



# Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir

## Annual General Meeting – 2026

### Chairman's Report - 2025:

The past year has been full of varied concerts / events and thoroughly enjoyed by all our active members. As has been the case in recent years there is absolutely no doubt that the ongoing success of our organisation is underpinned by the hardworking members of the executive committee who very capably oversee the four areas of the choir: Musical Organisation; Finance; Marketing & Membership. Our choir owes: Tom Bate, David Fyfe, Phil Holden, Steve Hale & Bill Hart - a huge debt of thanks for all their dedicated hard work throughout the year. Without them, it is without doubt, our choir would not be in the position of strength in all areas we currently enjoy; recognised as one of best male voice choirs in the Midlands. We appear to be bucking the trend where – sadly - many similar male voice choirs in our area are fading and disappearing, we continue to thrive & flourish.

### Music:

Our primary motivation for being part of the choir is the sheer enjoyment of choral singing. Under the guidance of our Musical Director, Ray Curran, we have grown both individually and collectively as singers. Ray has encouraged us to refine our vocal abilities and has continued to develop the "Barber's Shop" group, which has helped to enrich our concerts with variety and fun. Some members have also gained confidence and worked hard to reach the required standard of performance to perform solos and duets at smaller events. This in turn helps to make our concerts even more engaging & enjoyable. Ray's efforts are supported by accompanist Neil Bolton and until his illness Steve O'Reilly. We wish Steve a speedy recovery & we are grateful to them all for their ongoing support & dedication.

On becoming Chairman in early 2023, supporting Ray's vision for enhancing our group singing skills was my top priority. In many ways, he has surpassed my expectations. Our weekly two-hour rehearsals are productive, enjoyable, and uplifted by Ray's dry humour. Our well-known repertoire has never sounded better, as noted by our regular audiences. To support this a recently formed sub-committee has been established to facilitate comprehensive long-term planning, thus ensuring that the music we rehearse and perform throughout the upcoming year remains balanced, diverse across all genres, and engaging for all members and audiences through 2026 and beyond.

I am assured that our Musical Director, along with the music team and committee, are dedicated to optimising our musical standards. However, for these efforts to have any positive beneficial impact it is essential that every choir member actively supports these initiatives & endeavour to attend more rehearsals & concerts. I would also ask that we all make a more concerted effort to learn the words to all songs in our current repertoire as it evolves. If we as individuals each commit to these two requests, we would undoubtedly become an even better a choir.

Whilst Ray directs us musically, all choir events (concerts) need thorough planning and organisation. This is a huge task and last year, the lead for this was undertaken by Phil Holden, with Tom Bate focusing specifically on concert scheduling. Their combined efforts have delivered a diverse, well-managed programme that has improved our reputation and provided a programme of enjoyable, memorable concerts.

As previously explained at last year's AGM it was decided not to involve the choir in risky 'high profile' concerts with 'star acts', which are not currently financially viable. To fit into this 'model', our annual Autumn Concert was a much smaller event this year held at the Ruskin Centre, Stourbridge. None the less it was a well organised event enjoyed by all and it made a positive contribution to choir funds.

During 2025, we performed at 23 concerts / events, including the Black Country Showcase at Brierley Hill Town Hall. Black Country Mental Health were our chosen charity, and they worked hard to combine with us & raise funds for their cause.

Once again, thanks to the efforts of David Fyfe, we successfully held a charity concert at Springdale Church, Penn which raised considerable charitable funds for the Beth's Sunflower Charity & Dudley First Responders.

This year we supported the Dudley Remembers group at an April concert to commemorate 80 years since the end of WW2. In November we again joined them at their Remembrance concert at Dudley College - always a calendar favourite for the choir. Both concerts raised funds for the British Legion.

We again enhanced on reputation in August where we joined other choirs as guests of Kidderminster MVC travelling up and down the Severn Valley Railway, culminating in an evening concert involving all choirs on the concourse.

