



Annual Report and Accounts for year ending 31 March 2026



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A message from the Chair

An interesting, and perhaps surprising, fact about group singing is that it's more about listening than singing. To blend and balance our voices, singers need to listen to voices around them rather than to their own performance. We have to trust each other's contribution to our shared sound. This active, outward listening connects singers, helping us to create the hoped-for harmonies.

Our capacity to hear one another brings wider benefits; in a 2018 US study, *Singing for a Lifetime*, roughly 70% of singers reported that listening and singing together improved their social skills in other arenas. Nearly two-thirds of singers surveyed believed taking part in group singing had made them more tolerant of people who held different views. Singers are more likely than the general public to volunteer and contribute positively to their communities. Could this be linked to singing improving our listening skills?

Talking in Tune has long believed in using music as a tool to bridge divides and engender positive action. We understand that songs can channel difficult feelings and inspire courage, build cohesion and provide comfort.

In the past year our singing groups, Memory Notes and Singing for Breathing, have met on 78 occasions, enabling nearly 100 local people to share all these experiences. Many more singers were able to participate in two stunning Talking in Tune singing workshops and an extremely successful fundraising busk at Christmas.

In a year that has already seen much social division, let us hope that Talking in Tune's commitment to singing together can play its part in bringing communities together and helping us find common ground.

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 be able 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 developed out of the work of Rowena Whitehead and Sue Parlby and gained charitable trust status in 2004.

2. The year in brief

We continued to support Memory Notes and Singing for Breathing in their vital work. We initiated an evaluation process for participants of both groups, the findings of which were very positive. We brought a wider singing community together through two successful workshops. We undertook a rebranding of Talking in Tune, with the aim of communicating our work, our mission and our values clearly and effectively.

3. Funded projects



Founded in 2014, Memory Notes is a singing group for people living with dementia and their carers. The following report is by group leader Agi Peach.

There are currently 22 families on our register. Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, we held 42 sessions, with an average of 41 attendees – 16 people with dementia and 9 volunteers, with the rest of the group made up of carers and guests.

We have welcomed seven new families over the past year to the group and two have returned after a long absence; and sadly lost eight families. Unfortunately, this kind of transition is to be expected in a group like ours, as we lose people to failing health and various other reasons. Four families whose loved ones have moved into various care facilities still bring their loved ones to Memory Notes. Overall, numbers tend to remain stable, with a slight increase since my last report. We are now at full capacity.

We have 15 dedicated and highly skilled volunteers who support the group and never fail to go the extra mile for our attendees.

What happens at Memory Notes

Each Wednesday morning, we begin our sessions chatting over refreshments. This is an invaluable part of what we do, as this is how friendships and support networks are fostered.



We then form a large circle to sing songs on a different theme each week. Attendees are encouraged to bring along relevant items to share with the group and invited to contribute poems and songs. This year we have started to open our sessions with dancing, in response to

requests from participants. There are opportunities to play percussion instruments too. We have introduced the use of rhythm sticks, which allows the whole group to play together. Most songs are familiar and are sung from memory, but we do provide lyrics and have begun the process of reorganising our songbooks so they are more user-friendly.



However, Memory Notes is more than just a singing group. It is a happy little community with a genuine sense of friendship and support amongst its members. The sessions are filled with smiles and laughter, and people tend to leave singing, even dancing!

After each session, the volunteers stay on for a short debriefing, sharing observations and news. This is a very important factor in the success of the group, contributing to the quality of our care for attendees.

We constantly strive to improve our services and respond to new challenges. For example, with an increased number of wheelchair users attending this year, we have found new ways to arrange our space so it is accessible and safe for everyone.

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

Benefits

There is an ever-growing body of evidence showing the benefits of group singing for people living with dementia and their carers. These include:

- stimulation
- connecting with past memories
- improved sense of wellbeing
- social inclusion and support
- a sense of self-worth, accomplishment and belonging
- a positive impact on relationships and communication

At any Memory Notes session, these benefits can be seen in action. Carers report that there is a spark in their loved ones' eyes when they realise they are on their way to Memory Notes and that the positive effects of the sessions often linger. People who find speaking a challenge may be able to recall and enjoy singing the words of familiar songs. Carers find comfort and companionship in meeting other carers and take pleasure in seeing their loved ones enjoying themselves.



What next?

We will continue to bring the benefits of singing to members, continually reviewing what we do to provide the best possible service to our participants.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Talking in Tune trustees conducted an evaluation during this period, inviting Memory Notes participants to give feedback about their experiences. Here are some key findings and comments.

A significant majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that singing helped them connect with others and helped them relax. A sizeable majority felt that singing helped bring back memories; all but one felt part of the Memory Notes community.



All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that singing brings them joy, that they enjoy singing with others and enjoy being part of a group. Most felt lighter and happier both during and after the sessions and looked forward to them.

