



**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 August 2025

FOR

LEEDS LIEDER+ LTD.
(A company Limited by guarantee)

Registered Charity Number: 1105803

REGISTERED NUMBER: 05177020

**LEEDS LIEDER+
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

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**LEEDS LIEDER+
CHARITY REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

Charity registration number	1105803
Company registration number	05177020
Trustees	Kathleen Margaret Evans – Chair Councillor Jane Alice Dowson Caroline Alice Samantha Jane Hallam George Kennaway Margaret Josephine Pullan Helen Mary Stephens Cynthia Lynn Wainwright Jasdeep Singh Degun Rachael Green Dr Stewart Campbell
Registered office	c/o TC Murray Harcourt Ltd 6 Queen St. Leeds LS1 2TW
Independent Examiner	TC Murray Harcourt Ltd 6 Queen St. Leeds LS1 2TW
Bankers	Lloyds Bank plc 65-68 Briggate Leeds West Yorkshire LS1 6LH

**LEEDS LIEDER+
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

The Trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 August 2025. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the Charity.

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (October 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document

Leeds Lieder+ is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 12 July 2004 (Registration number 05177020). It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission (Registration number 1105803).

Directors and Trustees of the Charity

The Chair and Board members, who are unpaid, are trustees for the purposes of charity law and directors for the purposes of company law.

The Trustees who have served during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Kathleen Margaret Evans – Chair
Robert George Holt – Company Secretary – resigned 14 March 2025
Rosemary Annie Anderson – Treasurer – resigned 1 June 2025
Councillor Jane Alice Dowson
Caroline Alice Samantha Jane Hallam
Jillian Lesley Johnson – resigned 14 March 2025
George Kennaway – Company Secretary – appointed 14 March 2025
Margaret J Pullan
Matthew Roberts – resigned 14 March 2025
Helen Mary Stephens
Cynthia Lynn Wainwright – appointed 21 September 2025
Jasdeep Singh Degun – appointed 8 December 2025
Rachael Green – appointed 8 December 2025
Dr Stewart Campbell – appointed 8 December 2025

At the Annual General Meeting one third (or the number nearest one third) of the Trustees must retire, those longest in office retiring first and the choice between any of equal service being made by drawing lots. The Trustees can offer themselves for re-election if they so wish.

Trustee induction and training is carried out on an informal basis by the incumbent Trustees.

Each Trustee promises, if the Charity is dissolved while they remain a member or within 12 months afterwards, to pay up to £10 towards the costs of dissolution and the liabilities incurred by the Charity while he or she was a member.

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Objectives and activities

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY

To advance the education of the public, and promote the understanding, appreciation, composition and performance of art-song, in both its poetry and music. These activities are undertaken for the public benefit.

The powers, as set out in the Articles of Association, employed to achieve the Charity's objectives are:

To promote, initiate, develop, arrange, carry out or assist in carrying out concerts, performances, lectures, seminars, meetings and exhibitions;

To hold music festivals at such intervals as the Trustees think fit;

To promote, arrange and carry out education, instruction and training; and

To provide advice, carry out research and to publish or distribute information.

As detailed below (in the Achievements and Future Plans section) these activities principally embrace concerts, pre-performance talks, masterclasses, and workshops.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE PLANS

This was another landmark year for Leeds Lieder, being the 20th anniversary of the inaugural Festival, and one we marked with our change of name to Leeds Song.

A new decade, a new name

Change can be a curious thing. Sometimes it happens in a grand, sweeping gesture, and sometimes it can be as gentle as a name changing – a subtle shift that signals something deeper. For Leeds Lieder, the decision to become Leeds Song is one that has been quietly brewing for some time, a change rooted in growth, inclusivity, and a desire to enrich the lives of as many people as possible through the power of song.

Just before the 2025 Festival, Leeds Lieder unveiled its new identity, with a small yet important change to its name as *Lieder* became *Song*. At its heart, the change is about widening the circle. The word 'Lieder' is beautiful and evocative, but it can feel unfamiliar to those who haven't encountered it before and it also refers to a very specific corner of the repertoire, albeit a glorious, German, 19th Century one. Leeds Song, on the other hand, is open and inviting – it says, 'This is for everyone.' As a Festival that is well-known for our friendly atmosphere, a name that reflects our openness is important to us. It captures the essence of what Leeds Lieder has always been about breaking down barriers to classical song and welcoming new audiences to share in the magic.

The change also reflects the organisation's growing ambition. While the Festival's foundations are firmly rooted in the Lieder tradition, the programme has expanded to embrace a broader spectrum of song from different cultures, languages, and traditions. It is a celebration of song in all its forms – a way to honour the past while embracing the future. A cursory glance at this year's Festival line-up shows the full range of jewels we programme, from Schubert to David Bowie, Helen Grime to Claude Debussy.

