

LEWISHAM CHORAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS for the year to 31 August 2024
Registered Charity Number: 1040570

Charitable objects

To promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of choral music in all its aspects by the presentation of public choral concerts and recitals, and to advance such other charitable purposes as the Committee may from time to time decide.

Governance arrangements

Lewisham Choral Society (LCS) is governed by its constitution, last updated in September 2016. Membership of LCS is by payment of the annual subscription. LCS is managed by a committee consisting of the chair, honorary business secretary, honorary membership secretary, honorary treasurer and up to twelve other members, who are the trustees of the charity. Committee members are elected or re-elected annually at the AGM.

Trustees

Brenda Scanlan (Chair)
Jon Banks
Penny Champion (Librarian)
Elizabeth Glasser
Trevor Jarvis (resigned October 2023)
Lara Ruffle-Coles
Rosemary Savinson
James Toohill
Rebecca Vicary (elected October 2023)
Anne Wheeler (Treasurer)
Emily Williams (Membership Secretary)

Public Benefit

In planning activities for the year, the trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Activities and achievements

In 2023/24 we enjoyed another highly successful season. During the year, membership has grown, and we have seen near capacity audiences at each of our concerts. Undoubtedly, the variety of our repertoire has been attractive to both singers and audience alike and we are grateful to our Director, Dan Ludford-Thomas for proposing such a good range of choral works from different centuries and traditions.

Our season began in November with an all-Mozart concert at Goldsmiths' Great Hall, University of London. We were joined by Forest Philharmonic and soloists Eleanor Pennell-Briggs, Abbie Ward, Ben Miller and Allyn Wu in a performance which culminated in Mozart's Requiem. At our Christmas concert we welcomed a capacity audience to a range of seasonal music. This performance also included movements from Rachmaninov's All Night Vigil to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth. We were very grateful to one of our members who recorded the Church Slavonic text to help members familiarise themselves with the work.

In the spring term we rehearsed a work that LCS had never previously performed - Francis Poulenc's Stabat Mater. As this was a challenging piece, we provided additional workshop sessions, facilitated by Dan, and supported by long-standing friends of LCS: singer Helen Meyerhoff and accompanist James Orford. Forest Philharmonic Orchestra joined us for the March concert which took place at Blackheath Halls. The repertoire also included a moving performance of Vaughan Williams Five Mystical Songs with Daniel Tate as soloist, and Poulenc's Piano Concerto performed by Nico de Villiers, LCS's former deputy director until his recent move to the RNCM.

In July, our final concert of the season took place at Sinfonia Smith Square and comprised a broad range of American and British 20th century and contemporary works. For the headline piece, In the Beginning by Aaron Copland we were joined by Mezzo-Soprano Cathy Bell, who also sang the alto solo in Britten's Rejoice in the Lamb, along with treble

Leo Ogungbemi. We also performed works by Samuel Barber, Philip Glass, Eric Whitacre and Cecilia McDowall. Throughout, we were accompanied by Cliodna Shanahan LCS's Principal Accompanist who played Amy Beach's A Hermit Thrush at Morn as a solo work and also accompanied Cathy in Barber's Three Hermit Songs.

In addition to concert performances, there were opportunities throughout the year for LCS members to take part in other singing activities. There were workshop invitations from other choirs which several members joined. Our Christmas carol singing sessions were exceptionally well supported, raising over £1,300 for four different charities, St Christopher's Hospice and LEWCAS both locally-based, and CRISIS and Health Poverty Action which have a national reach. We would particularly like to thank our choir member who once again, conducted us in the carols.

A new development in the year was a flash mob type event to sing Lauridsen's O Magnum Mysterium in a number of City churches. This was organised by one of the members, giving singers the opportunity to perform a piece which was well liked by the choir and which was particularly suited to church settings. Permission was obtained from the churches in advance and around 30 LCS members took part. This proved very popular and there are plans to organise this again in the coming season.

