

The Warblers

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 5 April 2025



Scottish Charity No – SC047034

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Trustees' Annual Report

For the period 06 April 2024 to 05 April 2025

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report together with the financial statements for the period 06 April 2024 to 05 April 2025.

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity name

The Warblers

Charity no

SC047034

Address

18 Lothian Terrace,
Newtongrange,
EH22 4QL

Current Trustees

Isobel Gunn: Chair

Julie Surgeon: co-opted 27 August 2024 and appointed Secretary

Paddy Carstairs: Treasurer

Pulaporn Sreewichian: co-opted 11 March 2025

Margaret McKay: resigned 31 October 2024



Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The Charity is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (a SCIO). It was registered in its current legal form on 8th December 2016. The charity was previously an unincorporated association but changed its legal form to a SCIO. The assets of the unincorporated association were transferred to the SCIO on the 8th December 2016. It has a single tier structure and as such the trustees are also the members of the charity.

Appointment of trustees

The Board of Trustees usually meets four times a year. New trustees may be appointed by the Board at any time during the year from the participants of The Warblers singing groups. At the annual general meeting, held in August, any trustees appointed during the year are elected and one third of the remaining trustees who retire from office may be re-elected. There must be a minimum of four and a maximum of six trustees.

Recruitment of trustees

The Board of Trustees gives priority to the identification and selection of new trustees. Care is given to the specific skills each trustee can bring to the charity and that there is a helpful mix of attributes amongst the trustees. The Board considers it important to also have trustees who are not participants of the singing groups.

Organisational Structure

In view of the size and financial resources of the charity, the trustees, with the support of the song leaders, undertake the organisation and management of the charity and call on external support as required.

Objectives and Activities

Charitable purposes

The advancement of health by promoting lung health and general wellbeing through a programme of breathing and singing exercises and songs.

The provision of recreational facilities through providing a welcoming fun singing group for people with respiratory conditions.

The advancement of education through providing a supportive learning environment to build skills and confidence in singing, and by raising

awareness of the potential benefits of regular group singing for people with chronic lung conditions.

The relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage by improving physical and mental health and wellbeing through singing and by reducing isolation.

Activities

The charity runs regular group singing sessions for anyone with a lung condition or who struggles with breathlessness in East Lothian and Midlothian. Sessions are also available online via Zoom for those who may be unable to attend in-person. The sessions commence with exercises warming up the body, breath and voice. These are designed to promote healthy breathing and to help participants manage their breathlessness. We then sing songs which have been carefully tailored to the needs and abilities of the participants of both groups. These songs cover a wide range of styles and genres; some may be chosen by the participants themselves while others have been composed specifically for the groups.

We promote the groups and the benefits of singing for lung health through our website www.warblers.org.uk and our Facebook page. Our two song leaders are always delighted to deliver presentations and interactive workshops to local health teams and organisations working with people with lung conditions and who experience breathlessness. We run taster sessions at local events such as community open days to inform people about The Warblers and encourage those who are curious to come along and 'give it a go'! Pulmonary Rehabilitation physiotherapists actively encourage respiratory patients to participate in community groups such as The Warblers through their 'maintenance sessions' at the end of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation exercise course. The Warblers sing at local and national events to develop confidence and to tell others about the benefits of singing for people with chronic lung conditions.

Our approach is based on the latest research evidence. The 'Singing for Lung Health' (SLH) [Systematic Review and Consensus Statement](#) based on a review of research studies, outlines that the benefits of singing can be considered in three broad categories: physical, psychological and social. It was written by a consensus group including respiratory physicians, physiotherapists, nurses, health psychologists and music therapists.

An [evaluation](#) of the BLF singing for lung health programme published in 2018 found that participants in singing for lung health groups reported an improvement in respiratory health-related quality of life and a reduction in health care utilisation. The study concludes that singing for lung health has potential economic and health benefits.

A research study into [moving singing for lung health online](#) in response to the covid-19 pandemic found that online singing sessions provided substantial health and wellbeing benefits, although participants had a clear preference for in-person singing.

[Recent research](#) published in 2021 has found the cardiorespiratory effects of singing to be comparable to those of exercise, and therefore effective in managing chronic respiratory conditions.

The Musical Breath website is an invaluable source of up-to-date research articles, information and resources pertaining to singing for lung health. In 2024 Sophie Wallace from Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust and Jag Mundra from National Association of Primary Care produced an evaluation of singing for lung health:

<https://www.themusicalbreath.com/2024/08/01/evaluation-of-the-impact-of-community-singing-groups/>



Achievements and Performance

Throughout this financial year The Warblers have continued to meet in the Musselburgh East Community Centre (East Lothian group, led by Esther Chuang) and St. John's and King's Park Church in Dalkeith (Midlothian group, led by James Robertson). Forty-two sessions were offered to the East Lothian group and thirty-one to the Midlothian group. Between both groups a total of fifty-three participants attended; of this number twenty-three attended for the first time.