We are delighted to report significant achievements in 2024 -25:

- Our 14th Festival took place over eight days with over **4,000 people** participating as performers, speakers, audience members and workshop students.
- YouTube livestreams and videos of concerts in the Festival have received **over 16,000 views** to date.
- Print and online Press, broadcast TV and radio coverage reached an **estimated 1.8 million people**.
- **Box Office takings were 30% higher than in our previous best year.**

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- **We gave free tickets to the value of over £4,000 to students and under-30s.**
- Festival recitals and talks were given by **38 emerging and established singers, pianists, instrumentalists and academics.**
- **10 young singers and 10 pianists aged under 30** were selected by open audition to join our 2025 Young Artists Programme.
- **10 locally-recruited poets of all ages** collaborated with **10 young composers** from conservatoires and universities to add 10 more new songs to *A Leeds Songbook*.
- **We gave the world première of *Seasons*, a new song cycle specially commissioned for the Festival from acclaimed British composer Helen Grime.**
- In the 2024-25 academic year, we worked with over **1,400 children in 36 primary and secondary schools and 7 SEND schools**, and **for the first time, in 2 SEMH specialist settings. 30 young artists and composers from 10 conservatoires and 6 universities took part in our Young Artist Programme and the Composers & Poets Forum.** Once again, we engaged with a group of people with often severe learning difficulties and their carers in a collaborative project with Leeds-based arts collective, **Pyramid of Arts.**
- **Over 660 people** attended talks and made up the audience for the public training sessions, enhancing their understanding of the art form.
- **Awareness of the Festival and Lieder as an art form was raised** through an intensive national publicity and social media campaign, with glowing reviews in the Telegraph and Guardian.
- **Reach for our social media platforms (Twitter/X, Instagram, Facebook and Facebook Ads) totaled 334,886; engagement totaled 59,817.**
- **In 2025, the 20th anniversary of the first Leeds Lieder Festival, we changed our name to Leeds Song, a subtle shift, simply replacing a German word with its English translation, but one that reflects what we have always been about: breaking down barriers, extending a friendly welcome to audiences old and new and celebrating song as a living, constantly developing art form.**
- **14 singers and pianists** performed in our 2024-25 Concert Season.

We continued to do everything possible to promote our artists, communicate with audiences both at home and worldwide and engage with young people through our Learning and Participation programme for schools, and we took full advantage of livestreaming, surtitling and video technology in order to do so

We maintained a hybrid working model combining working from home and in the office, thereby reducing our carbon footprint and contributing to sustainability in the city.

Ambitious plans for 2025-26 include presenting a Concert Season and another eight-day Festival in 2025; reviewing the composition of the Board and our staffing to reflect the changing needs of the organisation; building a strategic Business Plan for coming years and extending our Learning and Participation programme in schools. Plans are, as always, subject to securing the necessary funding.

2024-25 CONCERT SEASON

We were delighted to be able to work with our regular partners – the Howard Assembly Room, Leeds Conservatoire, Leeds International Concert Season, the University of Leeds International Concert Series and Wesley Concerts, Harrogate to present a varied season of concerts between November 2024 and March 2025:

Friday 8 November 2024 in the Clothworkers' Centenary Concert Hall, University of Leeds
James Newby *baritone* and **Joseph Middleton** *piano*

The Shipping Forecast, an evocative voyage featuring songs of the sea by Schubert to Chabrier via Elgar, Cole Porter and others.

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Wednesday 27 November 2024 in The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire

Our annual lunchtime concert in partnership with Leeds International Concert Season showcasing the **Academy Song Circle**, 6 young singers and pianists from the Royal Academy of Music, including alumni of our Young Artists Programme.

Friday 29 November 2024 in The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire

Huw Montague Rendall *baritone* and **Joseph Middleton** *piano*

We were most grateful to the exciting young baritone Huw Montague Rendall for stepping in to replace an indisposed Ian Bostridge with a Leeds Song debut recital that enchanted the audience with songs by Schumann, Mahler and Vaughan Williams.

Monday 6 January 2025 in the Wesley Chapel, Harrogate

Ashley Riches *bass-baritone* and **Joseph Middleton** *piano*

Our annual lunchtime recital in partnership with Wesley Concerts.

Friday 7 February 2025 in the Howard Assembly Room

Louise Alder *soprano*, **Mauro Peter** *tenor* and **Joseph Middleton** *piano*

A superb performance of one of the most important song collections of the Romantic period – Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch*.

Friday 14 February 2025 in The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire

Dame Sarah Connolly *mezzo-soprano* and **Joseph Middleton** *piano*

In a welcome return to Leeds Song, Dame Sarah Connolly was joined by our Director in a programme of songs by Schumann, Wolf, Debussy, Duparc, Britten and Samuel Barber.

Monday 24 March 2025 at Hinsley Hall, Headingley

Thomas McGowan *baritone* and **Joseph Middleton** *piano*

An afternoon tea recital, our annual 'Thank you' event for members of the Friends of Leeds Song given by an alumnus of our Young Artists Programme.

SONG, THE SECRET OF ETERNITY

The 14th Leeds Song Festival

Saturday 5 - Saturday 12 April 2025 in the Howard Assembly Room and Opera Centre, Leeds Conservatoire, the Clothworkers' Centenary Concert Hall at the University of Leeds, Kino@HAR, The Attic, Springwell Brewery and Leeds Minster.

