



SING  
IRELAND

The logo for SING IRELAND features the word "SING" in a large, white, sans-serif font, with "IRELAND" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font directly below it. The text is centered within a white, stylized arch that resembles a bridge or a smile. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a diverse group of people at a community event. In the foreground, a man with short brown hair and glasses is laughing heartily while holding a tablet. Next to him, a woman with blonde hair and glasses is looking at her smartphone. They are both wearing yellow lanyards with "SING IRELAND" printed on them. Other people in the background are also looking at their phones. A thick yellow curved line is in the top left corner, and a thick red curved line is in the bottom right corner.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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# WELCOME FROM CHAIR & CEO

As we look back on 2024, we're struck by the steady and meaningful progress made across Sing Ireland's work. This year marked the beginning of our new Strategic Plan, and with it, a renewed focus on inclusion, sustainability, and deepening our support for singers of all ages and backgrounds.

Throughout the year, our programmes continued to grow in reach and impact. From the Irish Youth Choir's international performance in Hanover to the expansion of Song Seeking into new communities, we've seen firsthand how group singing can bring people together, foster wellbeing, and celebrate the diversity of voices across Ireland. Behind the scenes, we've strengthened our systems and governance, completed the transition to a new CRM, and taken steps to embed environmental responsibility into our operations. These developments, while less visible, are vital to ensuring Sing Ireland remains resilient and responsive in the years ahead.

We're grateful to our team, our volunteers, and our partners for their dedication, and to our funders, especially the Arts Council, for their continued support. Thanks to all of this support, we've been able to deliver a wide range of programmes and lay strong foundations for the future.

Looking ahead, we're excited to build on this momentum. Whether through new collaborations, expanded youth initiatives, or continued investment in our organisational capacity, Sing Ireland remains committed to creating spaces where people can come together, raise their voices, and experience the joy of singing.



Virginia Kerr  
Chairperson



Dermot O'Callaghan  
CEO

# COMPANY INFORMATION



## Honorary President

Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness

*Patron of the Irish Youth Choir* Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

## Directors

Virginia Kerr, Chairperson

Conor Dooley, Company Secretary

Sophie Lee

Lisa McGrath

Eva O'Toole

Amy Ryan

Jim Fitzsimons (Until May 2024)

Peter Mannion (From September 2024)

## Executive Team

Dermot O' Callaghan, Chief Executive Officer

Jenny O'Connor-Madsen, General Manager

Cecelia Molumby, Development Manager

Kate Daly, Engagement Officer

Daniel Clements, Financial Officer

## Artistic Team

Orla Flanagan, Artistic Director of the International Choral Conducting Summer School

Bernie Sherlock, Artistic Director of the Irish Youth Choirs

Patrick Barrett, Conductor of the Irish Youth Training Choir

Registered Office: Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick, Limerick

Bankers: Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c., Patrick St., Cork

Auditors: Crowleys DFK, 5 Lapps Quay, Cork





2024



# 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

Reached

**274,976**

people

from 32 counties  
and 19 countries

**350**

members  
in our community



Worked with

**84**

professional  
artists

Worked with over

**10,000**

Children and Young People

Worked with over

**3,000**

people from  
marginalised  
communities

Partnered with

**42**

organisations







## FINANCIAL REVIEW 2024

2024 has been a significant year of progress and transformation for Sing Ireland. Building on the foundations laid by our Strategic Plan 2024 - 2029, we have seen substantial growth in engagement, programme delivery, and organisational strength.

In 2024, Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór (t/a Sing Ireland) had an income of €725,369 and expenditure of €726,656 directly related to services for its stakeholders and the wider sector, resulting in a modest planned deficit (-1,287) which represents just 0.18% of total income. While income levels have adjusted following growth in 2023, Sing Ireland continues to maintain a strong, diversified portfolio of income streams and a sustainable financial position. Importantly, there has been notable growth in income from a range of funding sources, alongside increasing earned income through in-person courses and events, which continue to attract large numbers of participants.

Our primary core funding was received via Strategic Funding from the Arts Council of Ireland. Additional income was secured from local authorities, trusts and foundations, and sponsorship.

