

# **Singing for Lung Health – with the Cheyne Gang**

**“Sing to breathe, to sing, to breathe.....is the motto of The Cheyne Gang – community-based singing groups for people with chronic respiratory or health conditions which cause breathlessness.**

**The groups use singing as a way of teaching natural breathing techniques to help manage symptoms of breathlessness and play a huge role in the members’ health and well being as well as their social life.**

The original group was founded in 2013 but now with eight groups and over 150 members (and rising!), The Cheyne Gang provides a positive, social opportunity for people to meet, learn breathing exercises, sing together, laugh, have fun and feel good.

Singers in the [Cheyne Gang](#) have respiratory health issues which means they are particularly vulnerable to Covid 19. As a result, all the groups are suspended for the time being.

But the [Cheyne Gang](#) – its singers, song leaders, volunteers, and group coordinators – are determined to keep everyone singing from the safety of their own homes.

Singing group leaders are busy recording breathing and relaxation exercises, new songs and familiar songs for singers to access and a DVD is in the pipeline for those who are not online.

But it is not just the singing that makes people feel good – the chance to socialise and have fun is just as important. As this is not possible at the moment, the team who coordinate the groups in different places (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Tweed Valley, and Coldstream) are busy setting up some kind of regular communication with members. Some singers have taken on the role of keeping in contact with others who live near them or who are in their friendship groups. Everyone has enjoyed getting a call, an email link to the online weekly exercises and songs and some who needed information to link into available support in their community appreciated the help they were given to do that.

The team is also keeping in touch with members who may be staying with relatives further afield.

The hope is that this will continue organically with group members themselves connecting by email and telephone calls.

Some of our more outgoing singers are recording themselves performing at home for us to enjoy on our website.

All of the online work that we are doing has been made possible by grants from CORRA Foundation, The National Lottery Community Fund, Bank of Scotland Foundation and The Bridge (Scottish Borders 3rd Sector Partnership). We must maintain an online platform for the foreseeable future as our members are unlikely to be able to meet for quite some time.

As a team, we recognise the importance of research into the benefits of singing for breathing and we are currently involved in several projects with The University of Edinburgh that we hope will provide conclusive evidence of the physical benefits for singing and learning natural breathing techniques for those with long term respiratory disease. As we learn more about the impact of Covid 19 on the lungs we feel that our service will be needed by many more people as they recover from this disease and perhaps require rehabilitation for their

lung health.

[The Cheyne Gang](#) is a Scottish Charity (SC047259) and as such relies on its own fundraising activities, which are currently curtailed, as well as grants and donations. To continue providing our service to our members, keeping them engaged and motivated from the safety of their own homes, we would appreciate donations via our local giving page – <https://localgiving.org/charity/the-cheyne-gang/>