Song, the secret of Eternity, marked the 20th anniversary of the first Leeds Song Festival. Celebrating song in all its many guises, under the directorship of Joseph Middleton, this year's Festival was our boldest and most engaging programme yet. Spanning eight energetic days, it brought music to every corner of the city as well as engaging with 100,000s online and in broadcasts. Alongside familiar venues like the Howard Assembly Room, Leeds Conservatoire and The Minster, we explored new, vibrant spaces to reach broader and more diverse audiences. Standout performances graced locations including Springwell Brewery and The Attic, a popular live music venue. We are deeply grateful to the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation, Arts Council England, Mayfield Valley Arts Trust, The Garrick Charitable Trust, The Jean Meikle Music Trust, The Leche Trust, the Maria Björnson Memorial Fund, the Friends of Leeds Song and generous individual supporters whose backing made this expansive Festival possible—helping us connect with devoted fans and curious newcomers alike, both in-person and online.

This year, we welcomed a record number of first-time attendees, from school children to retirees and from a wide cross section of society. Highlights of our learning experiences included our inspiring Young Artists Programme, a continuation of the innovative "A Leeds Songbook", and powerful education projects delivered across the city. Determined that financial barriers should not prevent access to our work, we kept ticket prices low, offered free admission to students and under-30s, and offered a vast array of free-to-view on-line material. Every event was recorded or live-streamed, reaching tens of thousands online. Our BBC broadcasts reached even more, and our estimated lifetime reach of media coverage this year has been calculated at 1.81 million. As always, the Festival featured world-class talent while nurturing emerging performers. With nearly 3,000 attending in person, breaking our previous best box office total by 30% and many more tuning in from afar, this year's Festival left a lasting impression—and built a rich digital legacy for future audiences.

Director Joseph Middleton produced an eclectic programme of 11 world-class recitals as well as other educational and participatory events. A total of 40 musicians and academics, both internationally acclaimed and rising stars, showcased their remarkable talents at the 2025 Festival (in addition to the

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20 Young Artists and the 20 composers and poets comprising the Composers & Poets Forum), performing a varied repertoire of works from the canon as well as new works.

Recitals featuring the finest international artists of the art-song world included Florian Boesch, Carolyn Sampson, Christoph Prégardien, Julius Drake, Louise Alder, Beth Taylor and outstanding representation of BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists past and present: Katharina Konradi, Erika Baikoff, Kitty Whately, and Kunal Lahiry.

A rare appearance of one of the finest singers of the 20th Century, our President, the great Dutch soprano Elly Ameling, as well as masterclasses from legends of the classical music world, Sir Thomas Allen and Dame Felicity Lott.

A recital featuring the world première of *Seasons*, a new song cycle commissioned from esteemed composer Helen Grime for the Festival in collaboration with Wigmore Hall.

A programme reflecting on LGBTQ+ rights and the Black Lives Matter movement.

An evening celebrating the link between women in music and the history of women in the brewing industry performed at a working brewery given by The Erda Ensemble.

A sold-out community 'Bring and Sing' choral rehearsal and performance directed by *the nation's favourite choir master*, Gareth Malone.

A day of 'Pop' performances in Selby, Barnsley and Huddersfield.

A Relaxed Lunchtime Recital welcoming everyone and especially for those looking for a more informal performance environment including people living with disabilities, autism, dementia, or other sensory and/or cognitive impairments. This event was signed by a British Sign Language Interpreter.

Our popular informal late-evening Lieder Lounge event further broke down barriers.

Workshops and a première performance of 10 new songs created for the third edition of "A Leeds Songbook" as part of the Composers & Poets Forum.

9 masterclasses (5 public and 4 *in camera*) and 2 showcase performances featuring the 10 singer and pianist duos enrolled in our Young Artists Programme.

5 free pre-concert talks.

An enlightening lecture recital on the songs of Schubert from renowned accompanist, scholar and Leeds Song Patron, Graham Johnson OBE.

A study event exploring Lieder by Schubert given by another Leeds Song Patron, the eminent linguist and scholar Richard Stokes, with the members of the Young Artists Programme.

SUPPORTING EMERGING AND ESTABLISHED ARTISTS

A core founding aim of Leeds Song has been to nurture and celebrate the next generation of Lieder performers. This commitment continues to shape our work as we bring exceptional talent to our audiences, presenting Rising Star recitals during both our Festivals and concert season. We are proud to maintain a valued partnership with the Schubert Institute UK, whose generous support this year enabled a series of Festival performances by ten gifted singer-pianist duos, selected through open audition to join our Young Artists Programme. This annual initiative offers emerging musicians meaningful opportunities to refine their artistry, providing the time, space, and encouragement to develop their craft within a nurturing and artistically enriching environment.

We are pleased to continue the legacy of the Leeds Song Young Artists Programme and to have engaged 5 previous participants of the scheme as part of Leeds Song's wider programming in 2025: soprano Anusha Merrin, baritone Thomas McGowan and pianists Camille Lemonnier, Natalie Burch and Kunal Lahiry.