Expenditure remains firmly focused on the delivery of services, events, and resources that enrich the musical and cultural lives of people across the island of Ireland. With a dedicated team of five executive staff members in 2024, we have continued to increase our reach and strengthen the sector as a whole, ensuring that Sing Ireland continues to act as a vital support and connection point for choirs and communities nationwide.



# GOVERNANCE

Virginia Kerr served as Chairperson of Sing Ireland throughout 2024, with Conor Dooley appointed to the role of Company Secretary. During the year, the Board provided clear strategic leadership, ensuring that the organisation continued to embed best practice in governance and accountability. Sing Ireland formally renewed its compliance with the Charities Governance Code in 2024, reaffirming its commitment to transparency and effective oversight. The Board worked closely with the executive team to expand core services, while also focusing on the wide range of governance, financial, and operational measures required to deliver on Objective 4 of Sing Ireland's strategic plan: Being a Sustainable Organisation.

## Board Meeting Dates 2024

- Sunday, 28th January
- Sunday, 5th May
- Wednesday, 14th August
- Friday 27th September
- Tuesday, 3rd December





# ENHANCING THROUGH LIVES SINGING



# 2024-2029 STRATEGY

## Vision

After 38 years of successfully promoting and developing the choral singing landscape, our organisation changed its name in 2019 to become our vision - a vision of a SINGing IRELAND - an Ireland where our collective voice resonates and enhances lives through singing.

# ENHANCING LIVES THROUGH SINGING

## Mission

Sing Ireland is the national organisation that supports all forms of group singing in Ireland. We engage with and inspire our singers, the wider group singing community and the general public to experience the life-enhancing impact of singing.

## Developing a new Strategy

During 2023, Sing Ireland developed a new five year strategic plan, to be launched in April 2024. Today, our purpose remains the same, but our commitment goes beyond the notes on the page as we strive to create a sense of belonging, unity, and joy for more people in Ireland, through the transformative power of singing. This development of work is our roadmap towards a future where every voice is heard, valued, and uplifted.



## Our Values

Through group singing, values, the following values underpin this plan:

# BELONGING

We believe in the power of singing together.

It's not just about music; it's about feeling like we're part of a community and connecting with our shared humanity.

# COLLABORATION

We believe in the intrinsic value of group singing and through collaboration we maximise our impact, bringing about meaningful change.

# CREATIVITY

We believe that group singing is a powerful conduit to creativity and acknowledge the positive benefits that are achieved for people through singing and creativity.

We are dedicated to uniting voices, empowering young singers, celebrating diversity, and fostering inclusivity. We want to ensure that our work reaches people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, and identities. [Here is a link](#) to our strategy to view in full.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## 1. Uniting Our Voices

In Ireland, an unprecedented level of enthusiasm and commitment drives the dynamic group singing community. To ensure its continual growth and sustainability, Sing Ireland will focus on providing essential support, fostering engagement, and nurturing passion within the sector. We aim to achieve these goals through targeted training, public engagement events, supports and facilitated networking opportunities.

## 2. Empowering Young Singers

Empowering Young Singers is our commitment to transform youth singing in Ireland. From 2024 to 2029, we're taking action to elevate both engagement and quality, leading a collaborative effort to design sustainable models and infrastructure. Reshaping the landscape of youth singing, music education policy and resulting action is essential in the longer term. We aim to ensure that every young voice in Ireland can have a meaningful group singing experience that makes an impact upon their lives and creates pathways to a lifelong love of music and a culturally, socially, and musically engaged society in Ireland.

## 3. Celebrating Diversity in Singing

Sing Ireland commits to fostering belonging, equality, and sustainable communities. People living throughout Ireland have a variety of musical and creative needs. We adapt to this reality, championing inclusivity and sustainability as well as a sweep of musical styles and genres. We envision a future where every voice contributes to a strong and cohesive society.

## 4. Being a Sustainable Organisation

Sing Ireland is committed to dynamic growth and restructuring to meet future demands while consolidating existing resources responsibly. Our journey prioritises attracting new resources to fortify existing programmes and also seeks to see new roles filled by skilled individuals, fostering inclusivity and sustainability across Sing Ireland's organisation. Sing Ireland will continue to adapt to, and positively transform Ireland's cultural and musical landscape.



