

Musical Memories CIC

Annual Report

April 2016 – April 2017

Introduction

Musical Memories is a social enterprise created to give older people the opportunity to sing together and enjoy each other's company.

Musical Memories aims to provide a sociable, fun, safe environment for the older generation to enjoy singing and socialising.

Live music (piano and guitar) and songbooks, a cuppa and the chance to chat and laugh together helps to combat loneliness and isolation and attendance at our regular singing groups engenders a real sense of 'belonging' for many of the participants. Singing songs of yesteryear that are familiar to many older people helps to stimulate the memory and encourage reminiscence and research has shown that singing together in this way can also boost levels of immunity, reduce stress and improve mood, leading to improved health and well-being particularly in older people.

Musical Memories has three operational strands: Community, Projects and 'Big Sing'

Community

There are many elderly people living alone in Ryedale. Often these elderly people have few opportunities to be 'out in the world' meeting other people from their own age group or younger, and loneliness combined with rural isolation, can cause long - term problems that can be time consuming and expensive to put right.

The first weekly Musical Memories singing sessions began in Pickering and from the start were attended by 15 people. Attendance has grown steadily since then such that the weekly average over the period of this report has risen to 25 participants per session.

From September 2016 we aimed to develop the 'reach' of Musical Memories and focussed our efforts on the three market towns of Kirkbymoorside, Helmsley and Pickering: starting groups in Moorside Room (KMS) and the Arts Centre (Helmsley). By focussing on these strategically located venues we felt that people might have a reason to come into the town (for shopping /appointments) and that they could then tie this in with attending a singing session. In fact it has often worked the other way around: participants come to the session and then go off to lunch together/appointments/shopping, buoyed up by a warm feeling of belonging and positivity.

Many of the people that attend our sessions have been bereaved – losing a partner of 50 years or more is a sadness that many of our beneficiaries have suffered. Singing songs that can link them back to their loved ones and to memories from the past can make people feel tearful but singing together can also be the most uplifting experience too.

Other engagements

Musical Memories has delivered a number of singing sessions to a variety of community groups including Ryedale Older People's Forum, Harrogate Elderly Living Project, Maple Creek Residents Association, Masham WI, Pickering Churches Together Luncheon Club, RVS War Weekend, KMS Elderberries, Menzown, Farmer's Breakfast, Diocesan Afternoon Tea Dance.

Projects

The Musical Memories 'Happy Hour' Project.

This project ran in partnership with Rural Action Yorkshire from March – August 2016 and took place in 8 community venues in Ryedale and the North York Moors. Each community venue/committee received 6 free sessions.

Some chose to arrange weekly sessions and others preferred to arrange sessions on a fortnightly basis. Marketing materials or financial help with refreshments were provided as part of the project costs and venues were responsible for making contact

with potential beneficiaries. A fun, social singing session for older people it provided the opportunity for local folk to get together in a social setting, have a cuppa, reminisce, make new friends and sing. Everybody was provided with a specially designed songbook and welcomed with a cup of tea and there was plenty of opportunity for interaction and chat.

One session focussed on developing a Makaton choir. All choir members had a learning disability and many also had a physical disability. Songs were carefully chosen to enable the greatest degree of participation. Additionally all songs were signed in Makaton. A bespoke songbook was developed for use with this group.

People with physical and learning disabilities, are warmly welcomed and totally included. Everyone can participate on an equal basis when singing together in this way.

Project data

- 47 sessions
- 175 individual beneficiaries
- 529 attendances
- 47 hours of singing
- 658 songs sung
- Top 3 songs: Que Sera Sera, Side by Side and Lili Marlene

Older Person's Day

We celebrated Older People's Day in 2016 at the RVS Centre Pickering, by singing together 'Songs Through the Decades 1920's – 1950's'. After reading in the local paper how Musical Memories aims to combat rural loneliness and isolation amongst older people by creating the opportunity to sing together in local community venues, The Malton Branch Manager of the Skipton Building Society was keen to help out and offered sponsorship of the event.

Forty five older people from the area came along to sing 40 songs that ranged from the 1928 favourite 'Lilly of Laguna' and finished with the 1958 hit by Shirley Bassey 'Kiss Me Honey Honey Kiss Me'.

The afternoon celebrated the wisdom, vitality, knowledge, talent and energy of older people and reflected on the achievements of several well known older people.

