

DSO TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR PERIOD TO END OF 2023

I. INTRODUCTION

The DSO Board of Trustees is proud of what has been achieved in bringing joy to so many people since the first DSO session on 4th July 2019 – venue changes, a world pandemic, increased running costs, logistical challenges facing the care sector as a whole have not dimmed that enthusiasm. The DSO website content & social media platforms provide a graphic snapshot of the charity's activities and are proof that every week we witness moments of magic; the recent 5 Year Anniversary celebration, the planning for which was itself evidence of the Charity's strength, was a fitting showcase for our successful story even though it technically took place outside of the return period.

We have been very deliberate in accepting that we cannot afford to take anything for granted. Against the backdrop of so many economic challenges across society and in the Charity sector particularly, the Trustees have been heartened by the continued growth in DSO's reach since the Charity's previous Annual Report. Care sector staffing and transportation challenges to Thursday sessions are largely out of our control but we marvel at the manner in which care home professionals and our charity volunteers conduct themselves and make immense efforts to support DSO. Our ongoing use of Zoom facility means that, despite the wearisome technical challenges, we can reach out to a wide audience but nothing beats the in-person experience.

DSO Trustees have been increasingly conscious of the need to back-up our natural enthusiasm by ensuring that we provide hard evidence of the success which we witness. Well-documented weekly data collection (both quantitative and qualitative) confirms our numerical expansion in attendees (this has grown by over 50% in the last 12 months) with weekly attendance now averaging 90-120 plus an additional 20-30 on-line. Our client base is an amalgam of Care Home residents and those who are brought by individual carers, relatives or friends; all are treated equally respectfully. Increased attendance has challenged our logistics whilst also allowing us to identify key trends. One example of this has been the necessity to accommodate an increasing number of clients with mobility issues which in turn has meant a re-organisation of space specifically for wheelchairs.

II. OVERVIEW of CHARITY'S ACTIVITIES

At the end of the reporting period we undertook a wide-ranging Strategic Review of the Charity's activities enabling us to re-establish commonly-held values, agree measures of success and future direction. This also included an analysis of threats and, although our charitable objectives remain unchanged, this has focused our determination to extend further our links with the local community and also to provide support to attendees outside of our weekly sessions.

One key decision that was agreed unanimously, was that, we will continue to focus on operating on one single weekly session. We have received requests for more frequent sessions but we concluded that because DSO runs, apart from our Musical Director, entirely with the help of unpaid volunteers, we simply could not expect yet more time commitments. However, because we are not prepared to standstill our expansion plans mean even more concerted effort on social prescribing linking with the local Care Sector and other related agencies; breakfast meetings, visits by, and invitations to, local professional bodies such as solicitors and care organisations are agreed ways forward in the coming 12 months. Already one spin-off from this initiative has been the thanks received from attendees for the legal and financial advice which new links have opened up. Expansion of presentations to potential benefactors will form another key element in our forward planning.

Another key outcome of our review was that we should formalize our growing volunteer body and this has led to a welcome strengthening of the charity. Over the last 12 months there has been an increase in those who wish to volunteer. This has undoubtedly relieved some of the weekly pressures on Trustees themselves. Recognition via the local Wellingborough Good Deeds Fund allowed us funding specifically to show appreciation and recognition to that team of volunteers. At the same time the trustees have continued to provide refresher Dementia awareness training and safeguarding training for both volunteers and supporters.

Dementia Friendly network breakfast meetings have been attended by Trustees and this has undoubtedly provided benefits for those who attend DSO. One example has been the provision of much-needed respite care for an attendee and her under-pressure carer via the developing unofficial carers' network which we see on Thursday mornings. Similarly our involvement with the Northants Community Fund network has opened up new links across a wide spectrum of community groups. We had been a recipient of an initial 3k grant following our application and their on-site inspection visit left a lasting impression upon their assessors *"When we do presentations of our own we still refer to the laughter, warmth and safe environment we saw on our initial visit to DSO"*

The Trustees have recently embarked upon a renewed marketing and publicity campaign to raise further the charity's profile. This tireless programme has focused upon presentations to a variety of local community groups, regular newsletters and social media postings

Logistically we are confident that we can build upon our well-established contacts with local schools in particular to develop and promote the mutual benefits of collaboration between those living with dementia and young schoolchildren.

Trustees committed to an on-going strengthening of the Board's skills and one development in the last 12 months has been the welcoming onto the Board of Steve Line as Treasurer bringing additional business acumen and added financial scrutiny; we are fortunate that the original incumbent Cathie Barrett remains on the Board.

III. SUMMARY OF DSO ACTIVITIES

- I. Weekly Zoom and in-person singing sessions
- II. Promotion of Dementia awareness amongst attendees and contacts.
- III. Provision of wider support for families via specific information events.
- IV. Safeguarding training for all Trustees, supporters and volunteers
- V. Monitoring of success of DSO activities/provision via analytics to inform future planning.
- VI. Collaboration with local primary schools: All Saints, Ruskin and Wellingborough School as part of an education programme.
- VII. Promotion of DSO activities through increased media publicity campaigns including media coverage of Christmas Party on Anglia News and BBC East as well as local radio and newspapers.
- VIII. Visit by Asian saxophonist.
- IX. Christmas Party event with involvement of Wellingborough Community Gospel Choir.
- X. 5-year Anniversary Celebration event attended by family members with involvement again from Wellingborough Community Gospel Choir.

IV. CONCLUSION

Trustees continue to be aware of their responsibilities as well as the challenges and risks facing the DSO Charity. The Charity's activities and successes are evidenced on our social media platforms (see Website and Social Media links highlighting activities,

regular newsheets and testimonials). Community Networking and delegation of tasks to our growing band of supporters and volunteers have been two examples of development since our last report. These areas will continue to be a specific focus and consequently we are as optimistic as ever about the future of this wonderfully uplifting Charity.

GRB
Chairman of Trustees
July 2024.

Dementia Sings Out

a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered Charity number: 1186115

Tax reference number: 2616622750

Trustees

Catherine Barrett

Ian Barrett

Garry Bowe – Chairman

Ruth Bowe

Judith Chapman

Lucy James

Stephen Line

Kathryn Manning

Background Notes for the year ended 30 November 2023

The Dementia Sings Out charity:

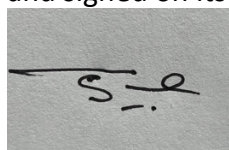
- aims to provide weekly music and singing sessions for the benefit of those living with Dementia and their carers residing in Northamptonshire.
- has no employees, and all the charity's activities are carried out by volunteer helpers who provide their time free of charge.
- derives its income from third party donations and the National Lottery Community Fund.
- has no assets other than its bank account.

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Receipts and Payments Account
For the year ended 30 November 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Receipts		
Donations	10,824	18,333
The National Lottery CF	8,723	0
Total Receipts	19,547	18,333
Payments		
Music director fees	6,900	6,450
Room hire	7,280	1,720
Refreshments	1,270	427
Website costs	1,056	1,051
Other consumables	181	386
Marketing and printing	116	695
Training costs	94	192
Insurance	218	425
Miscellaneous	35	12
Total Payments	17,150	11,358
Excess receipts over payments	2,397	6,975
Balance at bank 1 December 2022	31,109	24,134
Balance at bank 30 November 2023	33,506	31,109

The Receipts and Payments Account of the Dementia Sings Out charity for the year ended 30 November 2023 as set out above, was approved by the Board of Trustees on 31 May 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



S P Line: Trustee