

Playing* for Cake



Photo: Christmas last year at The Hub, Sheringham.

Welcome to our Christmas Newsletter!

What a year it has been. We've packed the calendar with memorable moments, from Nicky's unforgettable set at Latitude to the success of our first Bronze Arts Award group led by Saffron. David and Amanda produced a lovely short film that captures the spirit of our sessions, and The Cupcakes have launched adding new performance opportunities and community reach. Melanie's creativity has been everywhere this year, from her wreath for St Nicholas to new lanyard designs.

We've also launched pilots and new sessions across Aylsham, Upper Sheringham and King's Lynn, with guitar lessons, and an Assembly Bangers series coming together, and we're restarting the youth choir at the Little Theatre in January.

Looking ahead: we're using the rebrand to gain traction on social media, rolling out new session messaging, and planning a PfC concert for 22 May as part of the Creative Sheringham Festival. The festival will focus on celebrating participants and their stories, and our performances will tie into National and County Creativity and Wellbeing events happening during the same period. So grab a cuppa, settle in, and enjoy this slice of PfC life - served warm with a big dollop of cosy.



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Confidence, Creativity and Bronze Awards



Photo: Harry, Timmy & James in action.

Since launching the Bronze Arts Award this year, Playing for Cake has supported three determined young creatives whose achievements deserve celebrating. Under the guidance of session leader Saffron, the students have grown in confidence and skill.

Timmy produced a striking soundscape video about Sheringham that has already reached over 600 views on Facebook. Harry wrote a song on his guitar, recorded his vocals over a backing track and mixed the sound himself. James gave everyone goosebumps when he performed Malagueña at the Hub's Wednesday singing session despite playing with his arm in a splint!

The Trinity Arts Awards enable young people to develop a basic understanding of arts practice and some knowledge of arts provision in the community. All three lads attended a live gig and wrote a review, and each kept a detailed log of their work and research. All three have completed the Award's requirements and Trinity will be issuing their certificates before Christmas. We're proud of what they've achieved and excited to see where their creativity takes them next.

"He's thoroughly enjoyed working on his music... to hear that people appreciate him for who he is has really boosted his confidence." — Harry's Grandma.

Turn Your Shopping into Donations

Thank you - we've raised over £390 via Easyfundraising!

Want to help? It's super easy to join us. Search Playing for Cake on [Easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and every time you do your Christmas, or everyday shopping online, you can turn it into free donations to help us! Easyfundraising partners with over 8,000 brands who donate a portion of what you spend to your chosen cause—at no extra cost to you.



Playing for Cake

Playing for Cake Joins the Wreath Festival

St Nicholas Church in North Walsham runs an Advent and Christmas wreath festival that invites businesses, charities and societies from the town to produce and display wreaths in the church for the festive season. The event is presented as part of the church's Advent and Christmas programme and the wreaths are typically left on display throughout the Christmas period, giving residents and visitors a chance to view them at their leisure.

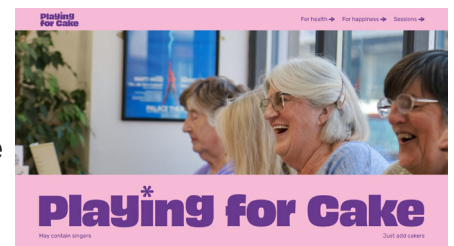
Melanie has created a wreath for Playing for Cake that will be on display at St Nicholas Church's annual wreath festival in North Walsham; the festival showcases wreaths made by local businesses and organisations and the displays remain in the church through the Christmas season.

Pop in to see Melanie's design and support Playing for Cake this festive season.



Coming Soon...

We're getting a bright, friendly new website designed by Ian at Eggcup Design. Finding local sessions will be effortless, search by town and instantly see times and session leaders. Built to scale, the site will welcome more groups as we open more sessions too! Keep an eye out for the launch!!



If you love the new look of Playing for Cake then we're looking make the T-shirts available for everyone. Our T-shirts for Cakers will be on sale soon—available online and at sessions. Watch this space on the new site or pop into a session to grab your tee!



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In every newsletter, we'll meet a new Caker. This issue features Attia— whose involvement with the singing for Health, Harmony & Happiness over the last few years has brought many smiles to the room.

Can you share a favourite memory that involves cake?

My birthday cake is always homemade by my Dad, it is the only time of year when he bakes a cake, and that makes it extra special.

What were your feelings and experiences when you experienced your first ever PfC event?

I remember thinking 'what a lovely community feeling



In your view, what makes PfC stand out as something special?

It's inclusive and providing a valuable service in an incredibly friendly, welcoming, supportive way, regardless of ability. Every week has something different, so all tastes are catered for.

What do you think are some of the benefits, perhaps unnoticed, of singing at PfC sessions?

Reduces a feeling of isolation and increases a feeling of community and happiness. It also engages practically every part of the brain.

During a session - what is the song that gets everyone singing along?

Sweet Caroline is a classic! And Take Me Home, Country Roads.



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How community music is quietly reshaping the world around us.

We see it all the time, someone comes for a sing-song and leaves feeling lighter, brighter, and more connected. But that joy doesn't stay within the sessions. Across the world, community music is being used to improve health, boost confidence, and even nudge bigger systems, like healthcare and education, towards a more human, and possibly more hopeful, future.

When the Lifemusic project trained musicians to lead creative sessions in places like hospitals and prisons, music became a gentle yet powerful way to build emotional connection, especially when words fell short. These sessions weren't about performance, but presence. They offered people space to feel, play, and simply be.

For example, in one long-term hospital ward, a practitioner ran an improvisational session with patients. One woman, largely non-verbal due to trauma, began quietly tapping a drum. Over the following weeks, this small gesture evolved into shared rhythms and playful musical conversations with others on the ward. Without needing words, music became her way of expressing herself and reconnecting, something staff hadn't seen in months.

Then there's The Pizzicato Effect in Melbourne, where young people from diverse backgrounds get free, long-term music education. It's not just about learning instruments, it's about feeling heard and valued. And when music programmes are built with communities, not just delivered to them, something special happens, they grow in ways that fit the people they serve. One student, for example, started out shy and unsure, barely speaking in class. But through weekly ensemble sessions, she found her voice, first through her violin, then by helping younger students. She even began leading warm-ups by the end of the year.

When music programmes are built with communities, not just delivered to them, something special happens, they grow in ways that reflect the people they serve, nurturing confidence, creativity, and leadership from within.

Of course, singing and playing music can't fix everything, but they can change how people feel in their bodies, in their communities, and in the systems they interact with. Studies show that singing regularly can even help heart health (that's right, music can be good for your blood vessels) and when music becomes part of public health strategies, it's not just a nice extra, it's an affordable way to care for people.

In the end, whether we're singing in a local café or a community hall, the heart of the matter is simple: music brings people together. It's not just about having a good time (though we do!). It's about helping people feel better, connect deeply, and be part of something bigger.

One song at a time.

