

President: Bob Chilcott
Director of Music: Will Dawes
Principal Guest Director: Oliver Parker

From: Elizabeth Bennett :: The Chair, Burford Singers

Annual report 2024/25

This report covers the financial year when the choir performed its usual number of concerts in autumn, spring and summer.

The Committee met formally on five occasions during the year (which includes the October 2025 AGM).

Concerts this year

1. November concert - Vivaldi 'Gloria'/Albinoni 'Adagio'/Rutter 'Magnificat'
2. April concert - Highlights from the Romantics
Brahms 'Schicksalslied'/Mendessohn 'Hebrides Overture'/Hensel 'Hiob'/Haydn 'Harmoniemesse'
3. June concert - Rossini 'Petite Messe Solennelle'

Will Dawes, Director of Music is going to provide a more detailed report for all the music which will be circulated to members.

Membership

By the beginning of September 2025 - 8 members did not renew their membership (this number includes 5 previous members who did not respond at all to emails and reminders or who haven't made their minds up what they're doing this year).

The other members who left cited the following reasons:

- age
- medical issues
- diary conflicts
- other commitments

On the waiting list we have 4 sopranos, 1 alto, 1 tenor and 1 bass.

This brings us to a total of **66 total membership** for this year - with a possible 5 previous members if they come back to us and renew (see above).

For the concerts we are expecting the following line up:

Autumn	Sops 30	Altos 18	Tenors 7	Basses 7	Total 62
Spring	Sops 30	Altos 20	Tenors 8	Basses 8	Total 66
Summer	Sops 27	Altos 17	Tenors 7	Basses 8	Total 59

New Principal Guest Director - Oliver Parker

I emailed Oliver Parker in the summer to formally ask whether he would like to take on the role of 'Principal Guest Director' which he accepted.

The rehearsal dates which Will Dawes won't be able to make for 2025/2026 year and which Oliver Parker has already agreed to take:

- 25th September 2025
- 22nd January 2026
- 19th March 2026
- 30th April 2026

Oliver Parker has sent over a brief biography which Peter Moran has updated on our website.

Finance

Sally Jones Treasurer has provided to you all a detailed summary of our finances.

Please read her report which should have been circulated in time for the AGM on 9 October 2025.

Sally Jones will be stepping down as Treasurer. It is a challenging committee role and I can't thank her enough for all her hard work. She will be missed and we wish her all the best in the future.

Outlook for 2025/26

- Feedback from our members with regards to possibly bringing concert times forward
- Membership fees remaining unchanged

After asking members about the possibility of moving the concert times earlier, it has been decided to keep the concert start time as 1930. Interestingly though, it wasn't as clear cut as one would have thought. The vox pop showed that it was pretty much straight down the line bar a couple of votes.

As explained when we gathered your comments it was merely a fact finding exercise and not a scientific vote

Concert Programme

We have some exciting concerts planned and I'm looking forward to them. We close the Burford Festival in the summer with a fitting programme to mark some important dates in 2026:

- 50 years since Britten died
- 100 years since Wood died
- 150 years since Wesley died

New ticketing set up

Thanks to all of those involved in the new digital ticket set up. Let's hope it works. If you didn't get my email explaining everything please do let me know and I can forward it to you again.

Sponsorship

We are going to contact the Friends' of the Burford Singers to see if they would welcome the opportunity to sponsor different items for each concert. There would be small incentives and a mention in the programme.

For example:

- overall concert
- an orchestral section
- conductor
- score hire
- piano hire

Soloists - Josephine Baker Trust

At Will Dawes' suggestion we are going to get involved with the 'Josephine Baker Trust' which is a charity that supports the developing careers of young professional singers who are studying at any of the renowned music conservatoires in this country.

As an approved 'Partner Organisation' we can apply for grants in support of engagements offered to singers on the current Josephine Baker Trust list. This helps undergraduates (and post graduates) get the experience needed to launch their singing careers.

Website

Please keep up to date in the members section of our website.

