

THE COBWEB ORCHESTRA

(A company limited by guarantee)

Report and Financial Statements

Year ended 31st April 2024

Charity number: 1118758

Company number: 6057812

Annual return 2023-2024

THE COBWEB ORCHESTRA

Report of the trustees for the year ended 31st March 2024

The trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31st March 2024.

Reference and Administrative Information

Registered Charity no: 1118758

Company registration no: 6057812

Registered office: 28 College View
Consett
Co. Durham
DH8 7DP

Bankers: The Co-operative Bank plc.
PO Box 250
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT

Directors and Trustees

The directors of the charitable company (the charity) are its trustees who, for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report, are collectively referred to as the trustees.

The trustees serving during the financial year were as follows:

Ms. S. Baker (Chair)
Mrs. R. Tanner (Secretary)
Miss L. Wearmouth
Mr. S. Baines (Treasurer)

Mr. A. Forsyth (Vice Chair)
Ms J. Greene
Dr. S. Orr
Dr. E. Pearson
Dr. C. Preston
Mr. R. Stamp
Dr. M. H. Cave
Mr. P. Mills
Ms. E. Willmore

The Cobweb Orchestra holds its Annual general Meeting in October. Ten trustees were elected to serve from October 2023 - October 2024. Mr R. Stamp and Ms. J. Greene resigned in October 2023 and Miss L. Wearmouth, Ms. E Willmore and Mr P. Mills were elected.

Structure, Governance and Management

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 which comply with current statutory requirements, with the company's governing document and with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

Governing Document

The Cobweb Orchestra is a charity, which together with its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with its constitution adopted on April 6th 2007 by the members of the executive committee. The Trust is a limited company by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association with no share capital, being limited by guarantee.

Organisation

The board of trustees, which can have up to 12 members, administers the charity. The board currently meets every quarter and there are sub-committees covering Finance, Human Resources

and Publicity and Marketing. The board contracts services for administration and creative direction as well as hiring conductors and musicians as and when required. The organisation does not have any directly employed staff.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charity and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the net income or expenditure for the year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

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

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the charity are:

To advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects.

The Cobweb Orchestra began as a 10-week course with one group in one venue with a small number of players. In October 2006 the organisation started to consider independence from North Music Trust for various reasons. Before becoming independent from North Music Trust, there was a series of meetings to establish what the potential membership wanted from a new organisation. The answer – much the same as has always been on offer. A working party, set up as a result of these early meetings, set out to achieve this objective.

As a result of the consultation process The Cobweb Orchestra became a company limited by guarantee in January 2007 and achieved charitable status in March 2007.

The Cobweb Orchestra has maintained its open access policy and this features strongly in its charitable objectives, which feature in its Memorandum and Articles. These objectives continue to be its guiding light.

We now run nine regular orchestral groups across northern England, in Northumberland (Morpeth), Newcastle, County Durham (Dipton, Spennymoor and Durham), Teesside (Billingham), York and Cumbria (Dalston and Tebay). These groups are open-access, with no auditions or quotas and attendance is open to both the general public and members of the charity. In addition, we run events and concerts across the region, drawing together members of our regular groups with other musicians and arts organisations. These include study days, longer weekend workshops to consider larger works or chamber music and programmes focused on the development of members' skills, such as composing or conducting.

Achievements and Performance

The Cobweb continued to return to its usual pattern of weekly meetings for its local groups and occasional/regular weekend workshops. The effects of the lockdown period have not been excessive and we are glad to be able to report a return almost to our previous levels of attendance. We continue to work to attract new membership.

- Our nine local groups, across Northumberland, Tyneside, County Durham, Cumbria, Teesside and York continue to meet regularly during term time. The group in Northumberland has a new leader as has Tebay in Cumbria.
- Our relatively new Music Director, Mr. Mark Edwards, is a talented and experienced conductor working with community groups across the North East and further afield. He has worked over the year to build on the ethos and enthusiasm of his predecessor, whilst stamping his own style on the organisation going forward.
- Our joint weekend workshops have concentrated on major symphonies during this year. The Overture Project has begun and our "Month of..." meetings in January worked on collaborations with other groups. At the "Big Play" event all groups come together and each presents a work with a common theme. Other events have covered music used in cartoons, Mendelssohn and our ever popular Spring residential.
- The Cobwebs Chamber group also re-started its yearly residential with related rehearsals and concerts.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charities Commission in exercising their powers and duties.