# 1 UNITING OUR VOICES





## UNITING OUR VOICES

Prioritising training, education and networking events for the singer, choir/singing group and conductor remained a key component of Sing Ireland's work in 2024.

### International Choral Conducting Summer School

The 43rd Sing Ireland International Choral Conducting Summer School took place from 10 – 16 August 2024 at the University of Limerick. This unique training event supports choirs across the country by providing professional development for conductors who work across the length and breadth of Ireland. We welcomed participants across six levels from beginner to advanced with Orla Flanagan as Artistic Director of the course. Our international team of conducting tutors, all expert choral conductors and teachers were: Róisín Blunnie (Ireland), Niall Crowley (Ireland), Amy Bebbington (UK), Carlo Pavese (Italy), Jennifer Tham (Singapore) and Gary Graden (Sweden). We were also joined by accompanist Peter Barley and vocal tutor Suzzie Vango.

### Membership

In 2024 Sing Ireland enhanced the membership experience with the introduction of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, HubSpot. This has made the journey from joining to renewal more straightforward, with clearer communication and more personalised support. The system allows us to better understand and respond to members' needs, strengthening the value of being part of the Sing Ireland network.





## Membership and Festival Big Sing Events

Sing Ireland supported and participated in a number of large-scale singing events throughout the year, each designed to bring singers together in celebration, learning, and shared musical experience. The following events reflect Sing Ireland's commitment to creating meaningful singing experiences for all, and to supporting the vibrant choral community across the island.

At the Cork International Choral Festival, Sing Ireland worked with member choirs and community groups to facilitate performances and workshops across the city. The festival's inclusive atmosphere and high artistic standards made it a highlight for many singers, with informal pop-up performances taking place in libraries, galleries, and public spaces. Patrick Barrett led the Big Sing at the Festival in 2024.

In April 2024, we hosted a workshop for our membership and facilitators with Suzzie Vango, which focused on the methods of her book, *How to Make Your Choir Sound Awesome*. In June 2024, we hosted a workshop with Dr Anita Collins, who is renowned for her research into the neurological effects of music education, demonstrating how music learning can enhance brain development and improve various cognitive skills.

In Derry, Sing Ireland partnered with the City of Derry International Choir Festival to support the Big Sing Workshop with SLIXS, a dynamic vocal ensemble known for their genre-blending style. The workshop welcomed singers of all backgrounds and abilities, and was part of a broader programme exploring diversity and inclusion in choral music.

In Dublin, Sing Ireland hosted a Come & Sing Fauré Requiem event, conducted by Niall Kinsella in November 2024. The day-long workshop invited singers to rehearse and perform the Requiem alongside professional soloists and instrumentalists. The event was designed to be accessible to those unable to commit to regular rehearsals, and was praised for its welcoming atmosphere and musical quality.

# 2 EMPOWERING YOUNG SINGERS







## EMPOWERING YOUNG SINGERS

The Irish Youth Choirs (including the Irish Youth Choir for 18 – 28 year olds and the Irish Youth Training Choir for 14 – 17 year olds) continued to be central to the work of Sing Ireland in 2023. The YouthSing Ireland programme continued in 2023 with engagement with 17 schools across Munster and Leinster and SingSpaces throughout the year.

### Star Songs

In 2024, Sing Ireland launched Star Songs, a new early years singing programme supported by the Arts Council. The project is delivered in partnership with four County Childcare Committees: Waterford, Roscommon, South Dublin, and Dublin City - and is designed to bring high-quality musical experiences to young children in early years settings.

The programme began in November with a development day for the musician team, drawn from Sing Ireland's 2024–2026 panel. Starting in late 2024, nine musicians worked across 24 early years settings, delivering sessions from December 2024 and continuing on to June 2025.

As part of the project, composers Seán Doherty and Laura Sheils were commissioned to create new songs for this age group. All songs and resources being developed as part of the project will be shared with participants and the wider Sing Ireland Community in 2025, once the project is concluded. The composers and musicians will work closely with the organisation to continue the developments in this area into future years.