Safeguarding policy

Our Safeguarding Policy is published on our web site. Full Members and Associates should make sure that they take time to update their understanding of the policy – see our members' web page www.burfordsingers.org.uk/member.

Rehearsal aids

Members who wish to use rehearsal aids are encouraged to use the .pdf that has been updated. You can find this .pdf using the link on the members' web page www.burfordsingers.org.uk/member.

Thanks from the Chair

I would like to thank Robin Baggs for his hard work with the choir over the last year. Bravo!!

Sadly, Hilary decided it was time to leave. However, the generosity from the choir enabled me to buy some fabulous flowers and give her a very generous Burford Garden Centre voucher. Hilary was utterly thrilled with the kindness of the choir. You truly made her day with the kind gifts.

I would also like to thank everyone involved in planning and delivering our events. Planning and executing the rearrangements in a busy working church with Sunday morning services in time for a Sunday evening concert is not a trivial exercise.

In addition to the Sunday volunteers, I would like to say thank you to those who help put the staging up in time for the Thursday rehearsal and for those who pitch up on the Monday to perform the most amazing feat of lifesize Jenga to get the staging dismantled and packed away with unbelievable precision (and a laminated sheet to aid with van packing).

Special thanks to David and Alison Willatts who truly are our unsung heroes. David sadly won't be renewing his membership this year but his job as orchestra fixer has been fabulous and we hope that his health improves to come back to the choir soon. Susie Moore has stepped into the orchestra fixer role and we are truly grateful.

Alison Willatts with her wealth of knowledge (about all these things) and fantastic black book of contacts, manages to secure our scores from all over the place. We couldn't do it without you - so thank you both!

Thanks also to the:

- Ticket team (Katie, door folk and stewards for concerts)
- Friends' secretary - Sian
- Staging volunteers - and Robin for coordinating
- Juliet - who's doing marvellously as membership secretary
- Programme and posters - Judy and Terence
- Website - Peter
- Programme/proofing - Robbie
- Advertising - Sarah Somers
- Marketing - Catherine M, Robbie, Peter, Judy and Terence
- Gerry for running the bar at our parties with Sally Jones and the other bar helpers
- Rachel for organising the flowers at concerts
- Ruth Reevey for liaising with the church and WH on behalf of the BS - with the addition of making the best tray bake!
- Tea making team - for rehearsals and breaks
- Our fab orchestra
- Will Dawes (of course)

My thanks to the Vicar and Parochial Church Council for helping to achieve this.

Special thanks also to the fellow committee members who do so much behind the scenes Sally Newman who gets all the papers organised, as well as minute taking, and especially those who are standing down from the committee at this year's AGM:

- Robin Hall (Vice-chairman/staging and thoroughly good bloke)
- Sally Jones (treasurer - and a dab hand at the card machine and spreadsheets)
- Sian Snelling (Friends' secretary)

T H A N K you all

New choir members

Our membership is declining, especially in the tenor and bass sections. Whilst we have a few auditions lined up, numbers are too low. This year we are 66 members and we have space for 100 singers.

The committee has tried to reach younger audiences, including Burford School and local groups, but with little success. Our priority is to recruit new members, ideally people who have recently moved to the area (tenors and basses in particular!!).

If you have ideas or can help with recruitment, please get involved. We need your support. You don't need to be committee members to help with this recruitment drive.

New committee members

We urgently need more committee members. There are still three vacant roles from last year, and this year we are losing another three - Robin (Vice-Chair), Sally Jones (Treasurer) and Sian Snelling (Friends' secretary).

Robin will continue to help with staging during concert weeks, for which we are very grateful. Sian has also agreed to continue her work as Friends' secretary for the time being.

Finding a new treasurer is our top priority

Without more volunteers, it will be extremely difficult to keep the choir running.

We need members to step up, either by:

- filling vacant committee roles **(6 in total)**
- volunteering for specific tasks (such as recruitment or events)

If we cannot get more support, we may face the closure of the choir and charity at next year's AGM.

