

# MUSICAL MEMORIES

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ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



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# INTRODUCTION

Musical Memories was established in 2016 as a not-for-profit organisation created to give older people the opportunity to sing together and enjoy each other's company with the aim of combatting social isolation and loneliness and thereby improving health and wellbeing.

Since then Musical Memories has run inclusive, friendly, singing sessions in accessible, community venues throughout Ryedale. Live music, songs which are transposed to make them particularly suitable for older voices, and specially adapted songbooks for those with visual impairments makes this a unique venture. A coffee and cake and the opportunity to chat and reminisce together gives those attending these fun gatherings the opportunity to make and sustain friendships. Participants often describe MM sessions with two key words - 'fellowship' and 'belonging'. Participants range from age 30 to 97, the majority aged 70 or over, with typically around 25 people attending each session.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020, knowing how important it would be to keep people connected, and that loneliness and isolation would be even more of an issue for the older members of society, Musical Memories immediately pivoted to offer an online service. Within 2 weeks of ceasing live sessions MM had purchased a range of essential technical equipment (cameras, microphones, stream deck and software), learned new technical skills and begun delivering live streamed song/chat sessions.

During this extraordinary year Musical Memories has delivered a full online Community Programme using the Facebook and Periscope platforms and has also delivered a number of online Special Projects.

# COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES



## 'TUNE A DAY' MARCH 2020 - AUGUST 2020 (89 SESSIONS)

'Tune A Day' was streamed live on Periscope and Facebook at 11.00 am every week day. Our intention was to sing one cheerful song per session which would be broadcast at the same time every day in order to help people to structure their day during this strange, scary and 'shapeless' time and hopefully provide some comfort and company for our beneficiaries.

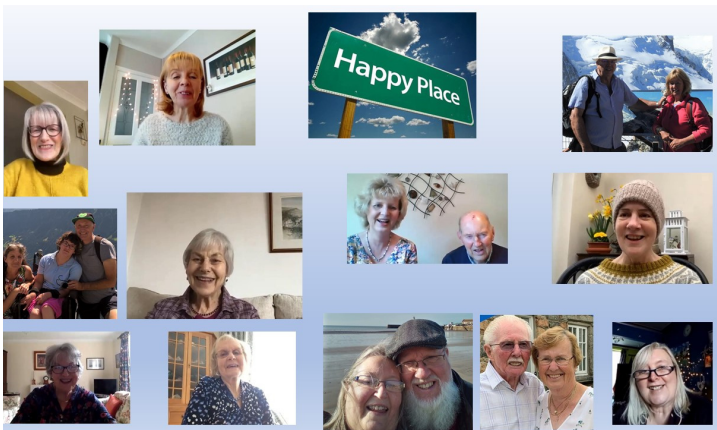
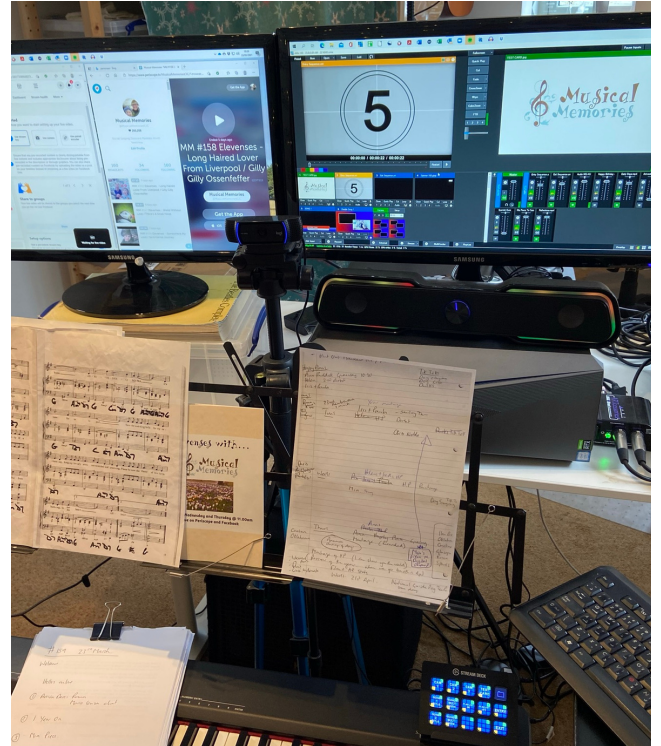
The first few sessions were approximately 5-7 minutes in length but grew (18 weeks later) to be 20 minutes long, incorporating photographs sent in by viewers on a range of themes 'Cakes We've Made', 'Our Gardens', 'VegCam', 'Dress Up Friday', 'Cravat Challenge', 'When I Was 20' and many more. Online conversations started with us and between participants.



