

Report of the Trustees and  
Financial Statements  
for the Period Ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025  
for  
**Derby Choral Union**

## Chairman's AGM Report

Good evening everyone – it's great to see so many of you turn out on this hot and humid evening to be here tonight. It follows a theme of strong commitment from members this season for which I and the committee are exceptionally grateful. Thank you.

It has been a season, of course, that has required commitment as it broke from our tradition of three billed events to an impressive five, plus another recently that was unexpected. Your flexibility and willingness to learn music at a faster pace alongside your adaptability to performing in new venues has meant we can broaden our repertoire and audience reach. I think you will agree with me that this variety has made for a fulfilling and rewarding season as a result.

In summary, the season started with our first concert, held earlier in the season than usual in October, providing a shorter rehearsal lead time to learn Mozart's *Solemn Vespers*, Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* and Harold Darke's *As The Leaves Fall*. Performed on the evening of 19th October 2024 to organ accompaniment by Tom Corfield at St Nick's Church in Allestree, a new venue for us, it represented the opportunity to learn a selection of challenging, lesser-known music without the financial pressure of holding a larger-scale orchestral concert in the city centre. While the music was great, audience attendance however was not and in retrospect the committee places the most probable cause of this on the ambitiously high ticket price. It was a mistake and meant our efforts went unheard by people who may have otherwise joined us. It is a lesson we have learned and we intend to place an emphasis on value for money to the audience when considering future events and ticket prices.

This concert also represented the opportunity to debut the latest update to our uniform, which was well-received on the night. Unifying our accessory colour for both men and women, while amending our choice of clothing has solidified and modernised our corporate appearance as we progress into the second quarter of this century. Change can often be challenging but after a round of clarifications and several further events I hope you agree the pain was worthwhile – especially when you look at photographs of our recent concerts, we look like we have upped our game. May I record my thanks to Karen Sampson and Val Cole for running this project, and once again especially to Val for covering the cost of the scarves and ties so the funds raised went directly to the choir.

Hot on the heels of our Autumn Concert we kickstarted the festive season with a rousing rendition of Handel's *Messiah*, returning to Derby Cathedral on 30th November 2024 to perform this work there for the first time in seven years. It felt great to be back and performing alongside the Central England Camerata to a strong audience, led by Paul unusually from the keys of the harpsichord, making for a novel experience for performers and audience alike and that went down very well.

A short four weeks later we returned to Derby Cathedral, this time as guests of Derby Concert Band to join them for their Christmas concert for the second year running. This gave us the opportunity to perform a variety of Christmas music both traditional and modern, to a full venue which for those who were able to perform made for a highly enjoyable evening. We hope to work with Derby Concert Band again in future years.

Heading into the new year we focussed our attention on preparing for our Spring Concert, with Handel's *Coronation Anthems*, Haydn's *Te Deum* and Cecilia McDowall's *Magnificat* representing a balance of Baroque, Classical and contemporary music to learn and perform. Returning once again to Derby Cathedral on Saturday 5th April, joined once again by Central England Camerata, our audience was anecdotally roughly twice that of Derby Bach Choir's concert of the previous week, and while the venue was by no means to capacity, it was good to perform to a significant audience and to the praise of local music critic Mike Wheeler.

Typically our season would have finished around the time of our spring concert however this year we had another concert planned for Saturday 14th June at Longford. The very fact we had this planned, plus the mixed repertoire of choruses we were preparing for this concert meant it was convenient to agree when asked by Derby Market Hall if we would also perform for them as part of their opening week of events, at relatively short notice.

Our performance at the Market Hall on the evening of Thursday 29th May was nothing short of a triumph – the informal nature of the venue and event meant we performed to dozens of people who would have otherwise never heard us, and feedback on the night was resoundingly positive. To perform choruses from *Messiah* exactly 159 years to the day the choir was formed in that very same venue made for a particularly significant moment for both the venue and the choir. We hope to perform there again in the future.

Finally our most recent event just a couple of weekends ago at St. Chad's Church in Longford was also a great success, with many more people in attendance than we had planned for. Again the number of members singing for a summer event was impressive, and the venue and grounds made for a special occasion. I would like to record my thanks to the Ashby family for their generosity in making the venue available and providing a buffet for members between rehearsal and performance.

As Graham will undoubtedly point out shortly, the finances of the latter two events were surprisingly successful, meaning we may want to consider the types of events we put on over the coming years.

Moving forward, we face a number of pressures for the organisation to remain sustainable. Our costs continue to rise meanwhile we want to keep membership and tickets affordable. Appropriate city centre venues remain in short supply despite recent venue openings and they are hotly contended by other local groups and commercial events – especially the Cathedral. Membership this year has taken a hit of a net loss of 7 members – approximately 10% of our membership and will be starting the season with 68 members as things currently stand.

Derby probably has a higher than average number of choral societies for its scale and while we remain in such a competitive market each organisation continues to vie for a limited pool of members, interested audience and funding opportunities. In future years we may need to consider collaborating with other local groups to secure dates for venues, ensure we attract a viable audience and have enough performers to justify the event. In the meantime we may need to consider alternative venues whereby expectations are lower but then so are ticket prices to attract more people to attend, or consider other performance revenue options. This season has been an inadvertent experiment to prove that we can still hold successful events if we modify our expectations as to what a DCU performance entails.

