

Farnham Youth Choir

Annual Report and Accounts (Financial Year ended 31st August 2021)

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 2021 are presented on pages 6 to 7 of this report. An excess of receipts over payments of £18,277 is reported compared to an excess of £6,191 in the previous year. The balance sheet shows total assets less current liabilities of £72,453 (up from £54,176) with £68,553 (up from £50,276) in the bank account as at 31st August 2020.

Despite a reduction in subscription income and cancelled concerts, we have been able to generate an income surplus due to fundraising activities, donations, patronage & sponsorship. Costs have also been tightly controlled with a reduction in music team fees, reflecting the reduced level of choir activities, music costs and venue hire.

FYC has seven separate funds:

1. a general fund for the day-to-day operation of the choir; current value £39,897;

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 £9,021; and
4. The Mansell fund for new commissions; current value £2,150
5. Friends of FYC fund to support FYC tours; current value £16,140
6. Vocal coach fund to provide vocal coaching for the choir for the 2021/22 season; current value £1,700
7. D'Oyly Carte fund to support the re-launch of the Training Choir during the 2021/22 season; current value £2,959.

3. Activities Report from Patrick Barrett

This is my first AGM activities report as Artistic Director following on from Joanna Tomlinson. Whilst it has been an incredibly challenging time to take over the reins - I believe our team at FYC have done a fantastic job throughout the pandemic and have been at the fore of the choral scene in endeavouring to get young people singing again. So as such, we have a lot to celebrate and be proud of.

The 2020-2021 season was looking particularly gloomy, with online muted singing, new members (consequently) leaving the choir and no clear idea as to when normality would recommence. The choirs struggled online and we even paused the Training Choir as Zoom wasn't working for them, so we focused our energy on a September relaunch for this choir. With this said, many singers showed up week after week and highlighted an incredible commitment to FYC. The Junior Choir even recorded a virtual performance of 'The Angels' Song' by Roy Rashbrook. My thanks to Roy for including us in this project.

During lockdowns, we worked hard behind the scenes to find a suitable outdoor venue and were fortunate to be welcomed by Blacknest Golf Club who let us use their tipi. Blacknest and its beautiful surroundings provided the perfect backdrop for recovery. Singers were impressed by our rehearsal venue which allowed us to not only sing together but also socialise and play together in the natural surroundings. At Blacknest we hosted outdoor concerts in the sunshine and began to see 'the light'! This time was invaluable as it allowed us to reconnect before the new academic year. For the Senior Choir, it led to an outdoor performance at the Farnham Maltings. All things considered, the choir sang well.

In July, we hosted a Senior Choir weekend of singing at More House School, as part of the Barnsley International Youth Choir Festival. This was to be an in-person event but got cancelled and digitalised last minute. Barnsley Youth Choir kindly paid for our choir to be recorded in the beautiful setting of St. Catherine's, Bramley and we performed on Facebook Live. This festival gave us the chance to sing new music as well as attend digital choral workshops from leading experts on Zoom. Our singers worked with our new vocal coach, FYC

alumnus, Hannah Poulson. July also saw us run a successful recruitment campaign for a new conductor of the Training Choir, Claire Robins. We felt this was a worthwhile process as it introduced us to excellent local practitioners and people outside our usual network.

August saw Senior Choir head to Braeside Education Centre for a trip away. Here we enjoyed singing around campfires, outdoor pursuits, rehearsals and lovely food. Thank you to our parent volunteers for a magical time away. This trip was topped off by excellent recordings, videos and photos by Ben Tomlin. This footage will help our public profile and inspire new singers to join FYC.

The new academic year saw a change of rehearsal venue and all three choirs resume normality (give or take absences due to the COVID-19). Rehearsals are taking place in the Spire (Methodist and URC) church. Junior Choir is now thriving under the direction of Margaret O'Shea, while the Training Choir has had a successful relaunch (although we are still keen to increase its numbers and we have taken steps to help with this). We have invited Russell Hepplewhite to be our 2022 Composer in Residence. He will compose a song for each of our choirs and the Training Choir's song will be taught in schools recruitment workshops run by Claire Robins. We hope these recruitment workshops will encourage more singers to join FYC.