Every 6 weeks participants received an in-house produced songbook and those who could not access sessions online were sent CDs of previously broadcast sessions as well as a songbook.

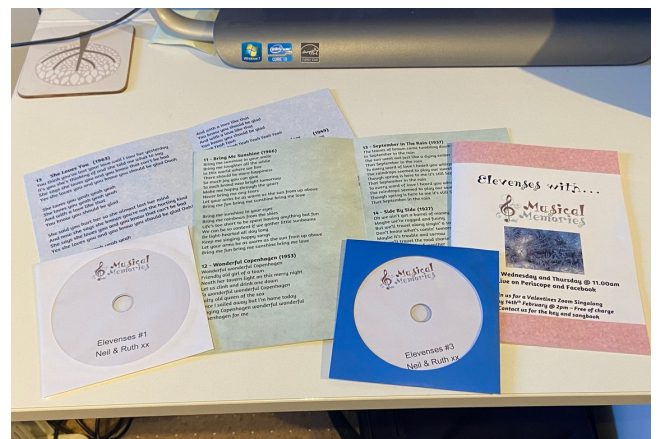
## 'ELEVENSES' SEPTEMBER 2020 ONWARDS (71 SESSIONS)

'Elevenses' broadcast on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week at 11.00 am. This production developed into a 'magazine-style' show including 2 songs, real time online chat with participants on Facebook and Periscope, live interviews, short VTs, Tik Toks, photographs sent in by participants and footage from the Yorkshire Film Archive. Birthdays and anniversaries were celebrated. A weekly 'guest-spot' song was pre-recorded by a young theatre school graduate - Mia West. Interviews with beneficiaries were pre-recorded on Zoom and broadcast live on the show - giving people the opportunity to actually see their friends.



High quality songbooks were professionally printed and CDs & songbooks were still sent to those regular MM beneficiaries who were known to be unable to access the online service.

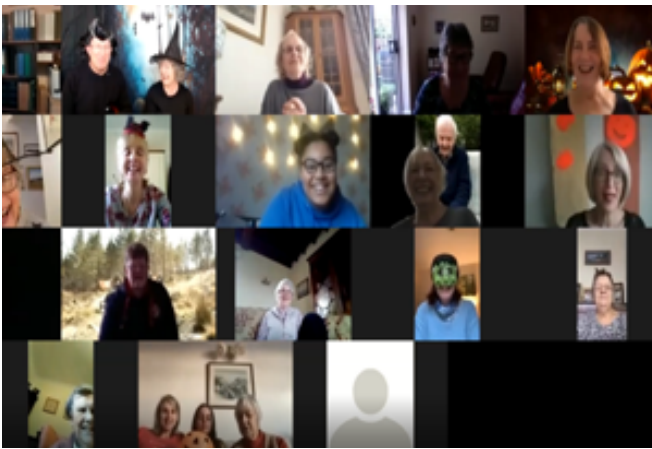
New software, technical equipment and increased experience and confidence meant the quality of the broadcast was greatly improved. Sessions lasted 25 minutes and many themes were explored including 'Songs From Different Decades' 'Journeys' 'Our Happy Places'.



## ZOOM SINGALONGS

### THE WILD WEST - JULY 2020

In place of our summer 'Big Sing' this Zoom singalong enjoyed plenty of songs on a cowboy/wild-west theme. Topped off with bespoke songbooks, neckerchiefs, cowboy hats and appropriate sound effects.