For the forthcoming season we currently have two billed events – Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, to be performed at the Robert Ludlam Theatre at St. Benedict's in Darley Abbey in November, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* to be performed at Derby Cathedral next spring. We are currently in early stage talks with Derby Market Hall to return to perform there over the Christmas period, with a current aim of Saturday 13th December. In Summer 2026 we intend to hold a 'come and sing' event, perhaps in collaboration with other local groups, as a means of fundraising and potentially attracting new members.

Over the summer we will be running a member recruitment campaign and once details of events are firmed up we will release the Season Guide for distribution across the county area.

To committee matters, I am currently at the end of my three year committee cycle but I am happy to stand again, if you will have me, and I am also happy to remain in position as chair for a further year, if the committee so chooses. I feel this season has laid the groundwork for re-establishing DCU as a Derby mainstay and while next season is less busy event wise, will allow us time to consider some of the more strategic aspects of the organisation to sustain it into the future.

I would like to thank all committee members for their continued dedication towards maintaining the smooth running of the organisation – particularly those who have recently joined and got 'stuck in' to the day-to-day running of the choir: Karen Sampson and Trish Owen who have shared the role of Secretary, Philip Mackin who

has led our publicity and social media and Jane Perry who was recently co-opted onto the committee and has provided valuable input and insight so far.

My thanks also:

To Graham Scott for his continued support as treasurer

To Alison and Ian Sharlott for managing our music scores

To Viv Bloodworth for managing refreshments at rehearsals and concerts

To John Maxwell-Jones for his flexibility last year in swapping roles so we were able to maintain constitutional

To Liz Fairfield for her determination to obtain grant funding

To Helen Walley for making the use of St John's Church possible

To Clare Turner and Margaret Cowley for producing and typesetting our programmes

To all other committee members and officers for their continued support and also to those who are nominated to join the committee for the forthcoming year

A particular thanks this season should go to Tom Corfield who has very ably accompanied us for our rehearsals and as sole accompanist at three of our events this year. Tom works very hard 'behind the scenes' to prepare for our concerts, visiting venues to become familiar with 'the equipment' and solve any problems that could spoil the performance in advance. His commitment to us and indeed many other local groups is incredible and we all owe him our considerable thanks for the efforts he goes to.

And finally my thanks to Paul who once again has led us in rehearsal and performance with his usual calm confidence and musical distinction that means we continue to 'up our game' and are able to learn and perform an increasingly broad and complex repertoire. I feel many of us sing better now than some years ago and I often find myself thinking I am attending not just a rehearsal but a group singing lesson, which certainly adds to our confidence and competence. Again Paul spends a great deal of time outside of the time he spends with us to prepare and organise performers and his continued dedication to DCU is greatly appreciated.

I am sure Paul will have some words to say about his plans for the forthcoming season, so I thank you again for your commitment this year and for making season 159 such a success, and look forward to welcoming you back here at St John's Church Mickleover on Tuesday 9th September when we start rehearsals for our 160th Season.

## Treasurer's AGM Report

The Committee's aim for Derby Choral Union is to offer high quality music, in major venues, supported by professional orchestras and soloists. But this also must be done in a way that is sustainable for the long term. Which is challenging in the current environment.

For the season we have just completed, we have offered a high-quality programme, including two concerts in the Cathedral. After working to a break-even budget with planned total income of £31,000 the financial result I report in the accounts is a deficit of £2,568 on total income of £26,920. The main reasons for this deficit are lower than expected income from:

- Subscriptions – income was about £1,000 lower than expected, which equates to about 8 fewer members
- Ticket Sales – the Messiah concert income was in line with our budget, but other concerts were not as well attended as we expected resulting in income being down by about £3,500
- Sponsorship and Grants – in an extremely difficult environment for charities seeking funding (and despite very hard and tenacious work by Liz Fairfield) we only received £242 in the year against a target of £1,000

Our costs for the year are relatively fixed once a programme is decided. Despite the reduced income, with some careful management of concert costs, the final deficit was kept to the £2,568 reported. This result leaves us with reserves on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025 of £13,859.

Our reserves have given us some breathing space over the last few years as we try to return to a sustainable position post-Covid. But they will not do that forever. From a treasurer's perspective, future sustainability is very achievable but is reliant on the 3 key areas identified in previous years. These are:

- member retention and recruitment
- concert promotion and ticket sales
- sponsorship and grants

So, a key focus for the Committee for next year must be to grow choir and audience membership, and we will continue to seek out sponsorship and grants.

In the accounts circulated the first page gives some detail on the income and costs for the year, and how these compare to the budget agreed by the Committee. I'll highlight some items now, and then if anyone has any specific questions I can try and answer these at the end.

Most items were within budgeting tolerances. But looking first at Subscriptions, we had 73 paying members and 3 life members. As a comparison, that compares to 95 members in 2019. That reduction equates to about £2,500. A choir of 95 is much more sustainable which is why recruitment of new members, and retention of existing members is so important for us.