Developing our work on an international scale, we are proud to partner with the finest European festivals going into next season and will share programming opportunities for young artists with LiedBasel, LiedStadt Hamburg, Schubertiade Vilabertran and Heidelburger Frühling.

PRESENTING THE FINEST TALENT

In addition to the 20 Young Artists and the 20 composers and poets comprising the Composers & Poets Forum, a total of 40 musicians and academics, both internationally acclaimed and rising stars, showcased their remarkable talents at the 2025 Festival, performing a varied repertoire of works from the canon as well as new works.

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Established artists included: singers Louise Alder, Florian Boesch, Christoph Prégardien, Carolyn Sampson, and Beth Taylor, representation of BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists past and present: singers Katharina Konradi, Erika Baikoff and Kitty Whately and pianist Kunal Lahiry, and pianists Julius Drake, Joseph Middleton, Graham Johnson and Andrew West.

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION The Festival Young Artists Programme

We inspire and promote the next generation of performers and composers of Lied. In addition to featuring early-stage career artists in our main artistic programmes, we provide invaluable training opportunities and performance platforms for young musicians under 30 years of age or who have graduated from universities and conservatoires in the last two academic years through our Young Artists Programme.

The 2025 Festival continued our long-standing tradition of supporting and developing young artists, with this year seeing the return of our Young Artists Programme in its continued extended format. This year we provided training sessions and performance platforms for 20 young singers and pianists aged under 30 from the UK, China, Hong Kong, Philippines, Lithuania, South Korea and Germany.

We offered an immersive eight-day programme of learning and performance, featuring nine masterclasses (five public, four private), two Showcase concerts, a Study Event with Richard Stokes, a lecture recital by Graham Johnson, and a concert premièring ten new works from the Composers and Poets Forum—marking the third chapter of 'A Leeds Songbook', which celebrates stories from Leeds's diverse communities.

The ten singer-pianist duos were invited to deepen their artistic and interpretive skills through masterclasses led by esteemed artists including Elly Ameling, Dame Felicity Lott, Sir Thomas Allen, Amanda Roocroft, Julius Drake, Anna Tilbrook, and actor Scott Brooksbank. These young musicians showcased their talents in formal recitals, the Study Event, and the informal late-evening Lied Lounge, designed to create a relaxed and accessible concert experience. Across the Festival, the Young Artists performed for a combined audience of approximately 2,500, both in person and online.

Composers & Poets Forum

A Leeds Songbook

The Composers & Poets Forum invited 10 local poets to collaborate with composition students from UK conservatoires and universities to create new songs telling stories of the people of Leeds. These 10 new songs form the third instalment of 'A Leeds Songbook' and were workshopped and performed by the members of our Young Artists Programme as part of the Festival.

DEVELOPING A NEW AUDIENCE THROUGH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

The Festival's core mission is to introduce Song to a wider audience, achieving this in part through a series of public events such as pre-concert talks, special performances and education programmes, and some in locations outside of the traditional concert hall. These lively events make the art form more accessible to new audiences. Each is designed to deepen and enhance the audience's understanding of art song - both its meaning and performance - regardless of age or previous knowledge.

Relaxed Lunchtime Recital in the Howard Assembly Room

This Relaxed Recital featured mezzo-soprano Kitty Whately and pianist Natalie Burch in a varied programme of song repertoire, welcoming everyone especially for those looking for a more informal performance environment including people living with disabilities, autism, dementia, or other sensory and/or cognitive impairments. Audience members were offered a range of seating options from chairs to cushions and no pressure to stay still throughout the performance, sensitive lighting, open doors in case people wished to leave and return to the auditorium during the performance and a quiet area outside the performance space. They were encouraged to engage with the music in a way that felt most appropriate to them. A British Sign Language Interpreter interpreted the performance from the stage and surtitles offered the song texts and translations in English.

Performance in Springwell Brewery

The Festival opened with a live performance on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune*, followed by a unique event at Springwell Brewery, where The Erda Ensemble—mezzo-soprano Martha Fontanals-Simmons, flautist Chloe Vincent, and harpist Olivia Jageurs—presented a striking programme of works by female composers. Celebrating the link between women in music and brewing, this vibrant evening transformed the brewery into an atmospheric space for song.

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Performance in The Attic

Building on the success of our 2024 nightclub event, we returned to a non-traditional setting with a powerful recital at The Attic, a grassroots gig venue in Leeds' South Bank. Tenor Freddie Ballentine and pianist Kunal Lahiry delivered a compelling programme themed around LGBTQ+ rights and the Black Lives Matter movement, resonating deeply with the audience.

Pop-up Recitals

In the lead-up to the Festival, we brought art song directly into local communities with a day of pop-up recitals in partnership with the Market Cross Shopping Centre (Selby), Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council / The Glassworks, and Kirklees Council / Byram Arcade (Huddersfield). One audience member in Barnsley commented, "It's very rare that we get to hear classical music here," highlighting the importance of this outreach.

