



Music In Our Bones Trustees Annual Report

1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021

Reference and administration details

Charity Name and Registered Charity Number : Music In Our Bones 1166578

Charity's principle address and contact: Tracy Sharp 203 Ranelagh Road, Ipswich IP2 0AH

Names of Charity Trustees who manage the charity:

Ian Heywood (Chairperson, cheque signatory, Health and Safety officer)

Elizabeth Gerrie (Secretary, cheque signatory)

Ian Flower (Treasurer)

Oliver Knowland

Pamela Wagstaff (Compliments and Complaints officer)

Allan Williams

Judith Goldsmith (Safeguarding Officer)

Adrian Stannard-Smith joined November 2020

Structure Governance and Management

1. Music In Our Bones is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a foundation model constitution
2. If a new trustee is needed, gaps in expertise and experience are discussed at a trustee meeting and people known to the team are approached based on that discussion and prior professional and personal knowledge.
Initial meetings with co-founders of Music In Our Bones are held to explore the role and the suitability of the post. If the post is suitable and the person approached able to meet the charity's needs the post of trustee is offered and accepted at this point.
Access to Community Action Suffolk's Trustee training is offered if needed.
3. Four trustee meetings are held annually, one of which is the AGM. Decisions, if needed, can be agreed via email if a trustee is unable to attend.
4. Our Chairperson, Ian Heywood, is the named person able to deal with any major Health and Safety concerns, Liz Gerrie is our Secretary, Judith Goldsmith is our Safeguarding Officer and Pam Wagstaff deals with any Compliments or Complaints. Our Treasurer, Ian Flower, a retired accountant, checks all financial management issues and provides interim management reports at each meeting. Adrian Stannard-Smith settled into his role as trustee this year, managing all the charity's cash handling, recording and banking on a voluntary basis.
5. As Music In Our Bones has no offices, debts, or outgoings other than workshop delivery, there are few financial risks as if funding was insufficient, workshops would stop.
6. Music In Our Bones accounts are independently inspected by Accountants John Phillips and Co Ltd, Unit 81, Centaur Court, Claydon Business Park, Great Blakenham. Ipswich IP6 0NL.

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

To advance the education of amateur singers, primarily in Suffolk, of all abilities by offering an opportunity for anyone to sing with others, without an audition or former experience of choral singing, in particular but not exclusively, for Family Carers and for those with a disability.

Summary of main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to those objects

94 face to face singing sessions during the year created regular singing opportunities and the support that our singing communities offer to a total of 173 individuals. (Pre-pandemic Jan – Mar 2020 we reached 203 people so we have successfully retained or made new contact with 87% of our singers)

39 zooms offered additional singing support to our singing communities, especially during periods of lockdown or limited face to face opportunities.

We also supported Inside Out Arts Community with 3 termly zoom sings for people in recovery from serious mental health distress and in-patient stays reaching a further 18 individuals and Suffolk Refugee Support's International Women's Group with 3 termly sings reaching 15 more.

Total individuals benefitting from 100 singing sessions (regular sessions plus outreach) = 206

Total new singers attracted to our regular groups = 46 (30 face to face, 16 via zoom)

Our new website

This was launched in April thanks to the dedication and talent of our administrative support, Janine Tompkins <http://musicinourbones.com/>

It includes a new gallery <http://musicinourbones.com/galleries/>

Research and feedback from our singers :
<http://musicinourbones.com/benefits-of-singing-2/>

And our legacy of sings anyone on-line can sing along with whenever they need a sing with us! <http://musicinourbones.com/music-videos/>

January to April 2021

During an initial period of lockdown we replaced 'live' singing sessions with:

- 10 half termly zooms,
- 2 You Tube films (sent out to 250 households) and
- 5 fortnightly CDs (sent out to 140+ singers)
- Our telephone support network continued to be hugely valued by those who were lonely, anxious, isolated or facing crises.

Trying to offer our singers a sense of purpose and meaningful involvement with us, we requested photos to create film montages against which songs were set. Lyrics were also requested and new songs written and recorded to honour and share our singers talents.

Following our singers expressed concerns, we realised we needed to plan a safe staged way forward in order to rebuild shattered confidence and overcome very real anxiety about mixing with anyone other than family.

A staged approach back to face to face singing

Government restrictions and high Covid infection rates meant that our face to face singing initially had to be outdoor from April to July. Our staged approach, (through too much wind and rain!)included:

1. Firstly doorstep sings

30 doorstep visits reached 36 of our most isolated singers, many living alone and without good family support, others managing challenging caring roles, many without the internet



2. Then, small group sings of 6



3. Next, larger sings in larger yet still 'private' community spaces as confidence built.



22 garden sings reached 181 (many under umbrellas!)