I'd like to highlight fundraising and thank the small number of hard-working people who were able to raise nearly £2,000 against a budget of £1,000. This includes Raffles, Bring-and-Buy, Refreshments at Rehearsals, Produce Sales, Collecting Small Coins, and this year £750 from scarves and ties as part of the new uniform.

The only other items I'll bring specific attention to are the Music Hire Income of £1,685 and Music Hire / Library cost of £1,858. Hiring scores for choir members, and also for orchestras and other musicians, is a considerable cost and you can see that this year the cost was not fully recovered from the £10 fees collected from members.

We sold 255 tickets for Messiah which was in-line with our target in the budget. That's good. But ticket sales for a Messiah pre-Covid would have been 350 so you can see how audiences have not recovered.

You will remember that our concerts will usually have a deficit which is then balanced by subsidy from member subscriptions, donations, fund raising and grants. Having 6 events including a singing day, market hall and Longford during this year has increased our deficit. But hopefully some of these events help promote the choir to potential new members and audiences and will therefore be an important investment for the future.

Looking forward to the new season, the Committee has agreed a budget which accounts for the proposed concert programme, that allows for known and anticipated cost increases, and assumes that new members will be recruited to at least replace those who are leaving.

In addition to growing choir and audience membership, the Committee will again look to identify Grant and Sponsorship opportunities. Good news on that front is that Liz Fairfield's hard work has paid off and we have recently been awarded a grant of £1,000 from the Ashby Fund of Foundation Derby towards the rehearsal costs for our next season.

With further efforts to promote and increase concert attendances, the budget allows us to break-even with a total income for the year of £25,730. This compares to an actual income of £26,920 in the last year.



# Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

Period start date  
01/06/2024

To

Period end date  
31/05/2025

## Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Subscriptions from Members	9,395	-	-	9,395	9,190
Donations	541	-	-	541	1,319
Gift Aid	2,094	-	-	2,094	1,798
Fund Raising	1,955	-	-	1,955	981
Grants	242	-	-	242	1,525
Income from Music Hire	1,685	-	-	1,685	1,500
Bank Interest	417	-	-	417	289
Concert Ticket Sales	-	10,259	-	10,259	8,583
Concert Programme Sales	-	332	-	332	176
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>16,329</b>	<b>10,591</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,920</b>	<b>25,361</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
Aged Creditor written back	-	-	-	-	1,100
Ladies Concert Dress Fund written off	-	-	-	-	387
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>713</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>16,329</b>	<b>10,591</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,920</b>	<b>24,647</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Musical Director - Rehearsals	3,696	-	-	3,696	3,585
Musical Director - Concerts	-	1,833	-	1,833	948
Accompanist	2,079	-	-	2,079	1,880
Rehearsal Room Hire	1,810	-	-	1,810	1,550
General Advertising	478	-	-	478	220
Music Hire	1,858	-	-	1,858	1,616
NFMS Fees & Insurance	602	-	-	602	419
Sundry Expenses	171	-	-	171	103
Fundraising Expenses	70	-	-	70	-
Archive Storage	425	-	-	425	425
Orchestras	-	5,500	-	5,500	8,000
Organists/Pianists	-	800	-	800	460
Soloists	-	3,800	-	3,800	2,000
Concert Advertising	-	749	-	749	151
Ticket Printing	-	85	-	85	64
Programme Printing	-	298	-	298	361
Venue Hire	-	4,188	-	4,188	3,410
PRS Fees	-	649	-	649	84
Ticket Sales Fees	-	173	-	173	127
Flowers / Wine / Other	-	224	-	224	434
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>11,189</b>	<b>18,299</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,488</b>	<b>25,835</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>11,189</b>	<b>18,299</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,488</b>	<b>25,835</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>5,140</b>	<b>7,708</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,568</b>	<b>1,188</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>7,708</b>	<b>7,708</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>16,427</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,427</b>	<b>17,615</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>13,859</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>13,859</b>	<b>16,427</b>



## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Lloyds Bank Business Account	2,495	-	-
	Nationwide 35 Day Saver Account	5,325	-	-
	Nationwide 1 Year Saver Account	5,386	-	-
	Stripe	-	-	-
	Petty Cash (held by Treasurer)	653	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>13,859</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

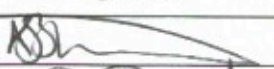
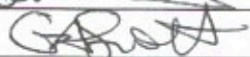
	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on  
behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Antony Stevenson	11/11/25
	Graham Scott	8/10/25



## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Report to the trustees

Charity Name

Derby Choral Union

On accounts for the year ended

31st May 2025

Charity no  
(if any)

1010174

Set out on pages

1 & 2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31st May 2025**.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

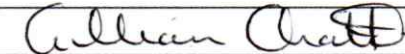
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (~~other than that disclosed below~~\*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:



Date:

7/9/25

Name:

Gillian Chatto

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

Retired Chartered Accountant

Address:

22 Guide Post

Nether Heage

Derbyshire

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.