as we had outgrown The Stables. This move will comfortably allow for an average attendance of 40–45, which we think might be the maximum number the group can hold without diluting any aspect of it. The content of the sessions has developed along with the group, because each week, immediately after the session, the leader and volunteers meet for feedback and evaluation. This weekly discussion enables our attempts to keep abreast of changing needs and shifting circumstances and so feeds both the development of the content and, just as importantly, the details of how each session is managed and gently orchestrated. Comments and evaluations make it clear that it is the attention given to these details of each aspect of every session that has built this singing group into a community that is now making a real difference to people's lives.

Some recent comments from participants:

Don & Mary: "Innovative, stimulating, a lovely feeling of fellowship."

Mary Pollard: "I haven't had so much fun in a long time."

Paula (Mary's carer): "Really wonderful, a fantastic group."

Judith (Daphne's daughter): "Mum had a bad fall during the week, but insisted on coming to Memory Notes despite the bruises – it's the highlight of her week."

Barbara: "When I get here, I feel I'm coming home."



Visitor Feedback

On 4 February the session was attended by singing leaders Tracy Sharp, Fran Flower, Trish Bessell and Denise Matthews, who are planning to set up a similar group in Ipswich. Below is a paragraph of their detailed feedback.

"We were all really inspired and delighted by all we experienced. It's a rare gift to see such skilful sensitive facilitation in action.....Particularly striking to me was the high levels of participation of everyone there, real evidence of how safe everyone has been made to feel, how included and engaged.... Having volunteers who are such skilled singers to include harmonies makes everything so much more musically rich and obviously offers opportunities for all to join in that improvising too. Your amazing team of volunteers and your wonderful colleague – their welcome, positive interactions with everyone, practical and unobtrusive management of all the practicalities of setting up and offering refreshments plus their awareness of the significance of these sessions for people and passionate commitment to them was striking – a beautiful thing to sense that depth of involvement. Your de-briefing sessions clearly are vital in maintaining this sense of cooperative working."

Training

It has always been one of our aims to keep an open door for others who work, or would like to work, in this field; to find ways of disseminating our particular approach and if possible to offer training to others. This need for dissemination and training has become ever clearer, for as word has spread locally about the group others have contacted us to see if we could run a group in their immediate area. This is beyond our capacity, but we can provide training and mentoring. The four singing leaders from Ipswich who visited in February sourced some funding so that Rowena could run a day's training for them and their volunteers. This took place on 6 March and covered some of the many component parts at the heart of our approach to this work. We want to develop a longer, detailed training course, one that would last approximately 10 weeks and would be followed by mentoring, so that more singing leaders can be helped to develop and spread this important work.

3.2. Lifecraft Singers

The Lifecraft Charity has now taken over the management of the Singers since the start of this financial year and £900 was transferred to Lifecraft from our funds which had been earmarked for the Lifecraft Singers. We have continued to link in with the singers and Penny Lutoslawska who leads them. We invite them to our events and in December ReSound Choir sang alongside the Lifecraft Singers as they busked at the Mill Road Winter Fair.

3.3. Street Voices



After seven years of tireless fundraising and leadership, Kay Barrett decided the time had come to retire from leading the group and as recent funding applications had not been successful, the decision was made to bring Street Voices to an end in its current form. Over the years, Kay and the wonderful volunteers she has worked with have given great support and inspiration in a friendly, encouraging way to many homeless and vulnerably housed people. On Friday mornings, Akeman Street Community Room has been full of music, laughter, creativity, and endless mugs of tea. The group has enabled and supported socially marginalised people to have their voices heard and to create their own music and the group has given many wonderful and moving performances throughout the city and beyond. Kay and the Street Voices volunteers have sung, shared, encouraged, listened, supported, cajoled, advocated and given so much, sometimes in challenging circumstances, and we know that the



work and achievements of Street Voices will live on as inspiration for future work.



harmonicas and guitar strings for two street musicians.

