

## The Panthers ANNUAL REPORT 2025 - Peter Lovatt

The Panthers is a music group for under 18s started in 2024. In 2025, we met every week between 13<sup>th</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> March, apart from February half term. Each session consisted of general musical work on tunes in a published resource. The band comprised a small group of teenagers forming a rhythm section, and instrumental players aged between 8 and 18 who bring instruments such as flute, violin and trumpet.

Izzy Harvey joined our team in early 2025, allowing us to offer coaching to singers. Through the early part of 2025 we worked hard to produce our 'Spring Spectacular' concert in April. The concert opened with the *Pink Panther* theme on solo saxophone and featured a mix of instrumental jazz numbers, with singers performing solo or in small groups all backed by our live band, to an appreciative audience. Support was provided by Annette and members of the community orchestra.

Following this, and in part due to the late Easter and 2 bank holidays, we decided to switch to a different programme for the period up to the school summer holidays – starting with a workshop and evening performance led by professional singer/songwriter Andy Mayo. We also tried some Saturday lunchtime sessions during the summer term; however, attendance at these was fairly low.



*The first Panthers concert on 5th April 2025*



*The Panthers with Andy Mayo*

After the summer break, the Panthers musicians began meeting again on Mondays in September 2025, with a new intake of young violin and flute players, some recruited via one of the Durham Music Service teachers. We reduced the length of these sessions to 45 minutes, and this has worked well. Several members of the church congregation were recruited to act as our second adult for safeguarding purposes. We provided background music at the Church Christmas Tree Festival in December with Harriet Morris playing piano for us.