

LEWISHAM CHORAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS for the year to 31 August 2025
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 decides.

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
Lara Ruffle-Coles
Rosemary Savinson
James Toohill
Rebecca Vicary
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

Our 2024/25 season built on previous years' successes with an increase in both membership and audience numbers. Our repertoire ranged widely from the 16th Century to contemporary pieces, embedding a range of styles from polyphony to jazz-inspired works. Throughout the year, we have been led with energy, musical insight and commitment by Dan Ludford-Thomas our Music Director and supported excellently at the keyboard by Clodna Shanahan, LCS's principal accompanist. We owe them both our sincere thanks.

There were six major concerts during the year, along with other events.

The season opened with a packed house at Goldsmiths' Great Hall for a performance of Handel's Messiah. This is a perennial favourite, and we were pleased that there were singers and listeners at Goldsmiths who were introduced to it for the first time. We were very well supported by our quartet of soloists: Helen Meyerhoff, Charlie Morris, Sam Jenkins and Philip Tebb and by Forest Philharmonic Orchestra.

In December we held our traditional Christmas event at St Mary's Church, Lewisham, reprising some seasonally appropriate movements from Messiah alongside a range of carols, including for choir and audience.

Our spring concert took place in February, earlier in the year than usual. We collaborated with Hackney Singers in our sixth joint appearance - the first was in 2012 - to perform together at the Royal Festival Hall. The programme comprised Brahms' Tragic Overture and Ein Deutsches Requiem along with a Southbank premiere of Hiob a cantata by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel. We were accompanied by the London Mozart Players and joined by soprano and baritone soloists Eleanor Pennell-Briggs and Jonathan Brown. We were delighted to welcome Fanny's great-great-great granddaughter Sheila Hayman to the performance. Sheila's film the Other Mendelssohn highlights how Fanny's work had been overshadowed by her brother Felix's for many years. Now that it is coming into the light, our concert gave people an opportunity to hear Fanny's skill as a composer in her own right.

In May, we performed Rossini's Petite Messe Solonnelle at Blackheath Halls to another full house. Clodna Shanahan on Piano and James Orton, Harp, were joined by a quartet of fine soloists: Ellen Mawhinney, Cathy Bell, Ashley Catling and Philip Tebb. A fortnight later, a group of LCS singers travelled to Cologne to perform with the Kölner Philharmonie in Benjamin Britten's War Requiem. The concert commemorated the 80th anniversary of the ending of the second World War and, as at its first performance in Coventry, included performers from several countries, with Dan conducting the Chamber Orchestra. The few rehearsals in Lewisham before the concert were an early opportunity to begin preparing LCS members for own performance in 2026, to which singers from Cologne will be invited.

Our final concert of the season took place in June. We returned to St Mary's Lewisham to perform an eclectic programme, headlined by Vivaldi's Gloria. Works by Monteverdi, Mozart, Barber and Eric Whitacre also featured. We were delighted to welcome back a group of singers from Vox Next Gen who performed two sets and also took the solo lines in the Gloria. The evening was an inspiring finale to the season.

There was a wide range of other activities outside the main concert programme, mainly for group singing organised by our members. A tradition which is always well supported is charity carol-singing. This Christmas we raised £925 for Crisis, St Christopher's Hospice and Health Poverty Action, and also took part in the all-day singing by choirs at Cannon Street station which raised over £1,700, a really excellent outcome which we hope to continue next Christmas. As in previous years, we greatly value the support of our colleague in the Basses who gives his time to conduct us.