While the main focus is on the actual work undertaken in the weekly sessions, The Warblers have taken part in three public performances throughout this year. In May 2024 we featured in a concert entitled 'Breath of Life' in Inverleith St. Serf's Church in Edinburgh. This was in aid of singing for lung health and raised over £2,000; The Warblers sang as a separate choir and also as part of a large combined choir comprising over 100 singers. In September we sang as part of the Musselburgh Communities Day. In March 2025 we were invited to sing at Dobbies Garden Centre in Lasswade to help launch their Spring Weekend. The Warblers were also represented at the Midlothian Older People's Assembly (November 2024) and the Midlothian Disabled People's Assembly (April 2025).

Flyers and posters have been updated with relevant information and contact details. These have been distributed widely to medical centres, community centres, health and social care agencies and libraries throughout East Lothian and Midlothian. The Warblers now has a pop-up banner which is displayed at all our public events. We have also compiled a Welcome Pack which is given to new members when they attend for the first time. A new development in this past year has been the establishment of a Social Media group. Regular notices and updates are posted on our public Facebook page We also feature on the LinkedIn platform.

Our two song leaders, Esther and James, meet on a monthly basis to discuss their respective groups and share ideas and resources. James informs the Board at each meeting of the progress of the two groups as well as indicating ways in which they may be further assisted. James and Esther remain in close contact with song leaders of The Cheyne Gang (another Singing for Lung Health group in Edinburgh) and participate in joint training opportunities.

We continue to have regular communication with Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (with whom we signed a Memorandum of Understanding which allows us to make applications to the CHSS Peer Funding Pot) and

Asthma & Lung UK. Two of our members participated in the UK-wide and well-established Singing for Lung Health training course by discussing how they have experienced physical and psychological benefits as a result of the weekly Warblers' singing sessions. In February, James delivered a presentation to the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Team in Midlothian Community Hospital. We have also been making links with other NHS professionals as a means of heightening the profile of The Warblers and promoting the value of singing for lung health.

As an organisation The Warblers are keen to involve people to take on a voluntary role within the organisation. One person helpfully supported the work of the East Lothian group and we are considering ways to develop voluntary opportunities in the future.

A review of our policies is undertaken on an annual basis to ensure that we are aligned with required national standards and procedures. A Safeguarding policy was devised and added to our list of official documents. Appropriate training for safeguarding is being considered and will be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

As an organisation, The Warblers are committed to new research opportunities. One of our newly-appointed trustees, Pulaporn Sreewichian, is a PhD student at Glasgow Caledonian University and is expecting to submit her thesis at the end of September 2025. The study with The Warblers was the final part of her research project on the potential of music technology in supporting the social prescribing of music activities. The study aims to explore the potential of a mobile music technology as an additional support tool for singing for lung health for people with COPD currently participating in a singing group. A total of eight group members participated (six from Midlothian and two from East Lothian) as well as the two song leaders who participated in the preparation, training, and providing of responses to the data collection.





Annual Evaluation

We carried out an evaluation during March 2025 using a questionnaire which was completed by twenty-six singers from across both groups; nine from East Lothian and seventeen from Midlothian. Five respondents have been with The Warblers for less than one year; ten have been with the group for between one and two years. Three respondents had attended singing sessions both in-person and on Zoom. The main points highlighted in the evaluation are as follows:

Satisfaction levels

The overall level of satisfaction was emphatically positive. Out of twelve categories to comment, eight received 90% satisfaction rates, and two received 100%. These were:

- a) the welcome people received at the Warblers, and
- b) the Song Leaders.

Benefits

88% of respondents say that their breathing control has improved either by “a lot” or “some”.

70% of respondents say they are reducing their use of an inhaler either by “a lot” or “some”.

93% of respondents say that they are more aware of their posture either by “a lot” or “some”.

95% of respondents say that the singing sessions have helped to improve their mood either by “a lot” or “some”.

88% of respondents say that their self-confidence has improved either by “a lot” or “some”.

96% of respondents say that a good impact on their mental health has been observed either by “a lot” or “some”.

Selected quotes

“I enjoy the sense of wellbeing after a session.”

“The welcome to the venue is the same every single week – warm and friendly. You walk in and instantly feel part of everything.”

“Great to be able to have some fun whilst at the sessions.”

“Really enjoy the sessions and they make a big difference to my breathing and general health.”

“Outstanding course leader. Diaphragmatic breathing exercises are very valuable and emphasised.”

“The last visit to the Royal Infirmary Respiratory Unity showed slight improvement in my breathing test results. The only thing that had changed for me was I’d started going to the Warblers.”

“The Warblers has had a massively positive effect on me – mentally, emotionally and also physically.”

