

Farnham Youth Choir

Annual Report and Accounts (Financial Year ended 31st August 2020)

Registered charity no. 1145358

1. Aims and Objectives

Farnham Youth Choir (FYC) is committed to promoting, improving and developing the musical education of young people in the Farnham area. This is pursued through the creation and maintenance of a youth choir of the highest musical standards. FYC's activities include the presentation of public concerts, tours both in the UK and abroad, the production of recordings and participation in choral competitions.

The public benefits of the organisation are three-fold:

- i. Young people in the Farnham area can participate in choral activities to a musical standard which may not be available to them within mainstream education. The ethos of FYC throughout its existence has been to ensure that no child is barred from accessing this opportunity purely on the grounds of affordability.
- ii. As a community-based choir, a significant proportion of FYC's public concerts are centred on the Farnham area, thus ensuring that the local population can benefit from attending youth choral concerts of the highest international standard.
- iii. Both FYC members and the local community benefit from the fact that FYC makes Farnham a destination of choice for other leading youth choirs from around the world.

2. Financial Position

The FYC annual accounts for the year ending 31st August 2020 are presented on pages 7 to 8 of this report. An excess of receipts over payments of £1,349 is reported compared to an excess of £6,191 in the previous year. The balance sheet shows total assets less current liabilities of £54,176 (up from £52,827) with £50,276 (up from £48,927) in the bank account as at 31st August 2020.

Costs from the 2019 tours to Switzerland and Sweden of £8,786 are included in these accounts. The balance of the tour fund of £6,825 has been attributed to these costs.

During the year, the Friends of Farnham Youth Choir was dissolved and the balance of their funds, £16,460, was transferred to FYC to be ring-fenced for specific purposes as detailed below.

The cancellation of the World Choir Games plus the choirs' Easter and Summer concerts has had a material impact on the 2019/20 accounts with lost ticket revenues as well as cancellation costs of c.£2k.

FYC has five separate funds:

1. a general fund for the day-to-day operation of the choir; current value £25,380;
2. a development fund to secure the future of FYC through the creation of development opportunities to encourage recruitment and to ensure effective succession planning by widening the team of music professionals who work with the choirs; current value £586;
3. a fundraising and marketing fund to develop FYC's fundraising and marketing proposition; current value £10,000; and
4. The Mansell fund for new commissions; current value £2,150
5. Friends of FYC fund to support FYC tours; current value £16,060.

3. Activities Report from Jo Tomlinson

This is my fifth AGM report and very sadly my final one as I step down as Artistic Director at the end of this term. I've always been able to write extremely positive reports but as you might expect, this year's is rather more difficult to write.

The 2019-20 season was looking particularly positive for FYC, with a top-notch new intake, a fantastic energy following successes in Sweden and Switzerland and a great year ahead preparing for the World Choir Games. The Youth Choir gave an utterly superb performance at Cadogan Hall last November, where we joined Wimbledon Choral Society and top-drawer soloists for a performance of Carmina Burana, and also performed our own first-half set, which went extremely well despite some members having only been in the choir for two months. The usual Christmas concerts followed, with the Civic Carol service and a joyful Farnham Maltings performance. It was also the 35th year of FYC so I invited David Victor-Smith and Alumni of FYC to join us for that concert and it was a very full and buzzing event.

During the Autumn term in 2019 our Training Choir saw a transition of music team from Lucy Joy Morris who had done a wonderful job of growing the choir so that it was full to bursting and needed a second member of staff to assist. Sally Hollyer joined us as Assistant Conductor from the start of term. Sally is a local class and music teacher based in Haslemere and was ideally placed to help run the rehearsals with this age group. Later in the term, Lucy was succeeded by Merel van der Knoop, a piano and singing teacher who trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