During the summer, we travelled to Norwich for a joint concert with Norwich Phoenix Choir where we broadened our reputation and built new friendships. Our thanks go to Mike Mison & Mark Powis who organised and led this trip. They are now in the process of organising a trip to South Wales to sing with the highly regarded Caldicot MVC this coming July.

Christmas was again a busy time for the choir with four events during the week prior to Christmas. Our usual Christmas Concert reverted to an evening event at St Benedicts Church, Wombourne & was a joyful occasion enjoyed by a full house. Our chosen charity BeDazzle will benefit from our bucket collections at these Christmas events.

Pub events remain popular; although they are not ideal for showcasing our choral expertise, they are effective for fundraising. To help with these events and to improve our performance, we have this year invested in some new electrical equipment to play backing tracks. Whilst there have been some technical glitches, with patience and practice this new technology will undoubtedly help us at these events. Our thanks go to Julius Adams for helping with the new equipment & to our MC Graham Rousell for his role in leading these enjoyable occasions.

Next year's calendar, thanks to the efforts of Tom Bate, is now virtually complete & full of interesting concerts & events. Please help us by marking your availability - either 'Yes' or 'No' - to all these events on Choir Manager.

### **Membership:**

Bill Hart, assisted by Gordon Bickley, has meticulously recorded attendance at all rehearsals and events. This data helps inform future decisions. We currently have 68 choir members:

12no – 1<sup>st</sup> tenors  
20no – 2<sup>nd</sup> tenors  
23no – Baritones  
13no – Bass's

During the past year, we sadly lost 2<sup>nd</sup> tenor – Ted Bartley and attended the funeral of Harold Eades – Baritone & life member. We have also very recently lost Don Marsh our founding member & Vice President. We mourn their passing & acknowledge their significant contributions to the choir over many years.

Pete Clay from the Bass section and past assistant accompanist has retired from singing with the choir.

We also must acknowledge, in an aging choir, that we have some members currently absent through long term illness: Brych Woodhouse; Dave Spinks; Keith Cope; Steve O'Rielly & Glyn Tebbutt - have been ill & away from choir for some time during the past year. We miss them all and wish them well. They are all in our thoughts.

On a more positive note, we welcomed six new members into the choir:

Mark Greenland (2<sup>nd</sup> tenor); Keith Jones (2<sup>nd</sup> tenor); Eddie Nichols (Baritone); Graham Curwell (Baritone); Trevor Smith (Baritone) & Phil Withers (1<sup>st</sup> tenor).

All have quickly integrated themselves into our membership and we wish them all a long enjoyable association with us.

During the year, we held 49 rehearsals & performed at 23no concerts / events

- 35no choristers attended 85% or more rehearsals.
- 24no choristers attended 70% attended or more events.

It is important to note that there has been a significant decline in the availability of active baritone and bass section members for concerts. Should this trend persist, it may negatively impact our ability to deliver balanced performances at future events.

During the year we successfully updated the choir's concert uniform for all members. This was funded completely from choir funds. This has been a lengthy process and has been very ably managed by Bill Hart. Having first asked all members for their preference, we followed due process in evaluating this information to provide the most suitable uniform at the most competitive price, ensuring that every member's needs were accounted for. Our thanks to all involved in this complex exercise particularly Bill, who has ably assisted by Annie.

In addition to the above we have introduced new Long Service Awards to be worn on our new uniforms. Again, Bill has managed this on the choir's behalf.

### **Finances:**

Steve Hale has continued to efficiently manage the choir's finances. He has introduced improved budgetary controls to help us with informed decision-making. This in turn has helped us to modify our concert programme ensuring it best suits



the choirs' current needs and run within our agreed budgets. Ticket sales are crucial to this process which combined with reduced production costs allow us more control & ensure positive contributions to our funds. This is reflected in this year's accounts. I'm sure Steve will expand on this more in his financial report and we are very grateful for his diligent work.

To help with this, next year, we will be introducing a new Quickbooks financial support package allowing us a better picture of the choir's financial standing on-going.