### HALLOWE'EN - OCTOBER 2020

Wizards and witches frequented this Zoom singalong and songs on the theme of moon, ghosts, potions and all things strange were sung. The atmosphere was enhanced by the usual creepy sound effects and haunting backdrop.

### CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION DECEMBER 2020

This was a special occasion and many of our beneficiaries dressed up and made contributions to this session: songs, stories, poems were shared. One participant dressed up as Father Christmas and delivered a beautiful Nat King Cole song and everyone enjoyed joining in the actions of 'The 12 Days of Christmas'.



### VALENTINE'S DAY FEBRUARY 2021

Celebrated actually on Sunday 14th February with a specially created book of love songs this too was a lovely occasion, especially as it was also the birthday of 2 of our participants.

# SPECIAL PROJECTS





## PICKERING LIBRARY

We were commissioned by North Yorkshire County Council to create two short videos celebrating the VE Day Celebrations May 2020 and Valentine's Day February 2021.

Each recorded piece consisted of a couple of songs to a video of interest (photos and film) and some friendly chat.

## CARERS RESOURCE

Musical Memories provided two bespoke zoom singalongs on 12th June and 26th November for carers in the Ryedale area. MM also made a recording of a specially commissioned song for the Carers Trust.

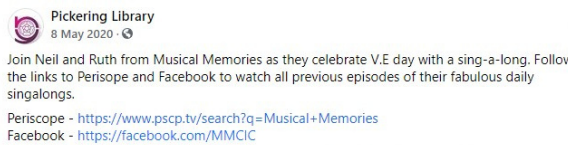
## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Organised by Community Catalysts, the North York Moors National Park and Stronger

NYCC, the Esk Valley Virtual Rurality Conference 31st July 2020 aimed to showcase some of the amazing community responses and innovative activities that had developed since the outbreak of covid-19. Musical Memories streamed a live session to this conference.

## NATIONAL EMERGENCIES TRUST

In December 2020, as recipients of funds from the NET (we were able to purchase some of our streaming equipment with this money) we were invited to contribute to a longform poem created by Johnathan Catherall to celebrate the work of the National Emergencies Trust. This video was released to the Duke of Cambridge, and then publicly, to mark International Volunteers Day.



## LET'S LINK UP

A project supported by TNL Local Connections Fund to improve the quality of our service by maintaining frequent and regular (telephone) contact with our oldest, most frail and isolated participants who still live independently in our local community.



*A Pound Of Butter  
And An Hour's Exercise.*

## HELMSLEY ARTS CENTRE AND LIBBY PEARSON CREATIVES

Working with Libby Pearson we explored the comparisons that were often being made between WW2 and the Covid-19 pandemic; interviewing younger and older people, creating stories and setting them to the music of the 40s and 50s this virtual project. 'A Pound of Butter and an Hour's Exercise' was commissioned by HAC in March 2021

## HUNGATE CENTRE

Throughout 2020 Musical Memories led the community campaign to save the Hungate Centre, Pickering from closing. This involved many hours of work and negotiation with other groups (CaVCA, Lions, Rotary, centre users) individuals, town and district councillors, MP, High Sheriff, local radio and press and much correspondence with the Royal Voluntary Service who initially sought to sell the building. The campaign came to a successful conclusion at the beginning of March 2021 when CaVCA agreed to take on the trusteeship of the building for the community.



# STAKEHOLDERS

## **Beneficiaries**

The age range of the people who regularly 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. One of our participants is registered blind and we supply a weekly playlist which she converts to Braille before each session thus ensuring that she is able to fully participate in the sessions. This group of people have suffered disproportionately from the loneliness and isolation that has been a part of this pandemic. We have also seen a number of our regular participants die as a result of Covid-19. Over the course of this year we have gathered participants from all over the country and our impact is not just limited to Ryedale. Many participants have been in contact by email/letter/card/phone (and some several times) to say how much Musical Memories' streamed sessions have

during the course of this pandemic in terms of keeping them connected and focussed on living through the loneliness and fear. This year everyone from beneficiaries to volunteers to referrers and employees/employers has had the lived experience of loneliness and isolation.