Our singers generously offered their gardens for small gatherings and we used local 'private' spaces like the Brickmakers wood and Chantry Park walled garden for our larger July sings.

During April-July we reached 127 individuals in song. Our outdoor sings were attended by 201 singers, several accessing more than one event.

TWO NEW ON-LINE GROUPS LAUNCHED IN 2021

1. Singing for the Brain

Fortnightly singing for the brain zooms were piloted from April, following training from the Alzheimers society attended by Mark Coburn, Jill Jennings and Tracy Sharp, finding and sharing favourite popular songs alongside the teaching of songs easily taught.

Initially these were focussed on reaching out to Family carers and their partners living with dementia allowing us to 'seed' a new Musical Memories group in Bury and better support Family Carers with challenging roles.



However, they have proved to be popular and are now accessed by a wide range of our singers, some singers unable to leave their homes now due to their disabilities or health vulnerabilities as well as Family Carers keen to have an extra sing alongside their partners at home. Others dip in and out if the weather is bad, or if they are recovering from Covid or post operatively and stuck at home for any reason.

Individuals reached : 40 Average group size : 10 New to Music In Our Bones: 15

2. Songflight

Songflight is a singing project run by Jennie Fisk and Tracy Sharp. It offers a monthly zoom sing focussing on calming anxiety and extending the breath using a variety of chanting, sounding, and gentle songs to achieve this.

It is hoped that the sessions will prove especially useful for anyone with COPD, Long Covid or those trying to manage high levels of anxiety post covid. Zoom also banishes self-consciousness and allows people to really experiment with their voices and to sing out in the privacy of their own homes..

"Thank you for our lovely session together this afternoon. I enjoyed it so much more, being on mute; less embarrassing for myself and more comfortable to the ears of others....!"



Individuals reached : 18 Average group size : 12 New to Music In Our Bones: 1

WELLSPRING CLOSED JULY 2021

Having never closed a group before, we were sad to have to close WellSpring which was started in 2013. It seems however highly likely that the Covid epidemic will continue, possibly for years, to prevent such a project being advisable. Sadly, it will be some time before large groups of people from the community are encouraged to sing alongside very vulnerable elderly people in a tightly packed unventilated and very warm shared lounge.

Having sung twice outside Margery Girling House during the pandemic, we returned in July to bid them all farewell with a leaving garden party, residents singing and waving from inside the lounge, our community volunteers leading the singing from outside. Trays of cakes and cups of tea were shared with both. It was a very sad

goodbye, both to community members, Margery Girling residents and to Trish Bessell as their much loved song leader. WellSpring was a project which forged some beautiful relationships and brought us into contact with a wonderful group of older people willing to share their rich lives with us as they joined us in song.



Sept-Dec

- We had a total of 623 attendees (450 face to face indoors, 183 via zoom)
- 42 face to face sessions indoors were run (42 face to face indoors plus 17 Singing for the Brain zooms April –Dec and 2 Songflight zooms Nov - Dec)
- These reached 173 individuals (158 face to face indoors, 16 newcomers via zoom)
- 21 of these individuals had/have zoom contact only, plus 9 telephone /txt contact only

Throughout the year

1740 CDs (approx.)were sent out 12 CDs with replacement singing sessions were sent out fortnightly Jan – Dec 2021. **These went to 145+ households.** These were recorded by singing leaders, edited and produced by a singing leader and then packaged and posted by our amazing volunteer Donna Thrower. They lifted spirits and made a difference!

“Many thanks for the last ‘Best of..’ CD. I have just sung my way through it with you-never mind what the neighbours thought. As usual you lifted my mood, and now I’m ready to tackle all that comes my way! I’m gonna play that CD again now , louder this time-and I might dance too! Thanks again.”

“X has his computer set up in the kitchen and when your cd comes through the door he is straight on that computer singing along. He finds it more difficult when he can’t see your lips to follow but he tries and keeps trying.”

- **6 You tube videos** were filmed or created as replacement sings by Frankie Fisk and sent out in 2021. **These have had between 150-550 views**
 1. Photo montage for ‘Hold you in our circle’
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMMzjZCib9U>
 2. Photo montage for ‘What a wonderful world’
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-z3bZxqgrg>
 3. Helmingham Hall Spring visit – April 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lh0pksIGC8>

4. Celebration of doorstep visits – May 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUX4-H87lys>
5. Garden sings- July 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nL-C2LE1oE>
6. Helmingham Hall summer visit in the rain September 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1jO9GpdZno>

Throughout the pandemic, our aim has been to continue to offer a rich musical life-line to all we sing with albeit in different ways. Feedback from our singers suggests that these efforts have played a significant role in their mental well-being at a time of extraordinary isolation for so many.