The future of Burford Singers is in your hands.

Thanks all.

Elizabeth Bennett

Chair of the Burford Singers

BURFORD SINGERS

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

I have been largely absent from the choir as a result of personal circumstances and taking on a full-time job as a carer earlier this year has made it harder to keep the Treasurer role going. It has been mostly very rewarding contributing to the choir over the past four years, especially during the handover years between Brian to Will and I have enjoyed being part of the team saying goodbye to Brian and welcoming Will. I have put off holding up my hands and saying I can't cope any more but I am afraid over the summer I had to have finally admit defeat. I have spent the past few weeks doing the year end accounts and have brought most things up to date. The one job I need to do before handing over to Julia is to do a final Gift Aid claim which will happen very soon. Thank you so much Julia for stepping forward!

Looking at the past year's accounts I have the following notes to make:

- 1) We have received another £1855 in membership subs in September 2025 post the financial year end compared to £555 the previous September so the choir members have paid up more slowly this year. This is part of the differences in income from last year.
- 2) Another difference is that Gift Aid has not yet been claimed. It will be done before I hand over. I would expect it to be about £3.5k to add to the cashflow.
- 3) The current bank balances on the Gold account are £32,325 and we now need to have a balance on the cash account which is currently £178
- 4) At this time last year the Gold bank account balance was £45,510 so if you add in the projected gift aid claim we are currently £10k below the same time last year
- 5) We have had £2.2k less ticket income, about £2.5k less membership subs (if you include the £1855 just mentioned) and concert expenses last year cost £4k more than they did the previous year.
- 6) If you take the £13.2k negative movement in funds during 24-25 this can be represented by:

	£k
Unclaimed Gift Aid	3.5
Ticket income drop	2.2
Membership drop	2.5
Late members	1.3
Increased concert exp	4
Total	13.5

Problems with the bank

CAF bank has been a nightmare this year for all their customers. They launched a new portal that initially wasn't fit for purpose. I don't have the energy to list all their problems but at one point I spent a total of five hours over my two days off simply waiting in a telephone queue to resolve problems. It took several months for it to settle down.

Where once we had a simple two accounts, one for payments and one for receipts that would clear out the payments one each night, we now need to hold a balance in the payments one. Initially that was being cleared out each night to zero but they have stopped doing that which makes life a lot easier!

As a result, we have had a couple of payments that have not been debited; I haven't always been able to even see if payments have gone through, for a while I was so exasperated thanks to incorrect statements that did not even showing transactions in date order. The

situation is better now and I hope it continues to be. The new payment portal still isn't very user friendly on a mobile phone but it is ok on a laptop.

In the Concert Balance sheet I have added a post year end column to show a couple of ticket cheques banked after the year end for the June concert, and also a payment to the Harmonium player which I absolutely know I did at the beginning of July but didn't go out of the account (and sufficient funds were in the account). I have emailed an apology to him and he was very nice about it.

Many of our costs have stayed the same, however scores continue to be expensive especially if sourced from Germany, which has been unavoidable. I must give my heartfelt thanks to Alison Willatts for doing such a difficult job and putting up with me.

Burford church are putting their prices up again by 4% as they always do after Christmas, as follows:

'This adjustment is due to rising operational costs, and it will help us continue to maintain the high standards and service you've come to expect from us. The New Hall will £28.80 an hour, The Old Hall will be £19.20 an hour. The Greening room £13.20 and The Gauntlett room £8.80 an hour.'

Our other costs should remain the same, most are controllable and predictable.

We still need to promote and sell tickets and maximise our income that way, and of course make sure as many people as possible benefit from our music therapy, so keep talking and promoting the choir, word of mouth is still the strongest advert, but please use all methods of promotion so that every seat possible is filled. Extra support from sponsorship is definitely a good idea, I hope that the choir can in time return to full strength of its membership. The Friends are wonderful, a great many donate far more than we ask for, and the majority of which are Gift Aid claimable which at 25% extra is a significant help.