I'd like to finish this report by thanking everyone in our brilliant community - Liz, the music team, the committee and of course, our singers. You are all amazing.

4. Future Plans

Last year's Annual Report was written at a time of uncertainty, when we had all endured one long Covid-19 lockdown and could see that another was on the horizon. In November 2021, despite a successful Covid vaccination programme, things are still far from straightforward. The World Choir Games in South Korea presents an uncertain prospect and we have instead turned our thoughts to a Senior Choir tour less far afield. Depending on their age, most children in England are either wholly or partly unprotected from Covid-19 by vaccination, and infection rates are high among this age-group. Rehearsals and performances will be prone to disruption for a while to come.

My predecessor Andy Blair developed a 3-year strategic plan for FYC that expired in August 2021. The pandemic has of course meant that for at least half of the plan's life, the objectives and actions it recommended could not be pursued in the manner envisaged. The trustees are working on a new 3-year plan that will plot a way forward through phases of recovery, consolidation and finally growth and celebration as we reach 2024, the 40th anniversary of the founding of FYC by David Victor-Smith. We will definitely want to make a lot of noise on such an occasion!

In the meantime, FYC's trustees have concentrated upon raising funds from grant-making bodies – something that this charity hasn't done on such a significant scale before. In April we were delighted to secure a grant of £1,700 to cover the cost of one year's specialist vocal coaching for our Junior and Senior singers as they re-awaken their voices after the interruption of the lockdowns. Our donor is a charitable trust that prefers to remain anonymous. Professional mezzo-soprano and FYC alumnus Hannah Poulson has recently begun to work with the Senior and Junior Choirs.

To balance the decision taken this year to raise subscription rates from September 2021, the trustees are planning a bursary scheme to make sure that children don't miss out on becoming or remaining a member of FYC for financial reasons. We have made this the focus of our applications to funding bodies this year. FYC will be taking part for the first time in an initiative called the Big Give Christmas Campaign, building a bursary fund for 2022 and beyond so that we can support FYC members who otherwise would be unable to afford subscriptions, travel, uniform etc. With a target of £10,000, donations to the Campaign will be matched pound for pound, first by money generously pledged to FYC by a key supporter (who wishes to remain anonymous) and the by Lake House Charitable Foundation. We are delighted to have attracted the interest of the Foundation, with its active programme of support for smaller charities. Running a campaign of this nature is a new departure for FYC and will be a steep learning curve for us! If we can master how it is done, we will be able to repeat the process in future years for future fundraising needs.

We have had another important fundraising success and morale boost in the form of a grant of £2,959 awarded to FYC in August by the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust. The purpose of the grant is to support the post-pandemic re-launch of our Training Choir, with a focus on implementing a programme of singing workshops with local primary schools (especially those with which FYC has had little contact in the past). The intention is to encourage many more year 3 and year 4 children to join FYC, and the Trust's funding means that we can offer up to 25% of places in the Training Choir free of charge to children whose families or carers would have difficulty paying a subscription. Our new Training Choir Conductor, Claire Robins, is working with the Artistic Director and trustees to roll out this programme of workshops beginning this autumn. If you notice the Training Choir sporting smart new T-shirts and proudly giving their own concert each term (free of charge to their audience), this too is thanks to the support of the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, which is deeply appreciated.

In reporting these fundraising developments, I'd like to mention that the trustees continue to draw inspiration from the FYC members who themselves raised an extraordinary £7,800 with their Music Marathon in December 2020. We also pay tribute to parents who have masterminded one-off fundraising events such as the tombola in the summer and the doughnut sale this October: to Lucy Reidy and Kuniko Fukushima, thank you so much for your energy and creativity. Speaking of creativity, FYC's merchandising is looking particularly on-trend and I would like to thank Melanie Hancox for (among many other things) setting up FYC's Redbubble account for purchases sporting the FYC logo.

And finally on the subject of funds, Patrick has mentioned that acclaimed composer Russell Hepplewhite is to be Composer in Residence at FYC for 2021-22. The three songs that Russell will write for FYC's choirs have been commissioned using the residue of a bequest made to FYC by Christopher Mansell. I would like to express our thanks to the Mansell family for everything that has been made possible by this generous support.