Community Bring and Sing

This year's much-loved *Bring & Sing!* brought together a 190-strong community choir, drawn from across Leeds and supported by our 20 Festival Young Artists. Led by choirmaster and TV personality Gareth Malone, and accompanied by Leeds Minster organist Alex Woodrow, the group rehearsed throughout the afternoon before delivering an uplifting public performance of Fauré's *Requiem*.

LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME

The **Leeds Song Education Programme** forms a key part of our wider community engagement strategy and annual Festival activity. Delivered at no cost to schools, the programme invites children and young people across the region to experience, enjoy, and perform Art Song.

We are committed to making classical music accessible to those who might not otherwise encounter it—particularly young people in communities facing social or cultural disadvantage. Our work in this area aims to inspire musical engagement both in schools and beyond. Since 2005, we have led music-based projects in educational and community settings, with our core initiatives, Discovering Lieder and Living Lieder, taking their current shape in 2009.

During the 2024–25 academic year, we visited 36 primary and secondary schools, 7 SEND schools and 2 SEMH settings, engaging with over 1,400 students and their teachers. In June and July, we delivered 15 sessions in specialist SEND settings and to launch a new strand of work focused on students with SEND and SEMH needs, marking a significant and exciting development in our inclusive education offer.

In parallel with our in-person activity, we maintain a suite of online educational resources through the Songlines section of our website. These materials—developed and refined over several years—include song scores, worksheets, background information, and recordings, all designed to support our learning programmes. The platform continues to grow, and our three major video resources remain freely accessible and continue to attract an expanding viewership.

Thanks to ongoing support from partners including Arts Council England and West Yorkshire Music Hub, our part-time Learning & Participation Manager is able to take a proactive approach to school recruitment, working through local networks such as the West Yorkshire Music Hub to extend the reach of the programme.

The Projects

All our projects are led by creative teams of professional musicians, all professionally active as performers and music educators.

Discovering Lieder (aged 8-11)

Discovering Lieder develops young voices and invites children into the wonderful world of stories and characters found in art song.

Living Lieder (ages 11-14) The Living Lieder project enables pupils to perform art song and encourages musicianship and quality singing practices. It is an imaginatively stimulating project that develops young people's musical and singing abilities.

Collaboration with Pyramid of Arts

The Leeds Song: Pyramid of Arts Project was delivered in spring 2025 through a valued, long-standing partnership between Leeds Song and Pyramid of Arts - an organisation supporting people with learning disabilities, autism, or both through artistic expression. Centred on the theme of 'Happiness', the project brought together professional musicians Philip Smith (baritone) and Jonathan

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Fisher (pianist) with two Pyramid of Arts groups based in Bramley: the High Rise Music Group and the Legends Group.

Each group received four visits from our artists, who collaborated with participants and Pyramid's regular facilitators to explore a joyful repertoire spanning classical song and popular standards, including Gershwin's *I Got Rhythm*, *Feeling Good*, Schubert's *Die Forelle*, *Singing in the Rain*, and Finzi's *Who is Silvia?* The High Rise Group responded through song—learning repertoire and composing original material—while the Legends Group created vibrant visual artwork, notably a series of lamps and a large banner celebrating what brings them joy.

The project culminated in a celebration event on 4 April at Archive, on Kirkstall Road, where both groups presented their creative responses. The sharing featured live performances by Philip, Jonathan, Pyramid artists, and participants, and was warmly received by an audience of carers, Friends of Leeds Song, and members of the public. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and planning is already underway for a larger-scale project in 2026–27, building on the success and spirit of this joyful collaboration.

ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE

Leeds Song has developed considerably as an organisation since the visionary group of friends founded the charity in 2004 and presented the first Festival the following year, and the volume of administrative work has grown significantly alongside the artistic output. In recognition of this, in January 2024, we welcomed Tristan Watson as our first full-time General Manager.

Thanks to a successful fundraising campaign in recent years spearheaded by our Director, Joseph Middleton and which attracted a significant increase in funding from some of our high-level private donors, Leeds Song now finds itself in the most secure financial position in its history.

Following our productive ACE-funded consultative project with Counterculture LLP and a Board Awayday in 2024, we invited Susanna Eastburn MBE, the Senior Partner who led both, to return to facilitate a Board strategy day in June this year. Where appropriate, some of the sessions during the day were also attended by non-trustee Committee members and staff. This strategy day will now be an annual event.

As a result, the Board approved a number of statements, desired outcomes and objectives for the next five years of Leeds Song's development:

Our Purpose

'We exist to welcome many more people into the joy of creating and experiencing song, expanding perceptions of the art form through inspiring and diverse programming, commissioning and international exchange; and to fill the city of Leeds with song through an annual festival, concert season and education programmes.'

Our Values

All of our work, and the ways we are with each other, are guided by the following values:

Inclusive – we actively seek to ensure that more people feel welcome and included in our work through our programming, venues, communications and how we operate

Visionary – we present work of the highest artistic standard whether it is on the main stage or in a school; we seek to expand the understanding of what song can be through embracing other cultures and commissioning; we are progressive in where and how we share our work

Friendly – everybody feels welcome, whether a child at school engaged in one of our education programme, or a first time Festival attendee, or a young artist performing in public for the first time

Committed – we believe in our vision and mission, and are determined to ensure that audiences and participants can share and enjoy our work.

