

Edinburgh care home residents joined in virtual singalong

Residents at two Edinburgh care homes joined hundreds of people all over the UK in a virtual singalong to celebrate the life of the late Dame Vera Lynn.

Men and women from Haugh House and Craighall House run by [Mansfield Care](#) sang the iconic 'We'll Meet Again', with over 900 care home residents taking part throughout the country.

The event took place on Remembrance Sunday and also marked the release of the singer's farewell album 'Keep Smiling Through' in partnership with Decca Records.

The singalong was organised by Shapeshifter Productions which collaborates with care homes around the UK through their participatory singing project, The Smiling Sessions.

The charity provides weekly singing sessions for residents in care homes, which can be accessed through a newly developed [website and app](#) due to the pandemic. Songs can be streamed or downloaded.

Artistic Director of [Shapeshifter Productions](#), Alison Jones, said: "The Smiling Sessions was a project conceived over 10 years ago which enables residents at care homes throughout the country to sing with one another through weekly sessions.

"Unfortunately, with the pandemic we were forced to hold our weekly singing sessions virtually, but with this change we

came up with new ideas such as a virtual jukebox – allowing residents to pick the songs they want to sing together remotely.

“It became a huge hit with homes all over the country, and so we decided we wanted to have a mass singalong to commemorate those on Remembrance Sunday. It took a lot of effort to set up, but we were overwhelmed by the popularity of the singalong with over 10,000 residents all coming together to sing.

“Dame Vera Lynn is so iconic, and is a symbol of resilience and strength for so many during an unprecedented time, and you can see how much the song meant to all the residents, it provided a real sense of occasion for them.”

Haugh House and Craighall House were approached by Shapeshifter Productions over the phone after learning the mother of Pete Baikie, co-founder of The Smiling Sessions, was staying at Haugh House.

Care Home Manager, Jo Dickman, said: “One of residents, Rae Baikie, has a son who is involved in musical therapy for care homes down in England, and so he regularly comes up to do singing sessions with our residents.

“Through him we found out about the big singalong and we had many of our residents eager to join. They absolutely loved it, and you could see just how much it meant to those who took part in it.

“It made the residents feel very reminiscent of their childhoods, and we even have two residents who served in the forces so it was particularly poignant for them.

“Singing plays a huge role in the care of our residents, and seeing each of them after the performance, and when we showed them the video back, it obvious to see how much of an impact singing can have on their well-being.

“We are always trying to find new and unique ways to provide activities for our residents in a time where visits and sessions can be difficult. We will definitely be collaborating with the Smiling Sessions project in the future.”

Mansfield Care specialise in small, friendly residential care homes in Edinburgh, Borders and west of Scotland; each designed to an exceptional standard with state-of-the-art facilities.

The Mansfield Care ethos is inspired by the kind of care we would wish for ourselves in later life – supportive, friendly, bright, positive, empathetic, respectful and homely.



Rae Baikie whose son Pete was one of the members of the long running TV comedy Absolutely