“Not only does it help my breathing, it’s lovely to speak to other people who are going through the same as me, and James is a wonderful teacher and a lovely person.”

“You walk in and instantly feel part of everything. This is down to our Song Leader, who leads the group with kindness, compassion and passion. You feel included and supported and encouraged from the word go.”

“There are days when my voice isn’t strong, and I use my inhalers plenty, but I have been really interested in the information I have been given about breathing and warm-up techniques and have found they help a lot. I may be breathless at times, but I have found that after the warm-ups – time is

taken to do these – I can then sing and feel confident my voice won't run out."

"Sharing with others, learning how best to help myself, taking the good advice from Esther. Thank you."

"Having learned some techniques on breathing now means that I feel more in control and can bring my breathing back to a relaxed level and don't always have to use my inhaler."

"One of the really good things about coming to The Warblers is that everybody understands what it is like to have a bad day with your lung problem and some helpful advice can be given to you by other members."

"The singing group has had a very positive impact on my life. The experiences are good which I use at home. Most of the songs are good, some difficult, although I realise they are all about breathing."

The Future

We asked respondents to say how important they thought a list of 10 actions were for the future of the Warblers. They were given the 3 options of saying Important, Don't Know or Neutral, or Not important.

The actions regarded as Important by a majority of respondents were:

- Performing concerts or other fundraising events (69%)
- Singing with other singing for lung health groups (65%)
- Improving the publicity of the Warblers (61%)
- Starting new groups in other areas (55%)
- Making better links with professionals (50%)

Comments made by participants in relation to these points include the following:

"I think it is important to inform healthcare professionals of the benefits, both for our physical and mental well-being. And the fun we have doing it."

"Getting out there and making a presence felt is important and I believe in the strength of social media. But sometimes it is good to be physically seen so promoting The Warblers is important – we need this group to be

going on in the future giving others the hope and enjoyment that it gives to people like me!”

“I also think it is important for people with lung disease to see for themselves that you don’t have to be the best singer in the world to come along and have fun whilst looking after yourself.”

“I think we could see if some of the members of the group would be willing to give talks and/or presentations on The Warblers, and to do some short training on giving presentations, and preparing a presentation package. Hearing from people with lived experience of singing groups can have a powerful and persuasive impact.”



Financial review

Income for the year saw an increase of 40% on the previous year from £13,830 to £19,272. The main sources have been from charitable grants: £14,195 (2024: £11,230) and participants’ fees: £3,482 (2024: £2,400). Grants were received from the Agnes Hunter Trust (£9,130), the Midlothian Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (£4,615) and the DWF Foundation (£450). Details are provided in Note 4 of the accounts and have been granted with a view to being used in the course of 2025.

Conscious of a need to pursue other income streams, to provide simple means of encouraging donations we set up a Just Giving page which in the first six months raised £537 – and provides the opportunity to benefit from Gift Aid. Fundraising through the ‘Breath of Life’ concert in which we participated in May raised £885 and Easyfundraising, with which we registered, will enable funds to be raised through online shopping. As a result of these initiatives and singing at community events, this source of

income rose from £200 in 2024 to £1,600. This year also saw us become registered with the Midlothian Community Benefits group which enables local organisations to assist charities with specific projects and initiatives.

Our expenditure, which rose by 14% from £10,766 to £12,267, primarily related to the two song leaders who facilitate the sessions and also undertake outreach work and some administration functions. Other costs were in respect of publicity and the rent for the hall at St John's and King's Park Church in Dalkeith used for the Midlothian group sessions.

The reserves increased by 70% over the year from £9,935 to £16,940. However, the grants received in the year require to be employed in the course of 2025 and therefore, while the financial position has greatly improved, it will be necessary for us to continue to secure charitable grants and assistance as we have done in previous years to ensure the work of the charity can develop and grow.

In looking to the 2025/26 financial year, costs are expected to increase with a need to recognise the critical and considerable work undertaken by the two song leaders, which extends beyond the weekly sessions. In addition, an increase in the rental of the premises in Midlothian is expected.

Reserves policy

The trustees' policy is to retain a minimum of three months' worth of normal running costs in order to meet commitments and to cover any unexpected expenditure. This would require the General Fund to be at least £3,066 (1/4 of £12,267) and is well within the current balance on the General Fund of £5,841.

Plans for future period

This has been a successful and exciting year for The Warblers. We have seen a significant increase in our membership and we are extremely grateful to those charitable trusts and organisations who have given us much-needed financial assistance. It is clear from our Annual Evaluation that the weekly sessions are having a positive impact on the health of our participants. In addition, the three performances in which we were involved have raised the profile of singing for lung health in general and The Warblers in particular. We aim to expand our performance profile.

We also hope to develop further our social media profile and increase the accessibility of songs that we are singing to make them available on our website.