“ My life is restricted, I am dedicated to caring for my beloved wife who is sadly in the final stages of Dementia and MS. I have no other excitement or joy in my life, save for the wonderful gift of song. You travel all over Suffolk, bringing singing to we isolated carers. You have given us the opportunity to sing via Zoom too during the dark times, these sings are the glimmering light that casts such a spell on we lonely people. I honestly can't imagine life without Music In Our Bones”

OUR SINGING LEADER TEAM

None of the above could have been achieved without the astonishing level of commitment , flexibility and talents shown by our singing leader team. Our team worked incredibly hard throughout the year, in an inspiringly responsive and imaginative way, ensuring that our singers continued to know they mattered and that spirits continued to be lifted in song. Mark Coburn worked tirelessly to edit and produce 145+ lovely CDs fortnightly through much of the year, and Frankie Fisk's film-making creativity helped create a beautiful legacy of our singing year via our new You Tube channel. The work and talent of both were hugely appreciated by so many of our singers.

TRISH BESSELL RETIRED JULY 2021



We were sad to bid farewell to Trish Bessell who retired in July after over a decade of wonderful leadership, sharing Musical Memories and WellSpring groups, both of which included some of the most frail and vulnerable of all our singers. Her joie de

vivre and ability to whip up a party atmosphere, as well as her ability to tell and encourage stories and to showcase our singers talents will be much missed.

NEW SINGING LEADER JOINED TEAM - JILL JENNINGS APRIL 2021

We are lucky to have found Jill Jennings as a new member of the team. Jill brings with her huge expertise as a talented musician, confident with several instruments, as well as a life time of teaching and singing with children in schools and more recent experience alongside Mark leading singing with groups for older people. She joins Mark Coburn, Jennie Fisk, Fran Flower, Ian Heywood, Helen Rolfe, Denise Steward and Tracy Sharp – a fine and hugely supportive singing leader team.

VOLUNTEERS

Our dedicated teams of volunteers with Musical Memories and Songlines have offered astonishing support throughout the year to other members of their groups. Some have telephoned weekly throughout the year and had hour long conversations with Family Carers and Stroke survivors who were tremendously cut off from the world by the pandemic. Many have filled their cars whenever small group singing became possible and encouraged people without transport and with limited mobility to refind the confidence to come out again to join us.

Friendships and peer support within groups has been deepened immeasurably because of people's need of one another and appreciation of generosity, kindness and contact during such lonely times. Many now meet regularly outside of their sings, some go walking together, others are offering practical help to others in need, many talk regularly. Wonderful new circles of support have emerged.

Donna Thrower offered the charity a remarkable number of hours of time patiently sending out 145+ CDs fortnightly through much of the year. We were pleased to thank her at Bury HeartSong this April 2022 with the presentation of a gift from us all to show our huge gratitude to her and to mark her special contribution in keeping our singing community connected throughout the pandemic



OUR GROUPS

The following are details of how many individuals have returned to their face to face group

- **Lifting Spirits** run by Fran Flower, Jennie Fisk and Tracy Sharp fortnightly (The group due its size has been split into two, each group meets monthly now although we prioritise singers who have expressed the need for more frequent contact and they attend both sessions a month. Now moved to Castle Hill Primary School – a more spacious venue)

Individuals returned : 28. Average group size : 13. New to the group : 2.



Garden sings with Lifting Spirits

- **Ipswich HeartSong** run by Jennie Fisk and Tracy Sharp once monthly (now moved to Rushmere Village Hall - a more spacious venue)

"It was SO lovely to see you and the Heartsong gang on Friday in Rosalyn's lovely garden, despite the rain. A big thank you for all your efforts to keep us singing, smiling and laughing."

Individuals returned : 22 Average group size : 11 New to the group : 4



- **Bury HeartSong** singers run by Jennie Fisk and Tracy Sharp until July when Denise Steward joined Tracy to lead the group once monthly (now moved to the Bury Quaker meeting house with the changed time of Thursday mornings)

Individuals returned : 21 Average group size : 9 New to the group : 5

" I am so glad I made it to Gill's beautiful garden for such a very happy afternoon. Boy you bring so much joy and fun. It was also so good apart from the singing, to hear X expressing what she has to manage, she is so young and I think brave."