Singing is particularly good for people struggling with memory problems. Some participants have Parkinsons Disease, and many of these people have carers whose needs can often be forgotten. But when they come to sing with us nothing matters because everyone can sing and participate on an equal basis and carers (not carers) can be forgotten for a little while.

Warm and Well Lunches

Musical Memories was invited to participate in the Warm and Well NY campaign: the aim of which was to spread the message amongst older people and vulnerable groups about how to stay warm and well during the winter months. This was achieved through hosting a series of lunches, passing on the top tips about how to stay well and where to find further help, and singing songs on a warm and weather theme.

Big Sing

A Musical Memories Summer Big Sing and Vintage Afternoon Tea was held in the main hall of the Milton Rooms on Friday 29th July 2016. All members of Musical Memories singing groups were invited to attend. Transport was provided from Norton and Pickering (courtesy of Ryedale Community Transport) and the participants from the North York Moors funded their own minibus transport in order to attend the event.

Over 100 attendees in the age range 50 to 95 came along from all over Ryedale. Participants sang together some of their favourite songs from a bespoke song book

created for the occasion and then enjoyed an afternoon tea together followed by a few final songs. The event was opened by the Chair of NYCC.

Liaising with the NYCC Living Well Team and organisations such as Carers Support and Carers Resource, Alzheimer's Society, the attendance of so many older folk and the support from so many organisations shows how valuable this work is.

Conclusion

Comprehensive records were kept throughout the year:

- Who attended, where they attended, any special needs
- Songs sung at each session
- New songs introduced
- Thematic welcome music used

We believe we can really help to support the aims of our local authority by reaching out to provide a real sense of togetherness for the elderly people with whom we are working.

For many older people one of the biggest challenges is to simply get out of the house. Attending a Musical Memories session encourages older people to get out of their home to join like-minded folk in doing something which is within their physical capability. It challenges them to remember times, places, people, events; offers them a chance to be heard, to tell their story, to share their wisdom and experience or just simply have a laugh over a cuppa and a biscuit.

T, a stroke sufferer says 'I cannot play games, or cards or do a jigsaw anymore - I can't remember the rules. But I can still sing'.

Loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health and research shows that lacking social connections is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Holt-Lunstad, 2010).

New research has shown that elderly people who take part in community singing can benefit from improved health conditions. A recent study conducted by Canterbury Christ Church University's Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health, found that community singing was a cost-effective way of helping to improve the health and wellbeing of elderly and vulnerable people. The project, which was conducted over a two-year period, assessed a number of factors and activities and found that singing groups can have a significant benefit on the mental and physical health of older people. Professor Stephen Clift, director of the research, says: "Our research has not only cemented previous studies that pointed to an increase in health benefits from community singing programmes, but also demonstrated that singing programmes are a cost-effective method of health promotion against NHS measures for this group of people. The design of the study has enabled us to put a value on the results, which could ultimately result in substantial cost savings for the NHS and local authority adult services."

Our beneficiaries tell us they feel that they feel they 'belong' in our sessions and together we care about each other. We frequently celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. Singing songs is a major part of what Musical Memories is about, but only a part of it, as we really do feel that our sessions help to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness and give rise to feelings of increased well-being amongst our participants.

Musical Memories was Highly Commended in the 2016 NYCC Community Awards in the category of Best Project.

Impact Assessment Report

Scope

Community

During this period MM ran weekly sessions at the RVS Hungate Centre, Pickering and in September 2016 this grew to include weekly sessions at The Moorside Room, Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley Arts Centre in addition to other engagements in North Yorkshire.

Projects

The Musical Memories ‘Happy Hour’ Project.

This project, delivered in partnership with Rural Action Yorkshire, ran between March and August 2016 and involved 8 community venues in Ryedale and the North York Moors.

Older Persons Day. A one off session held at the RVS Hungate Centre on 1st October. Singing ‘Songs through the Decades’ it celebrated International Older People’s Day.

Warm and Well Lunches. As part of the Warm and Well NY Partnership Musical Memories organised a number of lunches and delivered the warm and well message through song to many older people in the Ryedale area.

Big Sing

The first Summer Big Sing and Vintage Afternoon Tea organised and delivered by MM for 100 older people from all over Ryedale was held at the Milton Rooms, Malton.

Stakeholders

Beneficiaries

The age range of the people who attend Musical Memories singing sessions is between 60 – 96 years. The average age of participants is 79 for women and 75 for men. 60% of participants live alone and 25% are unpaid carers. Many live with long term chronic conditions associated with the older population, a significant proportion live with Dementia and other memory problems, and many have mobility difficulties.