Outcomes for 2025 – 2030

Over the coming five years, Leeds Song seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: An enhanced artistic reputation

Our artistic reputation is already well established, particularly through the high regard in which our Artistic Director is held by the music industry both as a musician and as a festival director. However, there is still more to do to ensure that the full breadth and quality of our artistic work is recognised more broadly, including by key funders and stakeholders, and by the wider cultural community in Yorkshire. This includes our commitment to equality and diversity in our programming, our growing work in talent development, our commissioning and nurturing of new work creation and through our highly regarded education and outreach work which brings children, young people and under-

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represented communities into an inspiring (on both sides) engagement with our work and an expanding understanding of what song is, who can create it and how it can be performed.

Outcome 2: Increased (and more diverse) audiences, in person and online

We recognise that there is both a need, and an opportunity, to increase our audiences. We engage our audiences through multiple routes including through our Festival concerts, our education and outreach programmes, through broadcasting and online. Audiences in Leeds are diverse, with many different modes of engagement with culture and many different communication preferences. We also attract national and international audiences, both to our Festival and via broadcasting and our own online content. We want to diversify our audiences, recognising the many barriers (physical, cultural, perceptual, financial to name just a few) that many potential audiences face in engaging with our work and we are determined to address them.

Outcome 3: An improved local and regional profile and reputation

At a national level, we punch above our weight, attracting artists and media coverage that many much larger organisations in the North can only wish for. However, at a local and regional level there are still many potential partners and audience members who are simply unaware of us. Our profile in the Leeds cultural ecology is growing (including through the networks of our Board) but we were not mentioned in the Leeds Cultural Strategy 2017-2030 and there is much to be gained from growing our networks and relationships in the city region and across West Yorkshire.

Outcome 4: A more resilient organisation

The appointment in January 2024 of our first full-time member of staff was a hugely significant step for Leeds Song towards more capacity and resilience, but this remains a key area of development for us. Without core funding, we are reliant on year-by-year project-based fundraising and the support of donors, and much of this work is currently carried out by the Chair and the Director with consequent high risk attached to their departure when the time comes. Our Awayday in 2024 highlighted the Board's diverging views on the potential for income generation and lack of overall agreed strategy. Furthermore, although a key strength of Leeds Song is the commitment and passion of our staff and Board, we recognise that we may not have access to all the skills we need. We also know that part of resilience is having a clearer shared sense of longer-term direction and strategy – to which this business plan is making an important contribution.

Our objectives for 2025-2030

We have set ourselves the following objectives, which support the outcomes (and, ultimately, our Purpose) in the framework on the next page. Each of these Objectives has one or more Key Performance Indicators against which we shall monitor our progress at quarterly Board meetings.

- Deliver a high-quality annual Festival and concert season
- Achieve innovative concert and event presentation
- More integration between main stage and education programmes
- Deliver a highly regarded talent development programme
- Foreground diverse voices and music
- Expand and embed education and community programme
- Identify marketing capacity (freelance or within the team)
- Improve access and insight into audience data
- Broaden the range of venue partners
- Develop online content
- Nurture and develop national and local media relationships
- Nurture and develop local and national partnerships
- Governance development, recruitment and succession planning
- Embed strategic planning and longer term thinking into governance
- Strengthen team capacity, reduce reliance on Chair and Director
- Develop a clear fundraising strategy, including a refreshed Friends scheme.

These Outcomes and Objectives align strongly with the Leeds Culture Strategy 2020-30, the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2023-28 and the ACE Let's Create Strategy 2020-30

KEEPING IN TOUCH

During the year, Joseph Middleton made several appearances on the BBC Radio 3 drive-time programme, *In Tune*. Subscribers to our mailing list and members of the Friends of Leeds Lieder received regular e-newsletters and occasional mailings by post, although we now try to keep the

**LEEDS LIEDER+
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

latter to a minimum. In the interests of sustainability, we made every effort to minimize the use of printed brochures and programmes while bearing in mind that there are those who either cannot access materials online or who prefer not to do so. Supporters were able to download promotional brochures and concert programmes from our website free of charge, and we provided QR codes at Festival venues to facilitate access to them. We also maintained a lively presence on X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and Facebook.

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Special thanks are due to our principal partners: the Howard Assembly Room, Leeds Conservatoire, Leeds International Concert Season, the University of Leeds and Leeds Minster. Alongside our continuing partnerships with Shigeru Kawaii and Wesley Concerts, Harrogate, we have forged prestigious new alliances with LiedBasel, LiedStadt Hamburg, Schubertiade Vilabertran and Heidelburger Frühling.