As Patrick has reported, our three choirs are now rehearsing each week at the Spire Church in Farnham. Even though it can be painful contending with rush-hour traffic, it feels good to be based in the centre of town, not least because a long-held goal is to make FYC unmissable in Farnham itself. Auditions and training afternoons this year have been hosted by Walsh C of E Junior School in Ash, and we are very grateful to headteacher Gillian West for her continuing support: in blazing summer weather, we loved having the school's shady open spaces to spread out in. For one-off events like the Barnsley International Youth Choir Festival in the summer of 2021 and for recent training afternoons, we have been welcomed at More

House School in Frensham, whose music school is also surrounded by green spaces. More House School has not charged FYC a hire fee, telling us that they like to see their facilities being used by a children's music education charity like ours. I am deeply grateful to headteacher Jonathan Hetherington.

One secret of FYC's success has always been that every year, knowledge is passed on from experienced choir-member to newcomer. Lockdowns punched a hole through this, and I could not be grateful for everything that our inspirational and utterly committed musicians are doing to counteract the pandemic's effects. Thank you to Patrick Barrett, Sarah Burston, Sally Hollyer, Susan Norman, Margaret O'Shea, Hannah Poulson, Matthew Rickard and Claire Robins, truly a dream team. Former trustees and past Chairs (especially Graham Noakes and Andy Blair) continue to look out for us, as does our President David Whelton whose advice and wisdom are invaluable. We go into 2021-22 without the trusteeship of John Nicholls, who has stepped down after many years. We give John our thanks and will miss his counsel hugely, but luckily for us he will still be part of FYC - as will John's wife Alison - as a staunch supporter and indeed patron.

Meanwhile, musicians and trustees alike are indebted to Operations Manager Liz Chapman for running everything so smoothly and tirelessly, even though it must certainly be harder than herding cats sometimes.

At the time of writing, the Senior Choir has just given FYC's first indoor concert to a 'live' audience since the start of the pandemic 18 months ago. Parents/carers chaperoned the singers, distributed programmes (designed by Andy Blair), assembled and dismantled staging, marshalled uniforms, checked tickets and proffered hand-sanitiser. It put us back in touch with what it's all for. The small matter of a pandemic hasn't changed the fact that FYC's members, aged 7 to 18, have a talent that can move an audience to tears.

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

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Receipts and Payments Account

	2020/21	2019/20
	£	£
Receipts		
Subscriptions	25,010	29,840
Gift Aid Receipts	-	13,216
Concerts (net)	1,178	(1,973)
Fundraising	14,550	688
Donations	8,035	19,325
Sponsorship	500	-
Patrons	2,130	1,750
Miscellaneous	-	-
	51,403	62,846
Payments		
Fees (Directors and Accompanists)	15,797	25,934
Rent	1,135	1,860
Uniforms, net of receipts	(7)	163
Bank charges	745	605
Administration	17,430	18,412
Music & Commissions	488	1,571
Marketing	979	180
Tours (net)	(3,997)	11,282
Equipment	202	689
Miscellaneous	354	801
	33,126	61,497
Excess of receipts over payments	18,277	6,191

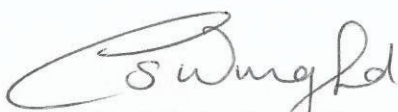
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Balance Sheet

	2020/21	2019/20
	£	£
Current assets		
Equipment	1,900	1,900
Music library	2,000	2,000
Cash at bank	68,553	50,276
Total assets less current liabilities	72,453	54,176

Funds

General fund	39,897	25,380
Development fund	586	586
Marketing fund	9,021	10,000
Mansell fund	2,150	2,150
Friends of FYC fund	16,140	16,060
Vocal coach fund	1,700	-
D'Oyly Carte	2,959	-
	72,453	54,176



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

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

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 2021.

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.

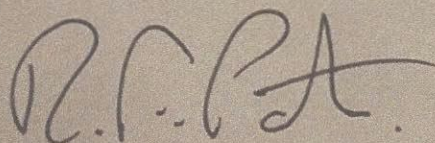
Independent Examiner's Statement

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 Palmore

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies:

Address:

60 George Road, Guildford, GU1 4NR.

Date

4th November 2021