Volunteers

Volunteers make refreshments, distribute songbooks, collect weekly contributions from participants and some provide transport to sessions for participants. Most of the 36 volunteers are also service users who enjoy the added experience of being central to the smooth running of each session.

Referrers

Contacts have been established with other local charities and agencies (Alzheimer's Society, Ryedale Carer's Support, Carer's Resource, Mind, Sight Support) who are aware of the service that is offered and that they can signpost their own service users to join us if it is thought to be beneficial. Close links have also been established with NYCC Health and Adult Services Directorate in particular the Living Well Team.

Impact

Inputs

Funding has been received from NYCC Stronger Communities Fund, Ryedale District Council, Pickering, Norton, Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside Town Councils, Aviva Community Fund, Ryedale Lions, Pickering Rotary Club, Skipton Building Society.

Beneficiary contributions are in the region of £40 per session. Volunteer contribution is worth approximately £20 per session.

Outputs

In this period Musical Memories has delivered 194 sessions to 748 participants and there have been 3,678 attendances.

The number of volunteer hours is 537

Outcomes

Feedback from Community activities

Feedback over the period indicates that 100% of participants believed the quality of all sessions to be good or very good and 100% of participants also believed the song repertoire to be good or very good. 83% of participants strongly agreed that the sessions made them feel good and 69% strongly agreed that the sessions helped them to connect with other people.

Q: What is the best thing about the sessions?

A: 'Making friends' 'The feel good feeling' 'The social interaction and of course the singing' 'Makes me feel good' 'It's cheerful and relaxing' 'Meeting people and having a chat' 'Singing and company'

Q: Have these sessions had any other positive effects on you?

A: 'Given me more confidence' 'Yes, very much it cheers me up' 'Yes they put me in a happy frame of mind' 'Helped me to make new friends' 'Very good for dementia'

Observations

Ted is brought to each session by his daughter who also stays to sing. Ted loves to sing all the songs from the musicals. Ted has a number of health problems including COPD and when he recently attended a check up with the nurse he told her 'This (MM singing session) is my medicine' meaning that it made him feel so much better and was helping his breathing.

Phyllis has been brought along to sessions by her neighbour. Phyllis is struggling with her emotions at the moment and some songs easily cause her to reflect and become sad. Nevertheless other songs are a source of happiness for her.

Clara is accompanied by one of her daughters and loves to sing everything in our repertoire. Initially a bit uncertain about attending sessions, over the weeks her confidence has grown such that she has never missed a session and even turned up one week when we were on holiday! She walks every week to the hall through all kinds of weather and one icy day she gave in and came by taxi. Clara is 96 and uses a walking frame.

After singing 'Slow Boat to China' Malcolm began to recall his father's wartime experiences in China

Candice is a young woman who brings along her neighbour to the sessions because she knows how good it is for her to get out of the house and be a part of something. Candice soon started to give lifts to several other elderly ladies who wanted to attend....

Glenda loves the old musicals and has a wonderful knowledge of old films and shows. She recently brought along her treasured book about the films of the forties to share with everyone.

Eva is living with Dementia and can only attend the session when her carer brings her along. Eva's language is severely affected by her condition and she finds it difficult to communicate in recognisable words with much of her language resembling 'babble'. She is always welcomed into the group and helped to find the correct song in the songbook. One day she was heard to respond to this help by saying amongst the babble 'Don't bother with me' - which she repeated several times.

On the second session that Eva attended I found the correct song for her and knelt next to her pointing at each word of the song and singing it slowly to her. Eva joined in the song very slowly reading and singing each word along with me in a tuneful voice. The song was 'Lily of Laguna'. Everybody stopped what they were doing to listen to Eva and then applauded her.

Case Study

G*** (88) M*** (94), M*** (93), J*** (88), B*** (88), B*** (94), P*** (95) are just a few of the people who live alone in Pickering and come each week to the singing session to enjoy the companionship that singing together, having a chat/joke and sharing memories brings. Each week they leave us smiling and happy and telling us that attending these sessions really does improve their health and the way they feel about life, and over the months we have seen for ourselves at first hand a huge improvement in each of these peoples' confidence and wellbeing.

When M*** first joined us she wouldn't take off her coat and would hardly speak to anyone. Her daughter persuaded her to come along and held her hand the entire time. M*** could only focus on negative things and was scared of the world outside her home. Now M*** is brought along (by car) each week by one of her neighbours and chats happily with us every week. She meticulously recalls previous conversations and facts and almost seems to use the time as the chance to test her memory skills. M***'s confidence has grown such that she even came along to a Big Sing and Vintage Tea Party that we arranged for the summer of 2016 on the bus.