### Irish Youth Choir (18-28 Year Olds)

The Irish Youth Choir, conducted by Artistic Director of the Irish Youth Choirs, Bernie Sherlock, had a full and rewarding year. In May, the choir travelled to Hannover to represent Ireland at the International Youth Choirs Festival, performing alongside ensembles from across Europe. The summer residential course brought together 48 singers for a week of rehearsals and workshops, including a session led by Virginia Kerr. The programme culminated in concerts in Limerick and Dublin, both warmly received by audiences. The Conductor in Training for 2024 was Callum Jeacle.

In November, several IYC members supported Sing Ireland's Come & Sing Fauré Requiem event, helping with logistics and joining the performance. Their involvement was praised by participants and highlighted the choir's role in connecting with the wider singing community. Auditions for 2025 began in the final quarter, with a decision to rea audition all previous members and focus on an ensemble performing more challenging repertoire.

### Irish Youth Choir (14-17 Year Olds)

Under the direction of Patrick Barrett, the Irish Youth Choir (14-17 Year Olds) continued to grow in scale and ambition. The choir began the year with a featured performance as part of the St. Patrick's Day Festival in Dublin, followed by an appearance at the Dublin International Chamber Music Festival. In June, 78 singers from every county in Ireland took part in the summer residential course, which concluded with sold-out concerts in Limerick and Dublin.

In December, the choir collaborated with the Irish Chamber Orchestra for three sold-out performances in Limerick and Dublin. Rehearsals were held in the RIAM and in Limerick, supported by members of the Irish Youth Choir's Youth Support Team. The partnership with the ICO was a highlight of the year and offered the singers a chance to perform alongside professional musicians. Auditions for 2025 began in October. The IYCs continue to be a cornerstone of Sing Ireland's youth engagement work.





## Brigid Sings

In early 2024, Sing Ireland joined forces with Music Generation Kildare, Kildare County Council Arts Service, and Creative Ireland to deliver Brigid Sings - a county-wide singing initiative celebrating Brigid 1500. The project invited five Kildare-based female singer-songwriters: Inni-K, Lea Heart, Megan O'Neill, SAL, and Sive - to compose original songs inspired by Brigid's life and legacy.

Over 3,000 children from 37 schools across Kildare took part, engaging with the songs through workshops, weekly sessions, and a rich suite of resources that included lyrics, practice videos, games, and illustrations by local artist Laura Dempsey. Irish translations were also provided, ensuring accessibility and cultural depth.

Musicians from Music Generation Kildare and Sing Ireland travelled the county throughout April and May, working directly with children and young people to explore Brigid's story through music. The project culminated in a Gala Performance at St Brigid's Cathedral in Kildare Town on 8 June, where 121 young singers performed alongside the songwriters, musicians, and members of the Irish Youth Choir. The event was a joyful celebration of creativity, community, and connection, attended by over 300 family members and friends. Feedback from schools and parents was overwhelmingly positive, with many describing the experience as transformative, inclusive, and deeply memorable. Brigid Sings stands as a testament to the power of music to bring stories to life and to unite communities in shared celebration.



# 3 CELEBRATING DIVERSITY







## CELEBRATING DIVERSITY IN SINGING

In 2024, Sing Ireland continued to embrace collective singing of all types as it pursued programmes for marginalised groups through our Song Seeking project for migrant singers. We also sought to expand our impact through singing for health and well-being programmes, exemplified through Sing for Life.

### Song Seeking

Song Seeking is a community singing programme developed by Sing Ireland to support wellbeing, inclusion, and cultural exchange among people living in temporary accommodation and Direct Provision settings. The initiative brings together migrants and local communities through shared musical experiences, creating spaces where people can connect, express themselves, and feel a sense of belonging.

Sessions have taken place in locations across Clare, Kildare, Limerick, and Tipperary in 2024 with each setting shaped by the needs and interests of its participants. From children singing nursery rhymes in Abbey Grove to adults sharing songs from Ukraine, Jordan, and Bangladesh in Clonmel, the programme adapts to the people in the room - fostering creativity, resilience, and joy. Facilitators play a central role, drawing on backgrounds in music therapy, community music, and education to create safe, welcoming environments. The programme has also supported integration, with participants joining local choirs and performing at community events. In some cases, participants have stepped into leadership roles, co-facilitating sessions and sharing their musical expertise.