We are, as always, extremely grateful to Arts Council England, the West Yorkshire Music Hub, the Mayfield Valley Arts Trust, The Liz & Terry Bramall Foundation, the Jean Meikle Music Trust, the Maria Björnson Memorial Fund, the Garrick Charitable Trust, the Leche Trust, the Scops Arts Trust and the other charitable trusts and foundations that provide generous financial support; to our unfailingly generous Friends and other private donors; and to the volunteers, not least the Trustees and Committee members, together with Dr Hannah Stone, the Poets Convenor and Prof Martin Iddon, the Composers Convenor, and the student Festival volunteers and education project shadows from Leeds and York Universities and Leeds Conservatoire, all of whom give unstintingly of their time and talents. Last, but most certainly by no means least, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our inspirational Director, Joseph Middleton and our dedicated small team of staff, without whom none of our work would be possible.

**LEEDS LIEDER+
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

FINANCIAL REVIEW

RESULTS FOR THE YEAR

The results for the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 15 of the accounts, which follow this report.

Income in the year was £342,164. Expenditure for the year amounted to £342,562 resulting in a deficit for the year of £398.

Income during the year was principally provided by friends, via the Friends scheme, including in-kind donations (13%), private donors (21%), both supplemented by Gift Aid where appropriate, Trusts and Foundations (39%), Arts Council (14%) and performance box office and miscellaneous activities (13%).

RESERVES

The Board's policy is to retain sufficient income to meet future revenue commitments, particularly at a time when future income is uncertain. As Leeds Lieder's expenditure is project based and projects are not undertaken until funding is in place the Board has set a target level of reserves of £5,000 as a provision against winding-up costs only. It is the Board's intention to build up the reserves in order to ensure that the festival can continue in the event of the fundraising target not being achieved. The reserves as at 31 August 2025 amount to £151,860

MAJOR RISKS

The principal risk to the company remains the ability to raise sufficient funds to enable the promotion of the Leeds Lieder Festival and sustain a programme of concert-giving in the periods between festivals. The Trustees manage these risks by constant fund raising.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Board has had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when preparing this statement. The charitable aims are set out in the objectives and activities paragraphs. The Board considers this satisfies the public benefit criteria in a manner that is not unduly restrictive geographically or by class of beneficiary. There is no private benefit obtained as a result of the Charity's activities.

VOLUNTEERS

The Board acknowledges with gratitude the work and commitment of the volunteers who willingly give their time to the considerable benefit of the Charity.

**LEEDS LIEDER+
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025**

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

The Trustees (who are also directors of Leeds Lieder+ for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (October 2019);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the Board

Signed by:

F67925208E8B481...

Kathleen Evans, Chair

Date: 18 February 2026

LEEDS LIEDER+

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Leeds Lieder+

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 August 2025 which are set out on pages 15 to 22.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities.

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.

Signed by:


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TC Group
6 Queen St.
Leeds
LS1 2TW

23/2/2026

LEEDS LIEDER+**YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)**

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024/25 £	Total 2023/24 £
Income:					
Donations	2	244,211	52,780	296,991	327,790
Charitable activities	3	34,220	8,347	42,567	31,563
Investments	4	2,606	-	2,606	2,089
		-----	-----	-----	-----
Total income		281,037	61,127	342,164	361,442
		=====	=====	=====	=====
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	5	221,960	61,127	283,087	238,707
Raising funds	6	59,475	-	59,475	42,224
		-----	-----	-----	-----
Total expenditure		281,435	61,127	342,562	280,931
		=====	=====	=====	=====
Net income		-398	-	-398	80,511
 Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		152,258	-	152,258	71,747
		-----	-----	-----	-----
Total funds carried forward	15	151,860	-	151,860	152,258
		=====	=====	=====	=====

All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the period.

LEEDS LIEDER+**YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****BALANCE SHEET**

	Note	2024/25 £	2023/24 £
Current assets			
Debtors & prepayments	11	15,085	10,197
Cash at bank & in hand		139,935	209,741
		-----	-----
		155,020	219,938
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	3,160	67,680
		-----	-----
Net current liabilities		3,160	67,680
		-----	-----
Total assets less current liabilities		151,860	152,258
		=====	=====
Charity Funds			
Restricted funds	13	-	-
Unrestricted funds	13	151,860	152,258
		-----	-----
Total charity funds	14	151,860	152,258
		=====	=====

The company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act relating to small companies; and

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Signed by:

P67923208E8B481.....
 Kathleen Evans, Chair

19/2/2026

The notes on pages 17 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Company registration number: 05177020

LEEDS LIEDER+**YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****1 Summary of significant accounting policies****(a) General information and basis of preparation**

Leeds Lieders+ is a registered Charity and a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England & Wales. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member of the Charity. The address of the registered office is given in the Charity information in the Charity information section of these financial statements. The nature of the Charity's operations and principal activities are given in the Trustees Report.

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (October 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity. The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all periods presented unless otherwise stated.

(b) Funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise restricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

(c) Income recognition

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the Charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

For donations to be recognised the Charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the Charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

LEEDS LIEDER+**YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****(c) Income recognition (continued)**

Donated facilities and donated professional services are recognised in income at their fair value when their economic benefit is probable, it can be measured reliably and the Charity has control over the item. Fair value is determined on the basis of the value of the gift to the Charity. For example, the amount the Charity would be willing to pay in the open market for such facilities and services. A corresponding amount is recognised in expenditure.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP (FRS 102). Further detail is given in the Trustees' Annual Report.