# STAKEHOLDERS

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## **Volunteers**

Volunteers usually make refreshments, distribute songbooks, collect weekly contributions from participants and some provide transport to sessions for participants. Many of our volunteers are also service users who enjoy the added experience of being central to the smooth running of each session. The role of the volunteer has changed enormously over the course of the past year. We now rely on our volunteers to contribute to online chat and keep conversation going; they send in photographs and videos to contribute to the sessions; they make suggestions about future content of the sessions; they find out how people are doing and have their 'ear to the ground', they show their appreciation of our venture and model the involvement that inspires others to get involved too - contributing stories, songs, photos, chat, being interviewed - in many ways their contribution is even more valuable through this medium than it was before.

## **Referrers**

Contacts have been established with other local charities and agencies (Ryedale Carers Support, Carers Resource, Next Steps, Sight Support) who are aware of the service that is offered and know 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, and the NYCC Stronger Communities Delivery Manager. Contact with the area's Social Prescribing Link Workers has also been established and MM is an active member of the Covid Voluntary Support organisation, Community Connect and the Ryedale VCSE Network.

# STAKEHOLDERS

## Employees

In March 2020 we joined the Kickstart Scheme using the NYCC Gateway and our newly inducted Community Liaison Officer began work. The purpose of this role is to improve connections with our most frail and most 'hard to reach' beneficiaries. Regular telephone contact is established and support given with digital technology.



## MUSICAL MEMORIES

Since lockdown began Ruth and Neil Hannah of Musical Memories have been 'Live Streaming' their happy singing sessions.

'Tune A Day' is broadcast every day Monday – Friday at 11.00 am on Periscope <https://www.pscp.tv/search?q=Musical+Memories> and Facebook <https://facebook.com/MMCIC>

During each session they sing one of the songs from their huge vintage collection. People can join in at home with the singing as each month they send out songbooks containing all the lyrics for the songs to be sung that month.

Ruth says, "We chat with participants on-line throughout the session and we will soon be taking telephone calls from participants too. We include photographs and bits of video that participants send to us and have a coffee and a giggle at the same time. It's gradually turning into a mini magazine show focussing on songs of yesteryear.

"We decided to do this because we knew we wanted to help our regular singers stay in touch with us and with each other through lockdown as many of them live alone. We've found that it has really helped people to structure their day.

"One lady rang me to tell me that her son had rummaged around at his house to find an old laptop and had download the link to our daily session for his Mum to click on so that she could join us. She was so delighted that she called me to tell me that it was 'wonderful that a little bit of normality had been restored to my very abnormal life."

For those ladies and gents who usually attend their sessions but who don't have access to the internet, Ruth and Neil send out CDs of the songs they have sung accompanied by a songbook.

"We have people joining us from all over the country and even some in Australia, Italy and USA!"



If you would like to join in then tune in at 11.00 am on Periscope or Facebook and please let Ruth and Neil know if you would like a songbook.  
Tel: Ruth 07527 006402

Web: [musicalmemoriescic.org.uk](http://musicalmemoriescic.org.uk)