I must thank Jo Tuffill who I am constantly indebted to for an accounting set up that works so well and who has again audited the accounts and signed them off. I always remind you all to check the payment reference before you make an online payment as it saves so much time checking what things are when we have had payments coming in for different items, eg Friends renewal and tickets. Separate payments don't cost any of us extra and makes it all easier for if they are split out and referenced correctly. However the fact that we will now be running choir members' ticket requests through Ticket Source means that instead of 160 separate individual payments over last year for tickets, this year there will be, based on this coming concert, about 60 over the year.

I would like to thank Juliette Dessain who has been a superb membership secretary and has worked quietly away being very efficient and who I hope everyone will thank for her contribution to the choir. Sian and Katie our Friends rep and Ticket Manager have also put up with my less than usual prompt payment reports and I thank them for their patience.

The entire committee, ably led Lizzie, should be applauded for their dedication to the choir, thank you to them all, I am only sorry that I did not last the fifth year. I hope I can come back to singing in the future; I know I shall miss you all but I look forward to being in the audience in November.

Sally Jones
Treasurer
October 2025

EXAMINER'S UNQUALIFIED REPORT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE BURFORD SINGERS

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 August 2025, which are set out on pages 2 and 3 of this report.

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 charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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;
- 2 the accounts do not match the accounting records;

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.



Joanne Tuffill BSc (Hons) ACA
Chartered Accountant
6 Wheelwrights Court
Buckland
Faringdon
Wiltshire SN7 8QA

9th October 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - Year Ended 31st August 2025

INCOMING RESOURCES		2025	2024
Membership Subscriptions		£ 12,490	£ 16,845
Income Tax Recovered (Gift Aid)		0	4,297
		12,490	21,142
Ticket Sales - future		0	783
Ticket Sales		12,474	14,691
		12,474	15,474
Other Sponsorship		370	310
Grants, Donations & "Friends"		4,472	4,125
Bank Interest		817	883
Fund Raising		0	18
Sale of Goods		25	30
Workshops		0	2,863
October Function		0	1,892
Members' purchase of scores		0	0
Misc. receipts		0	188
Total Incoming Resources		30,648	46,925
OUTGOING RESOURCES			
Direct Charitable Expenditure		41,859	37,790
Concert Expenditure			392
Subscription (Making Music)		411	0
Ex Gratia Payments			283
Insurance		289	0
Capital Purchases			0
Performing Rights Licence/Fees			0
Ticketing Costs		50	0
Singday		0	765
October Function			4,852
Previous financial year concert costs		0	0
Goods & music purchased for resale			0
Future Concert costs		409	100
IT Support		11	11
Administration		43,029	44,193
Postage, printing, stationery, telephone		38	31
Bank Charges		63	63
Misc. payments		84	481
Audit & Accountancy			0
Committee Meeting venue hire		119	129
Professional Fees			
Staging Storage		585	1,074
Total Outgoing Resources		888	1,778
Net Inflow / Outflow of Funds		-13,270	954
Cash Fund Brought Forward		44,165	43,211
Cash Fund Carried Forward		30,895	44,165

ASSETS	
2025	2024

Non Current Assets
Concert Staging
Rehearsal Piano
Trailer

9,920	11,022
1,379	1,533
1,650	1,834
12,950	14,389

Current Assets
Bank Gold Account
Bank Cash Account

29,236	44,165
1,659	
30,895	44,165

Total Assets

LIABILITIES

43,845	58,554
0	0

NET ASSETS

43,845	58,554
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FUNDS
Opening Balance
Movement in Cash Fund
Movement in Asset Fund
CLOSING Balance

58,554	59,199
-13,270	954
-1,439	-1,599
43,845	58,554
0	0

The financial statements were approved by the Members at meeting held on 9th October 2025

and signed on their behalf by :-

Sally Furlong
Elizabeth Bennett
Elizabeth Bennett