In September we were invited to be the guest choir at morning Communion Service in the Royal Naval College chapel Greenwich, conducted by Lucy Morrell. We also participated in St Laurence church's Community Christmas service. This was followed a few months later by "Breath of Life" a spectacular event at St Laurence's featuring narrative, song, dance, juggling, light and sound to celebrate the history of our local area and the many groups of people from different communities and from across the globe who have settled here and for whom it is home. Composer Liam Paterson was commissioned to write a new piece for this event aligned with the narrative, performed by a group of LCS singers. Later in the spring, we were invited to take part in the Brockley Max festival and performed a set of short choral pieces at St Hilda's church ending with Sir James MacMillan's O Radiant Dawn. Finally, one of our members continued our "City Churches" series, where two contrasting choral pieces are performed in a number of different churches on the same day. The first of these took place in October 24, then in August 25. Considerable forward planning and coordination are required and we are grateful to our Bass singer who has taken this on, along with his colleague who conducts us.

As reported last year, members had agreed to keep the season's subscription rates at their existing level, and extended this again in July to apply for the 2025/26 season. During the year, we received a very generous and unexpected bequest left by a former Tenor in the choir who had passed away in 2023. To ensure this is used effectively, the Committee has asked members for ideas on how the bequest can be used to benefit our overall purpose and support the choir's development, which we plan to action in the coming season and beyond.

We continue to attract new members including recruiting younger singers as well as people who are new to choral singing, some of whom sign up after first attending a concert as an audience member. We aim to be a welcoming and accessible organisation and continue to look for ways to extend our reach to all parts of our community. Looking ahead, we will begin the 25/26 season with a collaboration with the Frisian Chamber Orchestra (FKO). Two concerts are planned of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Puccini's Messa di Gloria, locally in Goldsmiths' Great Hall and then in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. Beyond that, we have a series of concerts taking shape during the rest of the season including works to celebrate Arvo Pärt's 90th birthday and a performance of Britten's War Requiem.

Financial review

Income for the year was £91k, an increase of 60%. Subscriptions income remained strong. Concert income was more than twice that of the previous year due to the greater audience capacity at the RFH concert and high audiences at other concerts in the year. Income also include the legacy of £10k that the trustees have designated for future activities to support the choir's development. Expenditure for the year of £68k was just 5% higher than the previous year. Costs increased because of an overall uplift in prices and also partly due to the higher number of concerts and other events; however, concert costs did not increase at the same rate as concert income because some venue costs were paid in the previous year.

There was an overall surplus of £22k, bringing total funds at 31 August 2025 to £57,964. This includes £10k designated funds arising from the legacy. Funds were well within the Committee's policy to hold sufficient funds in reserves to cover costs of the next two major concerts, allowing us to plan an ambitious repertoire for the year ahead.

Signed on behalf of the trustees

Brenda Scanlan, Chair 

Date: 10 November 2025

LEWISHAM CHORAL SOCIETY**Receipts & Payments Account for the year to 31 August 2025**

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Subscriptions	£27,714	£27,179
Gift Aid claim	£4,544	£4,878
Music sales / hire	£5,299	£6,894
Refreshments	£719	£849
Legacy and donations	£10,262	£441
Bank interest	£472	£514
Concert income	£41,685	£16,392
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£90,695	£57,147
PAYMENTS		
Music Director / Asst Music Director	-£14,680	-£12,370
Rehearsal venue	-£3,357	-£2,868
Refreshments	-£329	-£286
Concerts: venues, facilities, other	-£24,394	-£21,412
Concert professional fees	-£21,495	-£18,214
Music purchases / hire	-£2,761	-£8,346
Making Music subscription & insurance	-£700	-£742
Website / IT	-£798	-£767
TOTAL PAYMENTS	-£68,514	-£65,005
NET RECEIPTS/-PAYMENTS	£22,181	-£7,859
Brought forward funds	£35,783	£43,642
Funds carried forward	£57,964	£35,783

Assets and liabilities at 31 August 2024

	£	£
Bank	£57,801	£35,568
Cash / cheques in hand	£163	£215
Total cash funds	£57,964	£35,783

Signed *B. Scanlan*

Brenda Scanlan, Chair

Date: 10 November 2025

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 2025.

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: 14 November 2025