The Charity receives government grants. Income from government and other grants is recognised at fair value when the charity has entitlement after any performance conditions have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably. If entitlement is not met then these amounts are deferred.

(d) Expenditure recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

(e) Support costs allocation

Support costs are those that assist the work of the Charity but do not directly represent charitable activities and include office costs, governance costs and administrative payroll costs. They are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the Charity. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on a basis consistent with use of the resources.

Fund-raising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

The analysis of these costs is included in note 7.

(f) Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

(g) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Charity has an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount can be reliably estimated.

(h) Tax

The Charity is an exempt Charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

LEEDS LIEDER+

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

(i) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from authorising these financial statements.

2 Income from donations and legacies

		2024/25		2023/24
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Friends	4,555	27,780	32,335	28,212
Crowd funding	-	-	-	20,878
Gift Aid Tax Recoverable	18,843	-	18,843	26,407
Trusts & Foundations & Local Authorities	112,500	20,000	132,500	84,000
Commission Sponsors	-	5,000	5,000	5,000
Other private donors	53,333	-	53,333	108,333
Arts Council	49,500	-	49,500	48,000
Donations in kind	5,480	-	5,480	6,460
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	244,211	52,780	296,991	327,790
	=====	=====	=====	=====

In the comparative period £58,413 related to restricted funds.

3 Income from charitable activities

		2024/25		2023/24
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Ticket sales	34,220	-	34,220	23,429
Young Artists Programme		8,347	8,347	8,000
Miscellaneous sales	-	-	-	134
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	34,220	8,347	42,567	31,563
	=====	=====	=====	=====

4 Income from investments

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Bank Interest	2,606	2,089
	-----	-----

All Income from investments was attributable to unrestricted funds.

LEEDS LIEDER+**YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****5 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities**

			2024/25	2023/24
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Artists fees	65,701	26,024	91,725	79,317
Venue and piano hire and tuning	68,787	-	68,787	58,287
Learning & Participation project costs	-	35,103	35,103	27,487
Staff costs	62,098	-	62,098	43,328
Other expenses	16,362	-	16,362	15,814
Support costs	9,012	-	9,012	14,474
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	221,960	61,127	283,087	238,707
	=====	=====	=====	=====

6 Analysis of expenditure on fundraising

	2024/25	2023/24
Fundraising consultant	6,398	8,179
Staff costs	15,168	10,640
Marketing and Media support	10,130	4,818
Publicity, brochures and programmes	25,035	15,748
Support costs	2,744	2,839
	-----	-----
	59,475	42,224
	=====	=====

7 Analysis of expenditure on support costs

	Charitable Activities	Raising Funds	Total 2024/25	Total 2023/24
	£	£	£	£
Finance	84	21	105	356
Information technology	855	214	1,069	3,794
Office costs	-	1,356	1,356	3,748
Other administration costs	2,989	1,154	4,143	2,933
Governance	5,084	-	5,084	6,482
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	9,012	2,745	11,757	17,313
	=====	=====	=====	=====

8 Analysis of expenditure on governance costs

	Total 2024/25	Total 2023/24
	£	£
Independent examiners remuneration	2,640	1,680
Counterculture fees and expenses	746	4,118
Other administration costs	1,698	684
	-----	-----
	5,084	6,482
	=====	=====

LEEDS LIEDER+**YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025****9 Trustees' and key management personnel remuneration and expenses**

The trustees and key management personnel received remuneration totalling £75,484 (2023/24 £53,201) during the period. Expenses totalling £1,730 (2023/24: £2,212) were reimbursed to trustees and key management personnel.

10 Staff costs and employee benefits

The average monthly number of employees and full time equivalent (FTE) during the period was as follows:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
4 part-time employees	2 FTE	1.5 FTE
	=====	=====

The total staff costs and employee benefits were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	75,484	53,201
Employer's pension and NI contributions	1,782	767
	-----	-----
	77,266	53,968
	=====	=====

No employees received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

11 Debtors

	2024/25 £	2023/24 £
Other debtors	15,085	8,600
Prepayments	-	1,597
	-----	-----
	15,085	10,197
	=====	=====

12 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year and deferred income

	2024/25 £	2023/24 £
Deferred income	-	65,000
Accruals	3,160	2,680
	-----	-----
	3,160	67,680
	=====	=====

13 Fund reconciliation

	Brought forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Carried forward £
Unrestricted	152,258	281,037	281,435	151,860
Restricted	-	61,127	61,127	-
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	152,258	342,164	342,562	151,860
	=====	=====	=====	=====

LEEDS LIEDER+

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

14 Fund descriptions

a) Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

b) Restricted funds

Restricted funds were received, and expended, within the reported year, specifically to support the Young Artists programme, the Learning & Participation programme and the composers’ fees and performance of the commissioned work.

15 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted	Restricted
	£	£
Current assets	15,085	-
Cash and current investments	139,935	-
Current liabilities	(3,160)	-
	-----	-----
Total	151,860	-
	=====	=====