Steve's prudent financial management has in turn has helped us to provide new uniforms for all members & hold our current subscriptions at £200.00 per annum for 2026 and to plan future expenditure.

There is no doubt that a major contributor to our positive financial position is our continued 'Partnership' with Wall James Chappel solicitors which continues to produce benefits for both parties. We will shortly be 'rolling out' an initiative which will support all members and offer ongoing financial benefits to the choir.

### **Marketing:**

David Fyfe continues to play a pivotal role in all areas of the choir activities. He has revitalised the choir's image and uses his considerable marketing skills to promote all major choir events via social media and other recognised methods. Thanks to his efforts Choir Manager is now our principal method of communication with all choir information to members.

David also manages tickets sales including the maintenance of our online tickets sales system.

### **President and Other Roles:**

Annie Hodgkinson, our President, brings warmth, energy, and care to her honorary position. She regularly attends rehearsals & supports our concerts and often performs with us to enhance our events. She supports our less able members with much needed contact enabling us to help where and whenever needed. Added to this she now also handles all ancillary uniform requirements ensuring all members uniform requirements are catered for. We are without doubt fortunate to have her as our President.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge others within the choir who contribute significant & valuable service to GSMVC:

Trustees (Pete Hawthorne, Richard Molyneux)

Auditors (Richard Molyneux, Roger Shuttleworth)

Section reps (Steve Waltho / Dave Perry, Bill Hart, Chris Jones, Andy Parker)

New members probation managers: (Mike Mison / Mark Powis)

Ticket secretary (David Fyfe)

Stage manager (Richard Bagnall)

Social secretary (Mike Green)

Librarian (Ian Davies).

Tour Organisers: (Mike Mison & Mark Powis)

Each role is essential to our smooth operation - Thank you to everyone who ensures the choir continues to thrive.

You will all know that during the past year we underwent consideration for the prestigious Kings Award for Voluntary Services. Following nomination by Rose Cook-Monk – a good friend of the choir. The principal reason for this recommendation reflected our charitable work, which has raised significant funds, over many years, supporting those in need – principally in our local community. It was, therefore, a great disappointment for us all to be advised in November that we had been unsuccessful. It was heartening to be assured by the many positive comments by you the members, reminding us that:

'We are not in this choir for reward. This is not the reason we are choir members; we do it because we enjoy it'.  
I whole heartedly support & endorse these comments.

To be nominated for the King's Award is a significant achievement. Letters of support from sponsors & those who know us well reveal the deep respect and affection held for the Gentlemen Songsters and our members. It's evident we are highly valued as a unique group sharing the joy of choral music for the benefit of others, whilst also raising significant financial support our chosen needy charities. This is so much more important than any award no matter where it comes from. Personally, I feel privileged to be part of this community and I look forward to continuing our progress and facing future challenges together.

**Ken Crane**  
(Chairman)



Registered address: 27 Broad Street, London, E.C.4M 3DF

[www.gentlemensongsters.com](http://www.gentlemensongsters.com)

[www.facebook.com/gentlemensongsters/](https://www.facebook.com/gentlemensongsters/)

[www.instagram.com/gentlemensongsters/](https://www.instagram.com/gentlemensongsters/)

*Singing from the heart of the Black Country*





## **Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir**

### **Treasurers Report 2025**

Before the serious stuff starts, I would like to thank all members of the Choir for reacting positively to my nagging in regard to making payments without having to be reminded (too much) that money is owed. It makes my life so much easier. Also BACS is a much better option than cash or cheques.....just saying!!!!

As always, I have issued the signed Balance Sheet and Income/Expenditure Account sheets for your perusal. Any questions about their content can be raised with me after the AGM.

2025, like 2024 was a reasonably successful year financially as our records indicate that we improved our finances by £8,481.83 with a "pot" of £46,904.43 available to cover future expenses.

On the back of the end of year surplus for 2024, we are financially in a reasonable position to move forward confidently to know that we can cover all overhead expenses for the next 3 – 4 years, even without an income. We have been targeting that cushion for a few years and have been successful in achieving that target this year.