In the Spring term, the highlight was the Junior Choir gaining a place in the final of the Barnardos Singing Competition, which meant an exciting trip to London to perform at the Royal Festival Hall and to enjoy a fun day out and a meal at Pizza Express too! The Junior Choir Director Patrick Barrett was due to be only partly with us in the Spring term, and com-

pletely on sabbatical in the summer as he was working in Scotland with the RSNO Chorus, so Margaret O'Shea joined us to cover that time, sharing part of it with Patrick. Margaret is Director of Music for Ark Schools (a network of 38 schools) and is a top music educator in the UK. The Barnardos competition was a thrilling opportunity for our young singers, who were singing at such a high standard for this competition, certainly sounding the best that I had heard our Junior Choir and again everything was looking extremely positive on the musical front for that choir. Just a few days after the competition, lockdown loomed and we made the difficult decision to cancel both our Junior and Senior Spring Concerts, which all three choirs had been preparing for. Things got worse very quickly and it soon became apparent that we would have to make some huge changes to our rehearsals and to our future plans. The move to online teaching for all choirs, via Zoom, presented a very fast learning curve for all the music staff. It was particularly challenging given that Margaret barely knew the Junior Choir at that stage and Merel and Sally were also still very new in their roles. Given the circumstances, it's amazing what was achieved, and a testament to our singers in the way they coped with this incredibly difficult time. I felt that it was very important that we kept contact with our young people and that they could connect with each other, especially given that those in state schools were generally not getting any visual contact with schools, just being set work to get on with themselves. It was hard to put together a programme for the singers, given the limitations of singing online due to the time lag, so the singing could only be done muted. As concerts and competitions got cancelled we no longer had a focus or aim to rehearse towards so for the Youth Choir I put together a music education programme including musicianship, vocal technique, a visit from a composer, games and quizzes, a vocal masterclass and a virtual choir project for the members to record their parts individually. The Junior Choir had a lovely folk-song project with Margaret and the Training Choir learnt fun songs and kept the energy going for these very young singers. The main thing though was to keep the choir connected and feeling part of something that they could eventually return to. Over the summer the committee, Liz, Patrick and I worked very hard following the government guidelines to try to put something in place to be able to rehearse in the flesh in the Autumn. This was quite stressful and hard work for all involved as things seemed to change week by week but eventually we had a risk assessment, a system of volunteers in place and two new venues as Frensham Heights was no longer available to us (huge thanks to Gillian West for making things work so brilliantly at Walsh C of E Junior School in Ash). Covid-safety rules mean that the choirs can only rehearse in groups of up to 15 which means the music team have ended up working much longer hours, so particular thanks to them for being so generous and doing this without extra cost to the choir. Of course the live rehearsals lasted only a few weeks before we have gone into a second lockdown but the system is now in place for when we can get back again, hopefully very soon.

I now pass on the baton to Patrick, who I know will come to this difficult time for the organisation with a fantastic energy and positivity and come up with creative ideas as to how we can move forward. Like all arts organisations, FYC will struggle but I know that with the care and dedication of a fantastic team and the passion the singers feel for this choir, it will survive and thrive again. It's a very sad situation to be leaving in, and frustrating after building up the choir to exactly how I wanted them: a lot of that work will have been lost by the large gap they will have had in their singing. Things are looking more positive for next year though and I hope very much to come back for a "live" goodbye at some point next year. A huge thanks to everyone for making this the most rewarding time for me: to all the current committee, to Helen Cole who has dealt with becoming chair in this situation in such an amazing and calm way, to past chairs Graham and Andy who I have so loved working with, to won-

derful Liz who is such a joy to work with, to all of the music team, especially Matthew who has supported my rehearsals in the kindest and most positive way, to the parents past and present, with whom it's so lovely to form bonds, and not least to our incredible young singers, who I have had the privilege of working with and will never forget.

4. Future Plans

At the time of writing, it is unusually difficult to provide a picture of FYC's future plans: almost anything we might organise at this stage will necessarily remain provisional until the spread of Covid-19 is largely under control. Emerging vaccines are just beginning to show significant promise, but it is well understood that no matter how effective these vaccines might prove to be and how quickly they can be rolled out across the UK, there will be a time lag before the Covid-19 infection rate is reduced to negligible levels.

