



MEDIA RELEASE:

EVENT DATE: FRIDAY 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 11am-12:30pm

## **LOCAL CHARITY FLASHES SOME FESTIVE 'TEA, TINSEL AND TONSILS' TO CELEBRATE FLAGSHIP SINGING PROJECT FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

Plymouth Music Zone is holding its first ever Christmas Sing-Along to bring together scores of older people from residential homes across Plymouth, where the charity runs weekly singing workshops throughout the year.

The weekly workshops are part of the 'Keep Singing, Keepsake' project that uses music and video to reduce loneliness and isolation with people living in sheltered housing. For many of the older people, this may be their only social activity and one of the few times they meet other residents in their home. The project also works with participants to produce audio and video 'keepsakes' of the sessions that can be shared with family and friends.

The "Tea, Tinsel and Tonsils" event will now give the participants a chance to get together in a larger group to meet, talk and sing Christmas songs over a cup of tea, mince pies and festive fayre. It will be the first time people from the various centres across Plymouth will come together. PMZ expects up to 40 residents will attend, from George Downing House, Spire Court, St Barnabas, St Theresa's, Astor Court, Devonport Views and Pocklington Rise.

Marlene Simmonds, a resident of Spire Court says:

***"We all live in our separate flats, so the only time we actually see each other is when we come into the lounge to join in something. Otherwise we just see each other when we come and go to the shops, just passing each other by. Coming here gives us that opportunity to get to know each other that little bit more that builds up the community. It helps with memory and brings some memories forward and brings back something you thought you'd forgotten about. It just relieves the tension. If you've got any worries you just come here for an hour and a half and just forget them and have fun."***

Debbie Geraghty, Executive Director of PMZ says:

***"It's so wonderful to be able to get everyone together for a Christmas sing-a-long. Our 'Keep Singing, Keepsake' programme is one of only 15 special innovative projects in the country funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation. It's all about using music to reduce loneliness and make people happy. Nobody should feel lonely – especially not at this time of year"***

**Plymouth Music Zone Ltd**

Raglan Road, Devonport, Plymouth, PL1 4NQ

T - 01752 213690 F - 01752 509888 E - [info@plymouthmusiczone.org.uk](mailto:info@plymouthmusiczone.org.uk) W - [www.plymouthmusiczone.org.uk](http://www.plymouthmusiczone.org.uk)

Company Number - 4653409

Registered Charity Number - 1100878



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Suzanne Broom, Housing Support Worker, St Paul's Court says of the weekly singing workshops:

***"It's lifted the spirits of the residents here. We have residents that will attend the singing, but they won't attend anything else.... We have one resident here that has had a stroke. She cannot talk – apart from saying the word 'yes'. As soon as the music starts, I don't know what it is, but it must trigger something in her brain and she can actually sing a song right the way through and, I mean, that is amazing."***

The 'Keep Singing, Keepsake' project is funded by a range of funders, including the Big Lottery 'Reaching Communities' fund and Lloyds TSB Foundation. Only recently, representatives of the charity were invited to celebrate the success of the work at a House of Lords' reception.

'Tea, Tinsel and Tonsils' will take place at Plymouth Music Zone's base in Devonport from 11am to 12:30pm on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December.

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **Information about Plymouth Music Zone**

Plymouth Music Zone (PMZ) is an award winning community music organisation that provides high quality tailored music workshops for those considered most in need as well as delivering bespoke training for musicians, teachers and community leaders etc. PMZ works with some of the most disadvantaged people in Plymouth, reaching around 500 children, young people and vulnerable adults every week through the delivery of up to 50 music activities across the city and at their state-of-the-art education centre located in Devonport. 95% of PMZ's music provision targets children, young people and adults defined as being 'at risk', with 40% of that delivery involving children and adults with disabilities and 58% involving older people and those considered 'vulnerable'.

For more information about the 'Keep Singing, Keepsake' project, see:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7b\\_E0TRksw&feature=c4-overview-vl&list=PLiyOoe8br2C0uVDfe5gEttX949MysqxYx](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7b_E0TRksw&feature=c4-overview-vl&list=PLiyOoe8br2C0uVDfe5gEttX949MysqxYx)

Media Contact:

Pippa Cann, Development Manager, Plymouth Music Zone

T: 01752 213690

E: [pippa@plymouthmusiczone.org.uk](mailto:pippa@plymouthmusiczone.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/PlymouthMusicZone](http://www.facebook.com/PlymouthMusicZone)

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