It has only been possible, however due to a number of extraordinary windfalls.

1. We have to thank Ward James Chappel for their second donation to us in the sum of £4,500.00. They are under no obligation to do so, and if they simply turned around and told us that we were getting no more, then we could only thank them for their generosity to date. We are in line for a 3<sup>rd</sup> donation next year as well – fingers crossed!
2. This year we submitted our last 4 years subscriptions total to the HMRC and received a Gift Aid refund of £6,297.97 back from them. In April/May of this year we will be submitting this years (2026) subscriptions for Gift Aid consideration which should bring in approximately a further £1,900.00.
3. The 2025 account includes £1,700.00 payments for the Caldicott Tour in July this year which obviously have to be discounted as it will be an actual expenditure this year, 2026.
4. We have also received the following in donations: -
  - a. Choristers with long term membership = £500.00
  - b. Bereavement donations = £1,300.00

- c. Retirement donations = £1,000.00
- d. Other donations = £530.00
- 5. The total of the above is £15,827.97
- 6. In 2025 we also collected (in buckets etc), a sum of £1,046.27 which, as always, is set aside for disposal to our chosen Charities.

The above are “extraordinary” in so far as they cannot be depended upon as guaranteed incomes going forward. Even the WJC donation is not guaranteed, as discussed above.

If we adjust the end of year Cash Reserves total to exclude windfalls and donations (£46,904.43-£15,827.97 = £31,076.46), we would, in fact have made a loss of £7,346.14 compared to the 2024 reserve of £38,422.60.

It is only because of these “extraordinary” windfalls that we have been able to purchase the new “blazer uniform” for the Choir. Any other circumstance would have made that decision impossible. The new blazer uniform ensemble has cost the Choir around £2,200.00. The blazers will remain in the Choirs ownership and are “on loan” to members. All blues uniforms (polo’s, jumpers, shirts, etc) purchased by members remain the property of those members

This year, following a review of both venues and “Guest” costs, the revenue from the Concerts (both small and major concerts) plus the cost of our wonderful music team has, for the first time in years, been in the black. The decision made at the end of 2024 to go for local talent rather than “names” has turned out to be successful both financially and musically. This has reduced the reliance we place on Choir members to sell lots of tickets. A quickly expanding repertoire we believe, has also helped internal sales.

The issued spreadsheet actually shows a healthy balance between income and expenditure for the Concerts themselves, but much of the surplus was from our October Concert and the Black Country Showcase, plus to a smaller degree, the pubs at Christmas.

Bucket collections have also raised £1,050.00 which will be donated to Charity(s).

We would like to thank the Choir members for their efforts in selling tickets for Concerts over the last year and can only ask for a concerted (excuse the pun – same one as last 2 years) effort this coming Concert season.

Our running costs are, not surprisingly, still increasing. This year, we spent nearly £13,000 on rehearsal venue, music team and admin costs alone.

In line with all of the above, and following our January Executive Committee meeting, we have decided to retain the following, for 2026 subs:-

1. The subscription will remain at £200pa (still only £4 pw) following this AGM.



2. Members who have already been in the Choir for over 40 years will not have to pay a membership subscription.
3. Members currently in the Choir who have already completed 35+ years will NOT have to pay a membership subscription.
4. Members who achieve 35 years after the AGM on the 26th January will pay 50% of the membership subscription, including all subsequent years.
5. If any member feels that they are unable to pay this or would like us to consider accepting an alternative payment route, please talk to one of the members of the executive committee asap.

Last year we continued with our policy of Charitable Donations to several Charities. Our exec & our trustees have, this year, suggested that we donate to Bedazzle who are a Charity that addresses the crucial need for improved mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people and their families (reg Charity Nr 1166683). Once again, it has, been agreed that during the coming year we will actively seek & to prioritise Charities who are prepared to work with us to organise and actively raise funds jointly with us, via our concerts.

The final account has been agreed and signed by our auditors so I will make the balance sheet and income/expenditure summary available to any member that would like a copy. I will be free to answer any questions, on a one-to-one basis, after the AGM.