- **Lowestoft HeartSong** run by Helen Rolfe and Tracy Sharp once monthly

Individuals returned : 27 Average group size : 15 New to the group : 4



- **Music In Mind** run by Fran Flower, Jennie Fisk, Ian Heywood and Tracy

Individuals returned : 31 Average group size : 11 New to the group : 6



- **Songlines** run by Mark Coburn and Tracy Sharp fortnightly. Denise Steward also supported the group with some face to face gatherings until September when she started leading the new Bury HeartSong group.

Individuals returned : 14 Average group size : 9 New to the group : 4



- **Musical memories Ipswich** run by Mark Coburn and Tracy Sharp fortnightly (now moved to Rushmere Village Hall)

Individuals returned : 25 Average group size : 11 New to the group : 9 (4 of these Suffolk Community Foundation visitors)



- **Musical Memories Bury** new group run by Mark Coburn and Tracy Sharp fortnightly since November (meets in the spacious Moreton Hall Community Centre)

Individuals reached : 13 Average group size : 8

New to Music In Our Bones: 6

Disappointments and Challenges

1. Outreach

Outreach has unfortunately been on hold throughout this period as it has been unsafe to encourage singing indoors in large groups. Our termly zoom sings with Inside Out and Suffolk Refugee Support have been all the outreach possible in 2021. Face to face outreach will hopefully resume if infection rates do finally fall. Bookings are in the diary to sing in support groups for Family Carers, Stroke survivors and those living with dementia in the summer months of 2022.

2. Partnership work

Our focus has been less outward looking than we would have liked as we have had to concentrate our time and energies in maintaining good contact with our singers and surviving as a charity financially. Managing the many transitions of the period together has also taken up all our energy and time resources.

We have however, developed a termly briefing for professionals which we will use to advertise places once it is possible to begin to increase group sizes safely once more.

We also sent out links of our You Tube sings to organisations we work closely with:

- Dementia Together
- Suffolk Family Carers
- Inside Out Community
- Suffolk Refugee Support's What's App connection with their International Women's Group "Thank you so much for leading sessions online with the Women's Group on the 24th November. The teachers and the women really enjoyed it. It is so nice to be able to provide them with some variety."
- Margery Girling House Very Sheltered Housing used our CDs to encourage sing alongs with residents now able to socialise with each other though not other than 1-1 with family
- Memory Lane Dementia Café's members via an emailed newsletter
- Community singing groups SongRise and YoxVox

3. Making difficult decisions to minimise covid risks for groups

We have halved the group size of our two biggest groups Music In Mind and Lifting Spirits by offering monthly sessions to two groups. Those with most need of the group due to living with cancer, managing more severe mental health recovery from psychiatric stays during the pandemic, in recovery from a brain injury or those especially lonely and isolated have been offered spaces in both fortnightly sessions. We hope once infection rates have dropped to bring these half groups back together once more providing it is safe to do so.

4. Closing WellSpring singing in order to open a second Musical Memories group in Bury St Edmunds.

The difficult decision to close the WellSpring project was made for the reasons stated above. This gave us the capacity to create a new group for Family Carers and people living with dementia in Bury where there is no such group having 'met' some new Family Carers and their partners via our Singing for the brain zoom pilot..

5. Difficulties growing groups that have lost members during the pandemic

With outreach taster sings not being possible, and the Dementia Together service losing its tender (meaning that usually very active workers have had to concentrate on closing the project), it has been difficult to recruit new couples to both dementia specific groups and to the Bury HeartSong, our smallest group.

Hopefully once we can begin again to sing with support groups this situation will improve. Active outreach has always proved essential to our development as so many people avoid singing thinking their voices aren't good enough and need to be convinced by experience otherwise!

6. Coping with grief and loss

Unsurprisingly, this has played an unusually large part of our work during the year. Some singers have died during the pandemic and others will not be able to return as their disability has increased, still more are now being cared for at home or in nursing care. Some of our work has been supporting singers and families during these critical times as they have been so isolated and without the support usually available. We have helped individuals and families with these losses in different ways:

- through phone and post contact sending cards from people's group
- signposting : in one case supporting a family carer using the safeguarding procedures to get the help he desperately needed and a move for his wife with advanced and challenging dementia into a nursing home
- Responding to family requests to honour the significance of singing with us in the lives of their loved ones : in one case attending a very small funeral, in another singing with group members at a memorial celebration alongside a few singers from her group
- supporting those offering peer support to others at these difficult times

Some successes this year

1. A mix of short and longer term bids has been successfully secured to enable groups to be sustained and developed.
2. Trustees, singing leader team and regular volunteers have been supported to maximise our energy, sense of purpose and commitment to our group members.

Consulting and communicating well throughout such a period of change has been vital.

3. The challenges of re-engaging our former singers in a staged safe way back to their singing communities has been largely successful. However, due to the pandemic, we have lost singers, some still too anxious to return to groups, others now too disabled to come out. Therefore outreach will play an important role in the year ahead.