So, Street Voices has come to an end, after a period of gently winding down and supporting the participants to consider their next steps. Most of the group members have plans for other activities, which will help to take the place of the group in their lives. For example, one participant is planning to join The Michaelhouse Choir in Cambridge for people with mental health issues; another has joined a computing class. The Talking in Tune committee has agreed that some money can be used from unrestricted funds to support the ongoing purchases of

Kay wrote on the last blog from the group, <http://www.streetvoices.org.uk/>

We finally came to the end of the wonderful Street Voices era on 4th March 2015, when we held our very last Street Voices session at 82 Akeman Street.

We decided to make that morning a celebration of everything we had achieved and experienced during the past 7 years – a real roller-coaster ride of performances and outings, plus the quieter times working on songs and enjoying each others' company. We thought of absent friends, of course. And we enjoyed a final celebratory lunch together, our favourite meal of fish and chips. Members each received one of the trademark red bandannas as a keepsake and a reminder of the fun times we have enjoyed together.

We hope this website will continue to be an inspiration to anyone, anywhere, starting a music group for homeless and vulnerably housed people, or indeed any group of people looking for the joy and empowerment which making music together can bring.

We will continue to post details of upcoming musical events for the homeless community in Cambridge, so do keep an eye on this site.

Also, if you visited this site hoping to join a music group, there is good news! Friends and neighbours of the 82 Akeman Street Community Centre are invited to join a new music group called 'Good Sounds' which will meet on Friday mornings, 10.30–12.30. Anyone over 18 is welcome. There is a small charge of £1 per session to help cover costs. You can find out more by contacting the Community Centre on 01223 508150.

The photo below shows the 'tree' we made at the end of January, with the leaves and flowers each representing some of the gifts and qualities we have received from the group over the years. We hope we have sowed seeds which will continue to bear fruit in other places and other ways. Thank you everyone who has taken part in Street Voices or supported us in any way, and may the gift of music continue to nourish you on your life's journey.



The Future

Jimmy's Hostel and Day Centre have agreed in principle that they would like to host a 'Street Voices' style music group. The hope is that Jimmy's current residents (known as 'guests') will be on the spot and so form our core group of participants, with other service users returning specially for the sessions. Kay is very happy to start this group off, with remaining funds allocated to Street Voices in the *Talking in Tune* account, with the idea that she is likely to hand the group on to someone else at some stage, once it has found its feet.

Good Sounds: The Community Project Worker at 82 Akeman Street is setting up a new self-funding music group at Akeman Street on Friday mornings, starting in May. She has recruited former volunteers from the Street Voices team to take part in the group.

4. Sing and Swim, 5 July



Our 10th early evening Sing & Swim event at Jesus Green Pool raised £1858.73 for WaterAid. The weather was again perfect and around 400 people came along to what is now one of the favourite community summer events in the city. Musicians who played while people swam and picnicked were the Andy Bowie Quartet, No Strings Attached, Tom Ling and Jon Betmead and Pete Towers. Les Ray was the excellent sound engineer. Singers shared summer- and bicycle-themed songs from the Milton Rd School Choir, Cycle of Songs choir (hot-footing it from the Big Day Out event on Parkers Piece), Good Vibrations and ReSound choirs and the homemade cakes were perfect. Thanks to Anna-Louise Lawrence for coordinating the school's involvement, all volunteers and cake bakers and sellers.



5. Sing for Water London, 15 September

25 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. These annual events since 2001 have raised over £700,000 for WaterAid and are only possible because of the support and participation from choirs and community singing groups around the UK.

6. The Talking in Tune Christmas Busk for Winter Comfort, 20 December

Over 70 people turned up to sing by the Guildhall. We raised £230 for Winter Comfort, the local charity which supports homeless people.

7. Workshops and performances

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's major participation and fundraising event took place on the weekend of 8–9 November 2014.



On 8 November, a cappella quartet the B Naturals visited us from the southwest. The quartet, alongside ReSound, the Cambridge a cappella choir, gave a sell-out concert at St Paul's Church.



The following day, Sunday 9 November, the B Naturals led a singing workshop at Castle Hill Methodist Church Hall attended by 60 people.