Carers were also invited to give feedback. All respondents reported that Memory Notes was effective or highly effective at delivering a joyful experience for all, opportunities for fun social interactions, activities that contribute to general wellbeing and a safe, supportive space where everyone is valued.

I feel it is a lifeline for M, it really gives her such a boost. As her ability to verbalise diminishes – and my ability to understand what she is trying to communicate – it really helps us to connect and communicate with each other.

Dad has moved into residential care since starting Memory Notes; his daily life has changed a lot for this reason. However, I have noticed that he has become more keen to perform and cheer up others since starting – the group seems to have brought out his innate humour.

The group gives me an opportunity to do something with my mum that I genuinely enjoy – we both benefit from the group.

It's a time for me to escape the reality of living with an illness 24/7 for a few hours, in a magical way.

No emphasis on attendees having dementia – just a group enjoying meeting and singing. So many happy faces.

[What I like best about Memory Notes is] singing and dancing and meeting friends who have the same dementia that I have.



Established in 2016, Singing for Breathing is open to any adult from the Cambridge area who is suffering from breathlessness. The following report is by group leader Joanna Burton.

Regular fortnightly in-person and online sessions continue to run during term time. In the last year we have run 18 in-person sessions and 18 online sessions. Most participants choose to attend either in person or on Zoom. A few do both, and they really benefit from a weekly rather than fortnightly session.

Over the last year we have had 24 participants of the online group, with a recent average of 7-9 regular members at each session, with no volunteers, as none are needed online. The Zoom sessions are 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 24 members of the in-person group over the year, and usually have 8-10 at each session, along with two volunteers drawn from our team of four - Claire, Meg, Peter and Cathy - who are warm, welcoming, empathetic and very supportive.

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 a song with counting or lists, or holding final notes - we can extend the outbreath and build stamina.

The songs that we learn and enjoy in each session are also carefully chosen to try to build towards our aims. Each session is planned with a healthy and stimulating range of material and songs in mind while always trying to ensure that what we do with each song or exercise supports our aims – for example, we might include a song where line 3 is double the length of lines 1 and 2, so the outbreath is extended.



Participants are increasingly keen to suggest songs and we take their ideas on board where possible, adapting them if necessary, to make them appropriate for a Singing for Breathing session and the needs of the participants.

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!

What next?

We are investigating the possibility of introducing additional sessions in response to requests from participants.

Following a successful free trial offered to suitable patients via a local GP practice, which brought us two regular new attendees, we will be running a similar trial with another GP practice.

New publicity posters are in preparation which will be displayed at relevant locations in the Cambridge area to attract new participants who could benefit from our work.

Links are actively maintained with Papworth Hospital's Pulmonary Rehab unit, Anglia Ruskin University's Respiratory and Thoracic Care and the respiratory team at Addenbrookes Hospital.

EVALUTION FINDINGS

Talking in Tune trustees conducted an evaluation during this period, inviting Singing for Breathing participants to give feedback about their experiences. Here are some key findings and comments:

A significant majority of respondents reported that they had changed how they think and feel about their breathing, with several agreeing or strongly agreeing that the sessions had helped them to manage their breathing.

A majority agreed that singing helps them to relax.

All respondents said they thought Singing for Breathing was effective in supporting lung health and breathing, over half of these saying they thought it was highly effective.

I have more energy now, and especially after the singing class my voice is much stronger. I can go on longer walks. I can manage my breathing now and don't have to worry so much.

I am under Papworth Hospital and the physio there said they cannot give me any better help than what I'm getting at the group.

I am more positive about my asthma. I can manage my asthma and can make a difference.

I can walk further. Before I became short of breath. I used to do shallow breathing but now because of heightened awareness I breathe differently which has improved my COPD.

Feeling more able to breathe without stressing. Not as anxious. More able to focus on the breath/lungs without feeling panic.

I am able to get up more stairs and cycle a bit further. I enjoy singing when I did not before. I feel very accepted by the group which has given me more confidence to join other social groups. I understand how to regulate my breathing and I can avoid constant gasping now.

My breathing range became larger and asthma attacks less frequent.

4. Singing workshops



Open to everyone, our workshops are friendly community events which bring people together with the help of some of the UK's best singing leaders. Any surplus income 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, with a total of 120 singers, including first-time participants as well as many who regularly attend our workshops.



Anna Tabbush, 18 October 2025

Composer, choir conductor and singer Anna Tabbush joined us for the first time, teaching a selection of her own songs, including much-loved *Harbour*, and creating beautiful four-part harmonies. We received glowing feedback from many participants, including this: 'A truly magical day. Inspiring.'

Ryan O'Riordan, 14 March 2026

Also new to Talking in Tune, Ryan O'Riordan, a young London-based choir and workshop leader, delighted the 60-strong group with his energy and humour, introducing a mix of songs with strong themes of resilience and community. One participant wrote to say: 'Such an enjoyable singing session with a super-talented and engaging leader.'