We believe the benefits to local residents are huge and we know that between 76–100 people in Pickering in the age range 60–96 years are currently being helped by this initiative. By delivering these Happy Hour sessions we aim to

combat loneliness and isolation and to bring a little joy and happiness to the lives of our elderly Pickering residents.

Listen to Frank, Maureen and Irene describing the impact on them of attending a MM session.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WE2IIRYyHTU&index=2&list=PLnVzlw6oTakRFPIsrM0ZGrv0vUuFnSrXH>

Feedback from Projects-

Happy Hour Project

The short WEMWBS scale was used to measure the health and well-being outcomes of those that participated in the Happy Hour project and analysis shows that all responses became more positive in every question area. This method of measuring wellbeing was quite difficult to administer particularly with large groups of people: many elderly people found it too long (even though we used the shortened 7 question version) and needed a great deal of help to read and understand it. Some found it too personal and refused to complete it. It was unsuitable to be used for people with learning disabilities and extremely difficult to use with those people living with Dementia.

| Before the first Musical Memories session | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Statements | None of the time | Rarely | Some of the time | Often | All of the time |
| I've been feeling optimistic about the future | | 6% | 50% | 13% | 31% |
| I've been feeling useful | | | 25% | 56% | 19% |
| I've been feeling relaxed | | | 47% | 29% | 24% |
| I've been dealing with problems well | | | 38% | 38% | 24% |
| I've been thinking clearly | | | 18% | 24% | 58% |
| I've been feeling close to other people | | 6% | 38% | 12% | 44% |
| I've been able to make up my own mind about things | | | 24% | 6% | 70% |

| After the last Musical Memories session | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--------|---------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Statements | None of the time | Rarely | Some of the time | Often | All of the time |
| I've been feeling optimistic about the future | | 6% | | 67% | 27% |
| I've been feeling useful | | | 15% | 62% | 23% |
| I've been feeling relaxed | | | | 47% | 53% |
| I've been dealing with problems well | | | | 54% | 46% |
| I've been thinking clearly | | | | 54% | 46% |
| I've been feeling close to other people | | | | 53% | 47% |
| I've been able to make up my own mind about things | | | | 50% | 50% |

Older People's Day

'We go home feeling much better in spirit'

'It gets people out and mixing – really uplifting'

'My age is 80 but after this singing I feel 20 years younger'

'Absolutely tremendous'

'Great fun! Could not be bettered!'

'Brilliant afternoon meeting many people'

'Just what the doctor ordered!'

Feedback from Big Sing-

'I just wanted to say what a lovely and well organised day it was at Malton. Mum really enjoyed it and I am glad I went with her' - Mrs B

'My mum and Norman and Chris and Peter said they had such a lovely time in Malton thank you!' - Ms S

'Just a quicky to thank you both and to congratulate you on the wonderful BIG SING. What a super idea, with a response which must have delighted you and which you thoroughly deserve!! Keep it up! We both love participating and being able to help is, for us, a bonus. It definitely slows my dementia down, and I even remember some of the names, and some of the folk seem so pleased when I do!!' - FM

'Thank you so much for the Big Sing this afternoon. We really enjoyed the whole two hours and congratulate you on such a wonderful experience - so many people all joining together to make marvellous music!!' - Mrs N

'I just wanted to say a big thank you from the Living Well team to yourself and Neil for allowing us to come and help you last Friday at the Milton Rooms. All the Coordinators thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and it was a real treat for me as Manager who is often in the office. I was sat with the people from Danby and they had all had a wonderful time and said how much they enjoyed the sessions and the afternoon. It was very well organised and we were proud to be a part of it. Keep up the good work!' - Living Well Team Manager

'What a lovely afternoon you arranged. We enjoyed it and I'm sure everyone else did.' - Secretary Ryedale Older People's Forum

Social Value—

Based on the East Yorkshire Social Value model, Musical Memories activities across Community, Projects and Big Sing have generated approximately £1,111,680 of Gross Social Value over the period covered by this report. This based on the values attributed to people engaging in social activities which help to reduce social isolation, strengthen community ties and improve well being for the participants. We have reached over 700 people during the

year but based the Gross Social Value on a core of 120 people who have attended sessions regularly throughout the year.