Meanwhile for most arts organisations including FYC, concerts cannot go ahead. At any given time this may be either because Government guidelines prevent indoor gatherings of people from more than one household or because social distancing rules make the cost of putting on a concert prohibitive. There are slightly different rules in place for church services and for this reason, there is a possibility that the Civic Service at St Andrew's Church in Farnham may yet go ahead in December this year, although its date is not currently definite. It would not be possible for the Service to be celebrated with a congregation in the usual way and the current thinking is that it would instead be live-streamed for watching at home.

Performance is vital to our singers' sense of achievement, and concert revenue is crucially important to FYC's finances. We wait with concern to see how long it will be before this means of funding our activities can return. At the moment, the Youth Choir has a Spring concert booked at St Andrew's Church in Alton on 27th March 2021, whilst it is hoped that FYC's choirs will come together for a Summer Gala Concert on 19th June at the magnificent Menuhin Hall where we were able to put on a memorable concert in the summer of 2019. Both concerts are in doubt depending on the way in which the Covid pandemic unfolds over the coming months. Looking further ahead, the Youth Choir has been working on Benjamin Britten's A Ceremony of Carols and a London performance of this, with harpist, has been booked for December 2021. Everyone very much hopes that by this date, performance will be possible once again.

The financial effect of Covid-19 has shown itself not only in lost concert revenue but also in reduced subscription income. Here, the greatest impact has been on the Training Choir. Since the pandemic began, this has been the trickiest of the choirs to operate successfully. The youngest children have found Zoom rehearsals particularly difficult, and even 'live' rehearsals are awkward in small, widely-spaced cohorts: older children have adjusted to this but it is much harder for the younger ones. We know, too, that the youngest singers haven't necessarily developed the passionate attachment to FYC that older singers do. Consequently, numbers have fallen away sharply in this age-group. As a result the trustees have very reluctantly taken the decision to suspend weekly Training Choir rehearsals in the Spring term, and we anticipate that this is likely to remain the situation in the Summer term, depending very much on how the pandemic plays out over that period. However, we plan to keep our youngest singers singing by providing workshops approximately once a month whenever in-person teaching is allowed, led by either Patrick Barrett or Margaret O'Shea.

This will mean that when conditions allow FYC to open up the Training Choir on a weekly basis again, we will be in good shape to get back up to speed quickly.

Fundraising will now become a priority for FYC, requiring us to come up with innovative approaches given that 'traditional' events-based fundraising is ruled out for the moment by the Covid pandemic and social distancing requirements. The £10,000 fundraising and marketing fund referred to in section 2 above expressly permits FYC for the first time to take professional advice on the approaches we can and need to make to philanthropic trusts and similar sources of potential support, and the trustees (guided by Jason Harris and Kevin Sylvester) are actively moving forward on this. Meanwhile, crucially important smaller-scale ways to raise funds are either up and running or in the pipeline. In this respect, sincere thanks go to Melanie Hancox, Lucy Reidy, Clare Wain and Clare Wingfield for their ideas, time and expertise as well as to former Chairs Andy Blair and Graham Noakes for so kindly continuing to lend us their skills in publicity and networking.

A further decision taken by FYC's trustees in recent days is to return to the principle of holding rehearsals for the different choirs on the same night of the week as each other, and at the same venue. When the pandemic brought to an end our long association with Frensham Heights School, we were extremely fortunate to find a home with Walsh C of E Junior School in Ash. Socially-distanced rehearsals demand a large, well-ventilated space and Walsh's school hall more than met this need, but could not accommodate the Junior and Youth choirs concurrently. From January 2021 we will therefore begin rehearsals at the Spire Church in Farnham, comprising what used to be the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church. This will make life easier for families who have children in more than one of FYC's choirs, and we hope too that rehearsing together will bolster the sense of a family of choirs that Jo Tomlinson in particular has worked so hard to develop. The link we have made with Walsh Junior School is now a very strong one and we hope to continue rehearsing there for training afternoons/days and for Training Choir workshops.