## Connections

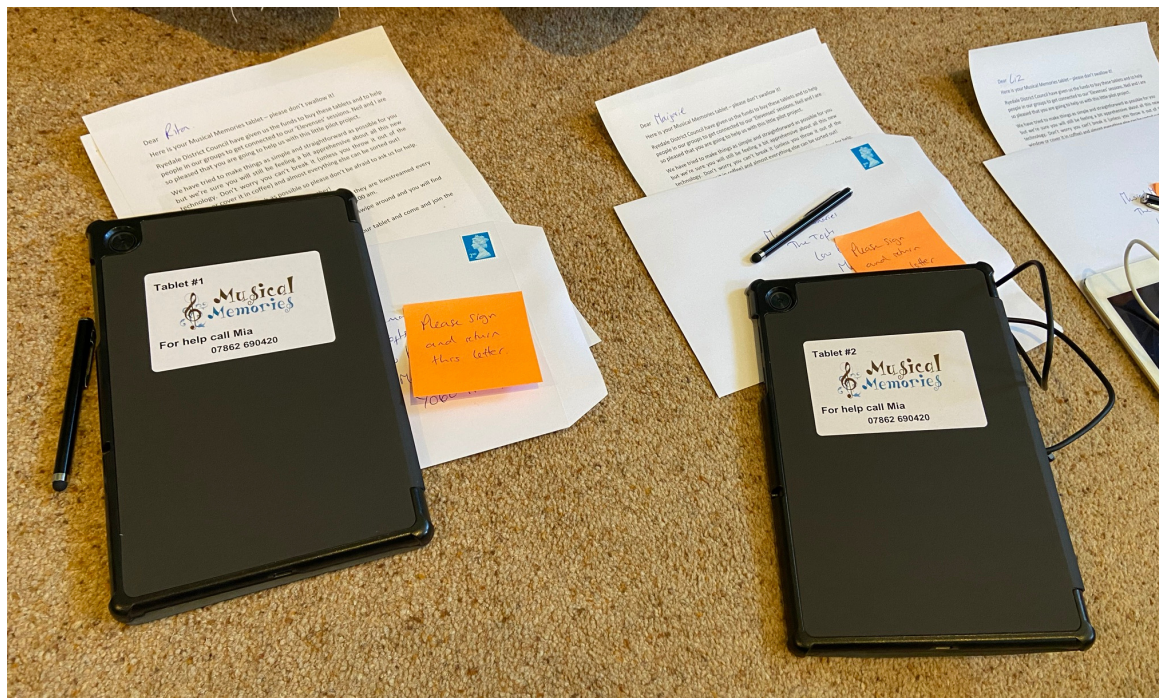
Our community programme is published in the local press (Gazette and Herald, Scarborough Post, York and Malton HandyMag) and there have been several articles and editorials on MM included in these publications. We have also been interviewed many times on Radio York and 'That's TV' North Yorkshire. MM has also been able to highlight the work of other organisations by highlighting specific issues brought to us by Ryecat, Sight Support Ryedale and by interviewing personnel at Carers Resource and RSW Carers Support on our session.

# IMPACT REPORT



# INPUTS

Funding has been received from The National Lottery Community Fund, NYCC Stronger Communities Fund, Ryedale District Council Community Grant, Wilfred Jackson Trust, Social Entrepreneur's Support Fund, Two Ridings Community Fund, National Emergencies Trust.



All sessions livestreamed on Facebook and Periscope have been provided free of charge as have the CDs and songbooks. Totally unsolicited our beneficiaries have made contributions towards our costs in the form of cash and cheques sent through the post.

Our CLO has trained as a 'Digital Champion' through the Citizens Online and through the NYCC Reboot scheme we have obtained a further 2 tablets to add to our supply of devices that we can loan out to our beneficiaries.

RYEDALE  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL



NATIONAL  
EMERGENCIES  
TRUST

TwoRidings  
Community Foundation



COMMUNITY  
FUND



## OUTPUTS

**25,000** Views of sessions.

**1190** Songbooks distributed to participants.

**520** CDs distributed to regular beneficiaries who have no digital access.

**233** Different songs sung during our sessions.

**157** Views on average of 'Tune A Day' and 'Elevenses' sessions.



# HIGHLIGHTS

01

Volunteers gave over 400 hours.



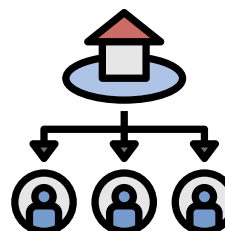
02

90% of beneficiaries said our sessions helped them to get through the pandemic by beating loneliness.