Song Seeking continues to demonstrate the power of singing to build bridges across cultures, reduce isolation, and offer moments of lightness and connection in challenging circumstances. It is not just a music programme: it is a space for people to be seen, heard, and celebrated.



## Sing for Life

Sing for Life is a group singing programme developed by Sing Ireland to support adults with intellectual and physical disabilities. Delivered in partnership with organisations including St Michael's House, WALK, Cheeverstown, and the Irish Wheelchair Association, the programme creates inclusive spaces where participants are not just welcomed, they lead.

Each weekly session is shaped by the participants themselves. They choose the songs, lead warm-ups, and guide the direction of the music. This emphasis on autonomy has had a profound impact, with participants gaining confidence, expressing themselves more freely, and building meaningful connections with peers, facilitators, and their wider communities. Sessions are designed to be consistent and supportive, using movement, rhythm, and Lámh (Irish sign language) to ensure accessibility. Facilitators adapt responsively, creating a space where everyone can participate fully, regardless of ability or communication style.

Performance is a key part of the programme. Twice a year, participants host celebratory events for family and friends, choosing their own repertoire and leading the show. These moments are filled with pride and joy, offering a powerful reversal of traditional roles and expectations.

Sing for Life continues to challenge assumptions about what inclusive music-making can be. It centres the voices of those often overlooked, and celebrates their creativity, leadership, and right to be seen and heard.





# 4 BEING A SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION





## BEING A SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

In 2024, Sing Ireland continued on strengthening its foundations, building valuable partnerships, ensuring stability and positioning the organisation for future growth. Alongside consolidating existing supports, we worked to attract new resources and opportunities that will sustain and enhance our programmes into the future.

### Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland (2022-2024)

Sing Ireland's journey on the Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland programme with Business to Arts and with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, concluded in May 2024. The Fellowship has embedded a stronger fundraising culture across the organisation. Through structured training, mentorship, and practical implementation, Sing Ireland has emerged with a robust fundraising strategy and renewed confidence in our ability to attract philanthropic and corporate support into the future.

### Community of Supporters

Our work is made possible by a growing community of supporters. In 2024, Sing Ireland joined in the Irish Life Dublin Marathon charity programme and further developed our Friends Ensemble, alongside the launch of our Business & Corporate Chorus. We are grateful to all Sing Ireland's ensemble of supporters, individual donors, and volunteers, whose dedication helps sustain our mission and expand opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience the life-enhancing power of singing.

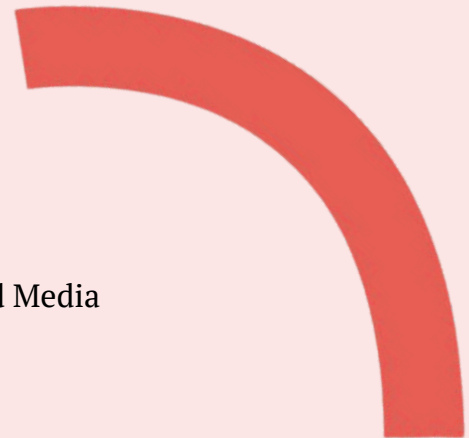




## Funding Our Vision in 2024

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following funders, partners, and supporters for their belief in Sing Ireland's mission in 2024. Your support ensures that Sing Ireland can continue to deliver meaningful, sustainable programmes, fostering community, creativity, and belonging through singing.

The Arts Council of Ireland  
Aeolus Engine Services  
Bank of Ireland  
Business to Arts  
EU Creative Europe  
Creative Ireland  
DAA  
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts Gaeltacht, Sport and Media  
Community Foundation of Ireland  
Grant Thornton  
Kerry County Council  
Kildare County Council  
Limerick County Council  
Rethink Ireland  
The Ireland Funds



# ENHANCING THROUGH LIVES



Spreading the joy of group singing across Ireland and making a lasting impact on our cultural landscape and to people's lives.