Finally, you may or may not be aware that Roger Shuttleworth and Richard Molyneux are stepping down from their roles as Auditors this year. Going forward, we will be asking external Auditors to check the accounts. Roger and Richards input into the success of the choir cannot be over stated. They are an important buffer in the financial security of the Choir and, for that reason, their input in undertaking this important role cannot be understated. Thank you guys!

We are also changing the way that the accounts will be presented next year, giving you all a clearer understanding of what we spend your money on and how we create an income to keep the Choir going. All will be revealed in due course.

To infinity and beyond!!!



Stephen Hale (Treasurer)  
January 2026

**GENTLEMEN SONGSTERS MALE VOICE CHOIR**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025 (accounts up to 29 December 2025)**

EXPENDITURE	£	£	2024	INCOME	£	£	2024
		2025				2025	
<b>CONCERTS (EXCLUDING Music Team)</b>				<b>CONCERTS</b>			
Christmas 2024	£ 477.50			Christmas 2024	£ 10.00		
Peace Concert	£ -			Peace Concert	£ 9.65		
Springdale	£ -	2 donations		Springdale Church	£ 1,574.56		
Himley CC - internal	£ -			Himley CC - internal	£ 78.50		
Peace Concert	£ 937.57			Peace Concert	£ 1,087.92		
Amblecote Methodist				Amblecote Methodist	£ 60.00		
Black Country Showcase	£ 1,283.00			Black Country Showcase	£ 2,295.14		
Black Country Music Festival	£ -			Black Country Music Festival	£ 250.00		
Norwich	£ 9,585.00			Norwich (£2,100 in 2024)	£ 6,890.00		
LM Dudley Inauguration	£ -			LM Dudley Inauguration	£ 250.00		
Limes	£ -			Limes	£ 350.00		
October Concert*	£ 759.00			October Concert	£ 2,668.43		
Remembrance	£ -	Ticket sales		Remembrance	£ 2,057.84		
Christmas 2025	£ -			Christmas 2025	£ 400.00		
Old White Horse	£ -			Old White Horse	£ 300.00		
The Old Bush	£ -			The Old Bush	£ 300.00		
The Bridge	£ -			The Bridge	£ 250.00		
DK Rugby	£ -	£ 13,042.07		DK Rugby	£ -		
Springdale Church 2026 deposit		£ 118.00					
		£ 13,160.07		Caldicot - see below			
Music Team Concert Costs	£ 1,980.00	£ 1,980.00					
* above - still awaiting room hire invoice							
		£ 15,140.07	£ 15,902.37				
						£ 18,832.04	£ 24,394.36
				<b>REGULAR INCOME</b>			
				Subscriptions	£ 11,040.00		
				Subs for 2026	£ -		
						£ 11,040.00	£ 7,663.87
<b>DONATIONS</b>				<b>DONATIONS RECEIVED</b>			
Ronnies Room	£500.00			In lieu of subs: -			
Brierley Hill Food Bank	£250.00			J Walley	£100.00		
Beths Sunflowers	£700.00			R Shuttleworth	£100.00		
Dudley First Responders	£700.00			J Mearman	£200.00		
Black Country Mental Health	£500.00			D Sliviter	£100.00	£ 500.00	
Remembrance	£1,860.00			Others: -			
Bedazzle	tba			P Clay	£1,000.00		
				E Bartley	£1,000.00		
		£ 4,510.00	£ 2,150.00	J Smith	£350.00		
				Choir - old kit	£150.00		
				Bert Bissell Remembrance	£130.00		
				Limes residents assoc	£90.00		
				Limes raffle	£160.00	£2,880.00	
				<b>Buckets: -</b>			
				Himley CC Raffle	£132.00		
				Old White Horse	£106.36		
				St Benedicts	£400.67		
				Old Bush	£134.44		
				DKRFC	£176.21		
				Bridge	£96.59	£1,046.27	
						£ 4,426.27	£ 5,510.00
<b>MISC/RUNNING/OTHER COSTS</b>				<b>OTHER INCOME</b>			
Bank charges	£ 80.80			Misc			
General admin expenses	£ 911.05			Uniform payments	£ 940.00		
Web domain	£ 478.80			Music deposits			
Insurance	£ 237.41						
New equipment	£ 2,323.64						
TP2 schedules	£ 121.50						
Room hire	£ 2,018.50					£ 940.00	£ 836.78
Music	£ 155.01						
New backing tracks (NB)	£ 170.50						
		£ 6,497.21					
New uniforms	£ 7,791.22						
Music Team (Rehearsals)	£ 5,636.00	£ 13,427.22					
		£ 19,924.43	£ 11,387.80				
<b>Transfers</b>		£ -	£ -	<b>Transfers</b>		£ -	£ -
		£ 39,574.50	£ 29,440.17			£ 35,238.31	£ 38,405.01
				<b>Extraordinary incomes: -</b>			
				Ward James Chappel	£4,500.00		
				HMRC Gift Aid	£6,297.97	£ 10,797.97	
<b>Surplus</b>	£ (4,336.19)						
		£ 39,574.50	£ 29,440.17			£ 46,036.28	£ 38,405.01
<b>Transient amounts for Concerts</b>				<b>Transient amounts for future Concerts</b>			
				Caldicot 2026		£ 1,700.00	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		£ 39,574.50		<b>Total Income</b>		£ 47,736.28	
<b>Known expenditure 2025</b>				<b>Known income 2026</b>			