Given the limitations of rehearsing online, conditions in 2020 have created a problem for FYC that will take time and commitment to put right. This concerns the way in which new Youth Choir singers pick up repertoire in large part from listening to (and drawing vocal support from) the more experienced FYC members alongside them. If finances allow, one way of tackling this would be to hold a workshop over a series of days, probably in August, that would enable 'old' members to transmit their knowledge to singers who have more recently joined or moved up to the Youth Choir. This would also be a welcome chance to round off a challenging year in a celebratory way. We are thinking of making this a residential summer camp, in the UK, which would also help to compensate the current Youth Choir for all that they will have missed in the way of the cancelled performances, tours and competitions they were so looking forward to. Whether this plan will be possible or not depends of course on things unknowable at present.

5. Structure, Governance and Management

FYC is a registered charity and all activities are planned and implemented under the control of a Management Committee. This includes all arrangements for rehearsals, concerts, tours, recordings and control of finance and expenditure. The Committee usually meets twice every term but has been meeting more frequently than this since the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. It comprises a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and other trustees,

supported by a paid Operations Manager. The trustees are joined by a number of Management Officers who are appointed to specific roles and provide support and feedback to the trustees.

Another charity, the Friends of Farnham Youth Choir (FFYC), previously provided support in a number of areas, including commissions, musical equipment and financial support for subscriptions or tours for families where needed. FFYC was formally dissolved in July 2020, and its remaining funds were transferred to FYC. The sum concerned was ring-fenced as follows:

1. £2,150 remaining in the Mansell fund bequest for new commissions; and
2. £14,310.05 for the support of FYC tours.

FYC is most grateful to FFYC for all the work that they have done over the course of many years, and has received the above funds with gratitude.

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020

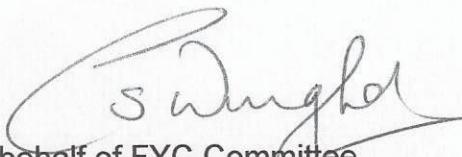
Receipts and Payments Account

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Receipts		
Subscriptions	29,840	23,855
Gift Aid Receipts	13,216	-
Concerts (net)	(1,973)	9,214
Fundraising	688	8,969
Donations	19,325	10,300
Patrons	1,750	1,639
Miscellaneous	-	608
	62,846	54,585
Payments		
Fees (Directors and Accompanists)	25,934	25,183
Rent	1,860	2,800
Uniforms, net of receipts	163	734
Bank charges	605	141
Administration	18,412	12,345
Music & Commissions	1,571	840
Publicity and PR	180	727
Tours (net)	11,282	4,594
Equipment	689	602
Miscellaneous	801	427
	61,497	48,394
Excess/(Deficit) of receipts over payments	1,349	6,191

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020

Balance Sheet

	2019/20	2018/19
	£	£
Current assets		
Equipment	1,900	1,900
Music library	2,000	2,000
Cash at bank	50,276	48,927
Total assets less current liabilities	54,176	52,827
Funds		
General fund	25,380	34,992
Tour fund	-	6,825
Development fund	586	1,010
Marketing fund	10,000	10,000
Mansell fund	2,150	
Friends of FYC fund	16,060	-
	54,176	52,827



On behalf of FYC Committee
Clare Wingfield BSc ACA MBA
Hon. Treasurer

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Farnham Youth Choir

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Farnham Youth Choir ('the Trust') for the year ended 31 August 2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

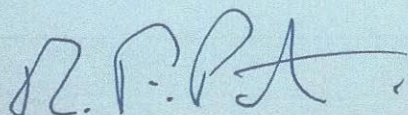
Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Name:

Russell Patmore

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies:

Address:

7 Foxenden Road, Guildford, GU1 4DL

Date

16/11/2020