Financial Review

The total incoming funds for the period amounted to £79,760 (2023: £71,897) against running costs of £84,486 (2023: £72,698), giving a total deficit of £4,726 (2022: surplus of £801). The total balance of unrestricted funds at the period end, including non-current assets, amounted to £27,932 (2023: £32,658) with a further £328 (2023: £328) held for restricted purposes.

We aim under our reserves policy to hold around 20% - 25% of annual unrestricted expenditure in available reserves (net current assets in the balance sheet), to mitigate financial risks. At the balance sheet date, the available unrestricted reserves totalled £14,843 (2023: £18,941) which equated to around 18% (2023: 26%) of unrestricted expenditure for the period.

Plans for the Future

We, as a board of trustees, continue to review our future calendar of events to ensure we offer a programme that will meet the needs of our members and hopefully attract new members. We continue to work with our community venues to ensure safety and confidence for our players at all times. The trustees have returned to quarterly meetings where we keep a watching brief on the situation, both financial and vis-à-vis membership, and to support the sterling efforts of our Director, appointed in May 2022, and our Events Administrator without whom our smooth running would hardly be possible. Trustees took the decision to raise membership and event fees (to start later in the year) to address financial issues before they arise.

Risk Review

The trustees have identified and reviewed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and systems have been established to mitigate these risks. A Risk Assessment Policy, focused particularly on the issues around Covid-19, remains in place until we are confident that we are clear of any risk of relapse, which we operate in conjunction with the policies of the venues we hire, as we continue to return to in-person activities.

Exemptions

This report is prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Section 415A of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 31st January 2025.

And signed on their behalf by

Signed: L Wearmouth

Miss L. Wearmouth
Secretary

Independent Examiners Report

Report to the trustees/members of The Cobweb Orchestra on Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024, set out on the following pages.

Respective responsibilities of the Charity and the Independent Examiner As members of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements; you consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 3(3) and section 144(2) of the Charities Act do not apply and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the financial statements under s.145 of the 2011 Act;
- Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charities Commission, under section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- State whether any particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of Examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records.

It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on these accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have been compromised; and

- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Andrew French

SignedMr A French...

Date19/01/2025.....

1. Accounting policies

1.1 Accounting Convention

These financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention and in accordance with FRS 102 (effective Jan 2015), the Companies Act 2006 and the requirements of the Charities SORP 2019. The trustees consider that the company is a public benefit entity. These accounts are therefore prepared on a going-concern basis.

1.2 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Deferred income balances arise when participants in charitable activities, for example residential events, pay in advance.

1.3 Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1.4 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets comprise the orchestra's music library (sheet music, associated storage units and printing facilities) and instruments for use by the orchestra.

The initial carrying value of donated assets is taken to be the lower of replacement cost and recoverable amount at the date it is received. The value in use is assumed to be equal to the current replacement cost. For the instrument bank and music library storage, depreciation calculated on a 10% reducing balance basis on cost, for IT related equipment, depreciation is calculated on a 20% reducing balance basis on cost. Sheet music is not depreciated, as its condition and value depends chiefly on the extent of use rather than age. It is therefore subject to an annual impairment review.

1.5 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities under the primary purpose trading exemption. Nil CT600 Corporation Tax Returns are filed with HMRC as and when requested.

1.6 Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees. Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular purposes.

1.7 Significant judgments and estimates

The trustees do not consider there to be the need for any significant judgments or estimates in applying these accounting policies, given the simplicity of the charity's operations. Other than as reported in the paragraph above regarding *Material uncertainty over going concern*, there are no assumptions or other sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date which may give rise to a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying value of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

1.8 Donated goods and services

Trustees and members of the charity contribute as general volunteers to a number of key areas of operations. These include managing the music library and general administration of membership and weekly groups. Under 6.18 of the 2019 SORP, these services are not recognised in these accounts.