In total, as we ran a successful fundraising campaign alongside these events to encourage people to support Talking in Tune via Local Giving, £3688 was raised for Talking in Tune. Thanks go to Sylvia Dannreuther and Sue Durham for organising both events and to Sylvia for coordinating the Local Giving campaign, to our donors and to the great team of volunteers who helped it all to run smoothly.

8. Wider Ripples

The Cycle of Songs



This Arts Council-funded project was commissioned by Cambridge City Council and was devised by Pilot Theatre and Historyworks to mark the arrival of the Tour de France in Cambridge on 7 July 2014. Rowena Whitehead was the Musical Director and hundreds of local people were involved in singing events from May to July, many of whom got involved via Talking in Tune and the singing development and community building work we have done over the years. This ambitious project involved commissioning a team of composers to write nine songs based on the stories of nine iconic places on the route of the Tour de France in Cambridge and teaching them to local choirs and singers, who then recorded their songs for the Cycle of Songs App. Alongside this, there were several community singing events, including a Singing Celebration Day on 11 May at Great St Mary's Church, showcasing the singing of local choirs, two Pop-Up Cycle of Songs performances in the city centre on 29 June, a communal sing at the City Council's Big Day Out AND at the Sing and Swim.

On 5 July, a community choir of 350 people of all ages sang Cycle-themed songs to thousands of people as the Tour de France cyclists passed the Fitzwilliam Museum as they processed through Cambridge. See www.cycleofsongs.org

9. Future Plans

1. We will consolidate the work of the Memory Notes and offer training and support to people who wish to set up similar groups. We will plan a training course for people who wish to do this kind of work.
2. We will continue to create events, workshops and performances which are inclusive, participative and community-building.
3. We will continue to organise accessible, high-quality singing workshops and performances. Some of these will be fundraising events for Talking in Tune projects.
4. We will look for alternative sources of funding for our work and continue to encourage local people to support our work via Local Giving.
5. We will continue to support volunteers who want to develop singing workshops and activities and to support the work of local singing leaders.
6. We will continue to liaise with other organisations in the city to support the development of more music making and singing in the community.

10. Grateful Thanks to:

- The Talking in Tune Committee for all their hard work and support in keeping Talking in Tune organised.
- Kay Barrett for her work with Street Voices and Yvonne Cieslik-Bridgen – Support Worker
- The Street Voices volunteers: Holly Dawson, Moniek Hopman, Neil Harris, Dick Ansell, Kate Meaby, Alex Squires, Mary Yardly.
- Penny Lutoslawska for her work with the Lifecraft Singers.
- Rowena Whitehead, leader of The Memory notes, and Sylvia Dannreuther, Coordinator.
- The volunteers with the The Memory Notes – Sharron Mahoney, Cathy Hadridge, Jo Thulbourn, Kate Grillet, Elaine Brown, Andrew Bradford, Chris Burgess, Lorraine Mitchell.
- All the volunteers who give cheerful and practical support to enable the Talking in Tune events to happen – over 60 people, so thank you everyone.
- Denise Neapolitan for administrative support.
- Les Ray and all musicians and singers who supported the Sing and Swim event.
- Sylvia Dannreuther and Sue Durham for their work in organising Talking in Tune workshops, and the volunteers who help on the days.
- Anna-Louise Lawrence for her support for Sing and Swim, and to Lorraine Mitchell and Sam Wynne for coordinating our participation in Sing for Water, London.
- Our funders:
 - Awards for all
 - Cambridgeshire Community Foundation
 - Cambridge Water
 - The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
 - St Andrews Church Histon
 - Two charitable trusts who prefer to remain anonymous
 - Friends and supporters who have given very generously via Local Giving/Grow Your Tenner/Gift Aid

11. Talking in Tune Committee 2014–15

Frances Sword (Chair)
Simon Watkins (Treasurer)
Sue Durham (Secretary)
Miranda Armour Brown
Anne Chippindale
Sue McLean
Rowena Whitehead, Musical Director (non-voting member)