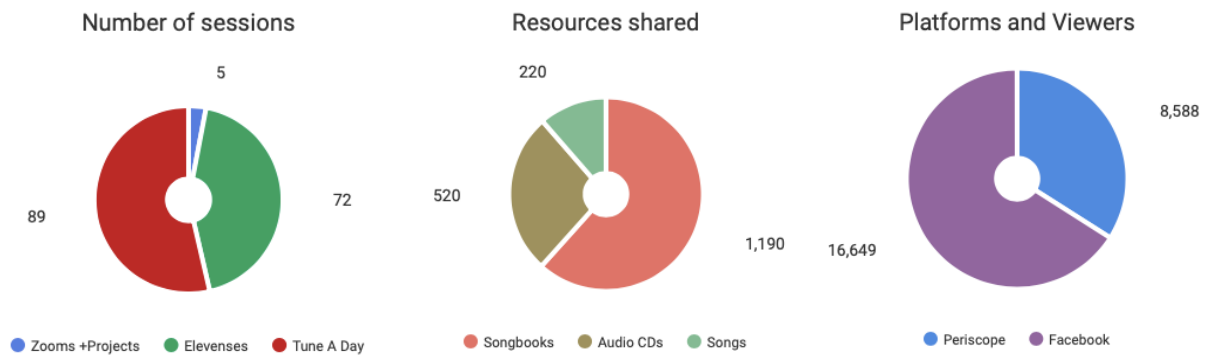


03

We kept in regular contact with over 150 beneficiaries.



# HIGHLIGHTS



'Thank you so much for the songs, they keep me going' JV Pickering

'When I think of everything you've worked at to make the videos so interesting and great fun, it's incredible - really great stuff to make us smile and sing' MC Reigate

'What wonderful work you are doing! A heartfelt note of gratitude for the extraordinary support and service shown by you and your colleagues during this Covid-19 crisis' Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire

'Ruth, the passion you bring to Musical Memories is very much appreciated. Very many thanks to you and Neil and all good wishes in your future endeavours' High Sheriff of North Yorkshire and Chair of York and NY LEP

Thank you so much for all the cheer and enjoyment you have given to so many people, which is so deeply appreciated even more this year. You have been a lifeline and a joy' GP Kirkbymoorside

# FEEDBACK FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

In June 2020 we carried out an online survey of our participants and received an unusually high response rate which informed the planning and content of future sessions: participants told us the kind of songs they wanted to sing, the best time of day to tune in live and preferred length of the sessions. They told us they wanted to hear stories, film clips and song facts. 47% said that they wanted two songs per session. 50% said the songbook enhanced their enjoyment of the sessions and 90% of all respondents said that tuning in to our sessions had helped beat loneliness and helped them get through the pandemic.



# FEEDBACK FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

In their own words...

'Just wanted to let you know that Eleveses has brought sunshine and fun and laughter into the gloomiest of days.'

SG of Pickering

'Once again a very big thank you for your daily broadcasts. They are a joy.'

AH of Bridlington

'I think the work that yourself and Neil do is fantastic and you are an asset to our community.'

NP from Day Centre for Adults with Learning Disabilities Malton

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*"Enabled us to enjoy the sharing of chit chat, music, song and reminiscence on good, bad and just ordinary days."* SG of Pickering

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'It was so good to see you both this morning. I just haven't had the heart to do anything much since my husband was rushed into hospital. What truly amazed me was that I should pick today when my dear friend 'R' was talking about her Happy Place.'

KP of Bishop Auckland

'Many, many thanks for everything you have done. It has certainly been something to look forward to and I have been there for every session'

JS of Norton

# CONCLUSION



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). Our beneficiaries tell us they feel that they 'belong' in our sessions and whilst singing great vintage songs is a major part of what Musical Memories is about, it is only a part of it. We really do feel that the fellowship that is fostered in our sessions helps to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness, helps to make and strengthen friendships, and all this in turn gives rise to feelings of increased well-being amongst beneficiaries, especially during this very isolating and frightening time.



We are proud of the fact that we have created a community that is alive and thriving, and which clearly means so much to so many people.

We are proud that we have a good reputational value as a 'go-to' organisation that is well managed, resourced, reliable and creative.

As an organisation we have so much more to give to our community and we are planning our future contribution to take place both virtually and, as we travel into a less risky future, in person.

Neil & Ruth Hannah

April 2021

# OUR PARTNERS

- Ryedale Carers Support
- Carers Resource
- Sight Support Ryedale
- NYCC Living Well Team
- NYCC Stronger Communities
- Libby Pearson Creatives
- Ryedale District Council
- Ryedale Community Transport
- The National Lottery
- Helmsley Arts Centre
- National Emergencies Trust
- Community Catalysts
- Citizens Online