In last year's report, we referenced the Marketing Action Plan, supported by a members' survey. This gathered feedback to help develop LCS's Vision, Values and goals. The survey explored what had attracted people to LCS and how we could expand on this to reflect our local demographic better. We also received ideas on how we could continue developing the choir's skills and experience whilst at the same time remaining relevant to our local community and audiences. The survey suggestions are very much still work in progress. Nonetheless, in this past season we implemented a number of practical changes and had some success in attracting new recruits, which we hope will be sustained in the coming season that we begin with Handel's Messiah, an iconic piece.

Reflecting concerns about the cost-of-living difficulties many people are experiencing, the membership agreed proposals to retain our subscriptions at the same level in 2024/25 as last year. These include a student rate and a reduced rate for individuals on means-tested benefits. We also are introducing a new rate for people aged 25 and under aimed at attracting younger members to the choir.

We have been excellently led throughout the season by our Music Team: Director Dan Ludford-Thomas and Principal Accompanist Cliodna Shanahan. A rehearsal schedule is planned in advance for each term which enables members to look ahead and practice at home as they wish. The schedule is flexible and can be adapted depending on the choir's progress. This, along with Dan's approach at rehearsals, builds people's confidence and enjoyment so that we can give our best when we perform.

Looking ahead, as well as Messiah in the Autumn term, the coming season, 2024/2025, includes a joint concert at the Southbank Centre with Hackney Singers and the London Mozart Players: Brahms Ein Deutsches Requiem and Fanny Hensel's Hiob Cantata. A first for LCS will be a chamber group performance of music by Josquin at the Christmas concert, with other seasonal music for choir and audience. At the start of the season a group of LCS members will be the guest choir at the morning Communion Service at the Old Royal Naval College chapel in Greenwich, to which we are very much looking forward.

Financial review

Income for the year was £57k. Compared with the previous year, subscriptions income increased by 22% whereas concert income fell by 60%. Concert income was exceptionally high in the previous year due to the sold out concert at the RFH in that year. Expenditure was £65k. Overall running costs, excluding concert costs were 2% higher than the previous year. Concert costs were 9% higher. These included advance payments for concerts in 2024/25. There was an overall deficit of £7,859. The strong opening reserves allowed us to plan for a deficit budget with an ambitious concert programme for the year. We were also able to subsidise the cost of scores to members for the summer concert.

Total funds at 31 August 2024 were £35,783. The Committee's reserves policy is to hold sufficient funds in reserves to cover the costs of the next two major concerts, and this target was exceeded.

Signed on behalf of the trustees



Brenda Scanlan, Chair

Date 27 September 2024

LEWISHAM CHORAL SOCIETY**Receipts & Payments Account for the year to 31 August 2024**

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Subscriptions	£27,179	£22,228
Gift Aid claim	£4,878	£6,921
Music sales / hire	£6,894	£6,069
Rehearsal refreshments	£849	£707
Donations / other income	£441	£232
Bank interest	£514	£67
Concert income: tickets & refreshments	£16,392	£42,331
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£57,147	£78,555
PAYMENTS		
Music Director / Asst Music Director	-£12,370	-£11,395
Rehearsal venue	-£2,868	-£2,430
Refreshments	-£286	£294
Concerts: venues, facilities, other	-£21,412	-£20,602
Concert professional fees	-£18,214	-£15,708
Music purchases / hire	-£8,346	-£5,983
Making Music subscription & insurance	-£742	-£780
Website / IT	-£767	-£729
TOTAL PAYMENTS	-£65,005	-£57,921
NET RECEIPTS/-PAYMENTS	-£7,859	£20,634
Brought forward funds	£43,642	£23,008
Funds carried forward	£35,783	£43,642

Assets and liabilities at 31 August 2024

	£	£
Bank	£35,568	£43,278
Cash / cheques in hand	£215	£364
Total cash funds	£35,783	£43,642

Signed



Brenda Scanlan, Chair

Date 27 September 2024

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Lewisham Choral Society

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Lewisham Choral Society (the Society) for the year ended 31 August 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of Lewisham Choral Society 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 Society'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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do 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.



John Howard FCA

Chartered Accountant
Thornwood Road
Hither Green
London SE13

Date: 27 September 2024