**BALANCE SHEET****AS AT 31 December 2025**

Issued for distribution to Choir Members prior to the AGM.

**CASH RESERVES****HSBC Treasurers account**

Balance 31/12/24	£ 17,254.35	
Balance (31st December 2025)	£ 25,416.13	£ 8,161.78

**HSBC Contingency account**

Balance 29/12/24	£ 11,345.69	
Balance (31st December 2025)	£ 11,531.85 Incl interest	£ 186.16

**HSBC Futures account**

Balance 23/12/24	£ 7,520.85	
Balance (31st December 2025)	£ 7,643.17 Incl interest	£ 122.32

**Lloyds Treasurers account**

Balance 09/24	£ 1,925.86	
Balance 09/25	£ 1,943.10 Incl interest	£ 17.24

**Lloyds Social account**

Balance 09/24	£ 390.85	
Balance 11/25	£ 369.60 Incl interest	£ (21.25)

Cash in hand	£ 46,903.85	£ 8,466.25
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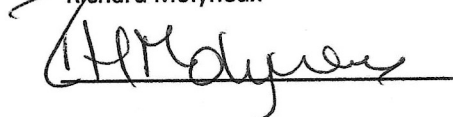
Appointed by the Choir Management Committee, we hereby certify for the accounts to be correct for the year ending 31/12/24

**Signed**

Date: 19/1/26  
Roger Shuttleworth


**Signed**

Date: 18/01/26  
Richard Molyneux


**Cash reserves - historical**

2010	Deficit	(£1,910.84)	£ 14,435.26
2011	Surplus	£7,130.91	£ 21,566.17
2012	Surplus	£10,414.54	£ 31,980.71
2013	Deficit	(£8,593.15)	£ 23,387.56
2014	Surplus	£5,949.33	£ 29,336.89
2015	Deficit	(£2,143.46)	£ 27,193.43
2016	Deficit	(£9,685.93)	£ 17,507.50
2017	Surplus	£7,128.74	£ 24,636.24
2018	Surplus	£3,512.13	£ 28,148.37
2019	Surplus	£3,519.83	£ 31,668.20
2020	Deficit	£ (5,119.09)	£ 26,549.11
2021	Deficit	£ (6,292.26)	£ 20,256.85
2022	Surplus	£ 4,435.54	£ 24,692.73
2023	Surplus	£ 2,097.27	£ 26,790.00
2024	Surplus	£ 11,632.60	£ 38,422.60
2025	Surplus	£8,466.25	£ 46,888.85