4. A new Family Carers and dementia specific singing community has been established in Bury (using zoom pilots.)

5. Two new regular zoom sessions have been piloted and now added to our regular 'offer'. These are sustaining people who are especially isolated, new to us, or perhaps ill or simply in the need of additional sing and contact with a friendly community of singers.

6. Feedback from our singers has been especially strong and heartfelt over this difficult year. It always reveals that feeling part of one of our singing communities allows people, otherwise isolated by illness and disability and often lonely, to experience a meaningful sense of acceptance, connection and purpose that they find rare in life. This was sent after a Singing for the brain zoom.

"After singing I realise how light and happy I'm feeling, like I've got fresh oxygen in my lungs, happiness in my smile. I can tackle anything with a lift from singing with you all. Thanks you are true life lifters. You lift my spirits and refresh my memory. The harmonies balance my heartbeat. You make me feel loved. Its mentally invaluable work you do. Without your constant help I couldn't have got through these last few years on my own. Even when I have difficult days, I have you all to look forward to, giving me a reason to carry on."

The communal act of creating music together creates unusually strong bonds between people overcoming shyness and a host of other communication problems. Regular involvement in the project also has helped very vulnerable people to avoid crises. We had to use the Safeguarding procedures in one instance last year to prevent complete carer breakdown for instance. Singing regularly offers much valued support to those with difficult caring roles helping those to be sustained ,

'I want to say a huge heartfelt thank you for everything that you have both done to keep our spirits up and ticking over in joy and love and song during what has been my worse personal year ever. Your CDs, messages, YouTube bits, garden sings and once back in the church have been great. Such kindness, and keeping the singing alive.'

Most importantly, singing with Music In Our Bones has offered a fortnightly life-enhancing boost to people's spirits. As we know, singing literally changes how people feel: releasing endorphins so filling singers with a sense of happiness,

lowering cortisol levels so reducing stress, deepening breathing and synchronising heart rates so calming anxiety, encouraging gentle movement and dance so helping with mobility and reducing pain levels.

Our choice of songs has been especially important during these toughest of times. The songs we choose, often from different cultures and times, have a history and a belief that change for the better is possible. The energy and lift of singing with others often moves people to feel freer, to laugh and smile more easily and sometimes to cry and acknowledge the sadness and grief they are carrying knowing that it is a safe space to do so. Songs carrying a belief that change is on the way, and that we must never lose sight of hope, have been especially valued this year, and more recently being able to raise our voices and to share songs of peace as war rages in the Ukraine has been a significant act for many when everyone has been feeling so helpless.

8. Peer support within groups and volunteer singing support alongside us has been vital to maximise our impact as a charity, as outlined, our volunteers have been vitally important in maintaining our communities sense of togetherness.

9. Long and short-term benefits of singing with others has been captured from our singers frequent and positive feedback. We aim in the year ahead, now that groups are beginning to return, to focus on researching singing's benefits alongside our group members, encouraging them to have a growing understanding of what singing offers them and what they offer others in the singing.

Agreed by trustees at AGM 11 May 2022

Signature..........Date..........

Ian Heywood Chair

Signature..........Date..........

Ian Flower Treasurer

MUSIC IN OUR BONES

Income & Expenditure

	Year to 31st December 2021			Year to 31st December 2020		
	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total
Income						
Funding from Other Charities	£47,471		£47,471	£29,221		£29,221
Voluntary Donations		£5,603	£5,603		£3,982	£3,982
Total Income	£47,471	£5,603	£53,075	£29,221	£3,982	£33,203
Expenditure						
Costs of Running Workshops	£33,718	£2,862	£36,581	£29,975	£1,851	£31,827
Governance & Development		£2,246	£2,246		£4,334	£4,334
Total Expenditure	£33,718	£5,109	£38,828	£29,975	£6,185	£36,161
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	£13,752	£494	£14,247	(£754)	(£2,204)	(£2,958)

Reserves						
Brought Forward	£16,196	£12,554	£28,751	£16,950	£14,757	£31,708
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	£13,752	£494	£14,247	(£754)	(£2,204)	(£2,958)
Carried Forward	£29,949	£13,048	£42,998	£16,196	£12,554	£28,751

Represented by:					
Current Assets					
Bank & Cash Balances			£43,538		£29,901
Income Accruals					
Cost Prepayments					
Total Bank & Cash Balances			£43,538		£29,901
Current Liabilities					
Cost Accruals			£540		£1,150
Total Liabilities			£540		£1,150
Net Current Assets			£42,998		£28,751