As we enter the financial year 2025-26 the trustees very much hope to be able to further develop the groups in Musselburgh and Dalkeith; clearly, this will depend on securing further funds. We will promote the service by reaching out to potential participants and raising awareness amongst health and social care professionals about the benefits of regular group singing for people who experience breathlessness. This includes exploring opportunities for people to access singing for lung health groups. It will be essential for the trustees to maintain efforts to secure grant funding for the charity to therefore have the confidence to pursue its aspirations for growth and development in supporting the clear benefits which the charity offers.

This report was approved by the Trustees and is signed on their behalf by Isobel Gunn, Chair of The Warblers:

Date: 19 August 2025

Isobel A Gunn



**Report of the Independent Examiner
To the Trustees of The Warblers**

I report on the accounts of The Warblers (the charity) for the period 6 April 2024 to 5 April 2025, which are set out on pages 15 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

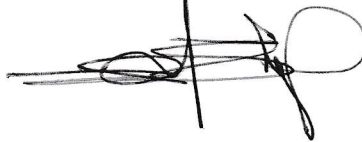
My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - 1 to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
 - 2 to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulationshave not been met, or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Charles M. Sharp
20 Rocheid Park
Edinburgh EH4 1RU



Date: 27 August 2025

THE WARBLERS

Receipts and Payments Account for the Year Ended 5 April 2025

	Unrestricted General Fund	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
RECEIPTS	£	£	£	£
Participants' Fees	3,482	-	3,482	2,400
Grants - Note 4	-	14,195	14,195	11,230
Donations	710	-	710	200
Concert Proceeds	885	-	885	-
Total Receipts in Year	<u>5,077</u>	<u>14,195</u>	<u>19,272</u>	<u>13,830</u>
PAYMENTS				
Song Leaders' fees	4,420	2,880	7,300	7,200
Outreach days	0	2,725	2,725	2,700
Group resources	57	250	307	208
Hall rent	200	400	600	-
Publicity	10	500	510	210
Web costs	109	120	229	-
Zoom costs	-	-	-	128
Mentoring	60	-	60	240
Independent Examiner's fee	80	-	80	80
Projector	6	450	456	-
Other expenditure	-	-	-	-
Total Payments in year	<u>4,942</u>	<u>7,325</u>	<u>12,267</u>	<u>10,766</u>
NET RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS)	<u>135</u>	<u>6,870</u>	<u>7,005</u>	<u>3,064</u>

The notes on page 17 form part of these accounts.

THE WARBLERS

Statement of Balances at 5 April 2025

	Unrestricted General Fund	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
<i>Funds Reconciliation</i>	£	£	£	£
Opening fund balances	5,705	4,230	9,935	6,871
Net Receipts/(Payments) in year	135	6,870	7,005	3,064
Closing fund balances	5,840	11,100	16,940	9,935
<i>Bank & cash balances:</i>				
Bank Current account	5,751	11,100	16,851	9,896
Cash in hand	89	-	89	39
Total bank & cash balances	5,840	11,100	16,940	9,935
Liabilities	-	-	-	80

Approved by the Trustees on
19 August 2025

Trustee : Isobel Gunn (Chair)



Date : 19 August 2025

The notes on page 17 form part of these accounts.

THE WARBLERS

Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 5 April 2025

1. Basis of Accounting

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with the Charities & Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

2. Nature and purpose of funds

Unrestricted funds are those that may be used at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity. *Designated funds* are set aside out of unrestricted funds for particular purposes (as shown in Note 4 below).

Restricted funds may only be used for specific purposes. The restrictions on the four funds in Note 4 are : *D'Oyly Carte* – for outreach and certain running costs for further development; *Agnes Hunter Trust* – core costs of delivering singing sessions and outreach; *Midlothian CMH&W Fund* – delivery of singing sessions; *DWF Foundation* – cost of projector for sessions.

3. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

No remuneration was paid to trustees or any connected persons during the year and no expenses were reimbursed to them.

4. Movement In Funds

	At 6/4/24	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	At 5/4/25
	£	£	£	£	£
<i>Restricted Funds :</i>					
D'Oyly Carte	4,230		(4,230)	-	0
Agnes Hunter Trust	-	9,130	(1,480)	-	7,650
Midlothian CMH&W Fund	-	4,615	(1,165)	-	3,450
DWF Foundation	-	450	(450)	-	0
<i>Total Restricted Funds</i>	4,230	14,195	(7,325)	-	11,100
<i>Unrestricted Funds :</i>					
<i>Designated Funds :</i>					
Reserve Fund	800	-	-	-	800
Total Designated	800	-	-	-	800
<i>General Fund</i>	4,905	5,078	(4,942)	-	5,041
<i>Total Unrestricted Funds</i>	5,705	5,078	(4,942)	-	5,841
<i>Total Funds</i>	9,935	19,273	(12,267)	-	16,941