5. Other events

Talking in Tune Christmas Busk

The annual Talking in Tune Christmas Busk took place on 13 December 2025 at St Bene't's Church in Cambridge. Following a concert by ReSound choir, people gathered in the churchyard to sing carols together. £1921 was collected for Wintercomfort, the Cambridge-based homelessness charity.

6. Financial review

For the year ending 31 March 2026, Talking in Tune generated income of £17,639 from a mixture of grants, donations and running workshops. Expenditure to deliver the two continuing programmes, Memory Notes and Singing for Breathing, and two singing workshops that are open to all, was £15,915.

In delivering the programmes, Talking in Tune has utilised £1,011 of restricted funds in the period and increased the unrestricted funds by £2,735, due to surpluses generated from the workshops and general donations to the charity. Overall, Talking in Tune had a small surplus of £1,724 for the year.

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 these 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 ability of the charity to continue to deliver our programmes, the trustees seek to retain a level of funding equivalent to six months' expenditure.

For the year ending 31 March 2026, total expenditure was £17.6k; six months' expenditure on this basis would therefore be £8.8k. Actual unrestricted funds are £19.4k.

Although this is higher than the target of six months' expenditure, 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 as of 31 March 2026:

Unrestricted Funds	£19,473
Restricted Funds	£11,542
Total	£31,015

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 to bring its benefits to more people.
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: Alison Deane, Andrew Bradford, Chris Burgess, Chris West, Elaine Brown, Eli Marreros, Faith Johnson, Gill October, Nikki Searle, Jenny Knowelden, Jo Thulborn, Pam Scott, Paul Christie, Penny Lutoslawska, Rowena Whitehead.

Joanna Burton, leader of Singing for Breathing

Volunteers: Cathy Davies, Claire Bright, Meg Clarke, Peter Scourfield.

Anna Kent, Kate Hendry and Sian Leary for their major contributions to our branding and website redesign.

Stephen Davies for invaluable help with fundraising.

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

Our funders: Education Services, the Pye Foundation.

Friends and supporters who have given financial aid.

10. Talking in Tune committee

Sally Fenn (Chair)

Jane Kershaw (Secretary)

Lynsey Newbery (Treasurer)

Rowena Whitehead (Musical Director - non-voting member)

Anne Clark

Sue Doughty

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

Talking in Tune Financial Statement for year ending 31 March 2026



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name: Talking In Tune		Charity No (if any)	1105061
Annual accounts for the period			
Period start date	01.04.2025	To	Period end date
			31.03.26

Section A Statement of financial activities

Recommended categories by activity	Unrestricted funds £ F01	Restricted income funds £ F02	Endowment funds £ F03	Total funds £ F04	Prior year funds £ F05
Incoming resources					
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	1,919	6,540	-	8,459	10,186
Charitable activities	3,300	5,806	-	9,106	8,025
Other trading activities	-	-	-	-	-
Investments	74	-	-	74	120
Separate material item of income	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5,293	12,346	-	17,639	18,331
Resources expended					
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities	2,558	13,357	-	15,915	19,213
Separate material item of expense	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2,558	13,357	-	15,915	19,213
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)	2,735	- 1,011	-	1,724	- 882
Net gains/(losses) on investments	-	-	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)	2,735	- 1,011	-	1,724	- 882
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	2,735	- 1,011	-	1,724	- 882
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	16,738	12,553	-	29,291	30,073
Total funds carried forward	19,473	11,542	-	31,015	29,191

Charity Name: Talking in Tune	Charity No	1105061			
	Company No				
Annual accounts for the period			To period end date: 31.3.26		
Section B Balance sheet					

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total this year	Total last year
	£	£	£	£	£
	F01	F02	F03	F04	F05
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	-	-	-	-	-
Tangible assets	-	-	-	-	-
Heritage assets	-	-	-	-	-
Investments	-	-	-	-	-
Total fixed assets	-	-	-	-	-
Current assets					
Stocks	-	-	-	-	-
Debtors	-	-	-	-	-
Investments	-	-	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	19,483	13,378	-	32,861	29,967
Total current assets	19,483	13,378	-	32,861	29,967
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	1,836	-	1,846	-
Net current assets/(liabilities)	19,473	11,542	-	31,015	29,967
Total assets less current liabilities	19,473	11,542	-	31,015	29,967
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	-	-	-	-	-
Provisions for liabilities	-	-	-	-	-
Total net assets or liabilities	19,473	11,542	-	31,015	29,967
Funds of the Charity					
Endowment funds	-	-	-	-	-
Restricted income funds		11,542	-	11,542	13,330
Unrestricted funds	19,473	-	-	19,473	15,961
Revaluation reserve	-	-	-	-	-
Fair value reserve	-	-	-	-	-
Total funds	19,473	11,542	-	31,015	29,291

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
Lynsey Newbery	01/05/2026

Signature of director authenticating accounts being sent to Companies House

Print name
Signature

	Date of approval dd/mm/yyyy