

**Southend Boys' Choir and Southend Girls Choir Trust**  
**Report of the Trustees for the year ending 31 August 2020**

Registered Charity Number: 1161752  
Principal address: Rosemary Pennington – PO Box 6, Civic Centre,  
Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, Essex SS2 6ER  
Email: [webmaster@southendchoirs.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@southendchoirs.org.uk)  
Website: [www.southendchoirs.org.uk](http://www.southendchoirs.org.uk)

Trustees: Christopher Walker (Chair) Peter Croysdill  
Heather Crisp (Treasurer) Emma Lindsey  
Alan Thorpe (Secretary) Robert Little  
Jackie Mullan

Bankers: CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue,  
Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4JQ

### **What the charity does**

Southend Boys' and Girls' Choirs are amongst the leading youth choirs in the country, each choir rehearsing and performing in its own right as well as in joint performances.

The formal objectives of the CIO are to:

- a) promote, improve, develop and maintain public appreciation and education of choral music and related activities in all aspects by the presentation, of public concerts, recitals, broadcasts, recordings or at the invitation of promoters and other artistic bodies; and
- b) educate and enhance the skills and enjoyment of all members of the choirs through a range of performances and musical opportunities, in the UK and abroad.

There are no joining or subscription fees for choir membership, so the Choirs draw on a very wide range of backgrounds, as well as a big age range - singers may enter the main choirs at 8 but the "Little Singers" and "Step-up" groups provide early introduction to the enjoyment of singing from as young as age 3, and members may stay until university and beyond via our offshoot choirs – the Southend Young Men's Chorus for male voices and the Chorus Sirenum for female voices.

### **Public benefits**

The trustees consider the CIO's activities benefit the public through the provision of high quality, creative musical concerts and opportunities for young people, irrespective of their families' means, to develop their musical skills and interests positively and to give regular performances for public enjoyment.

## **Activities for the year**

This year has obviously fallen into two very contrasting halves – because of Coronavirus the Choirs, like so many other musical organisations, now face a challenging future, both during the period of present restrictions and subsequent transition to what may be a 'new normal'.

Over the 2019 Autumn and Christmas periods the Choirs had their accustomed mix of seasonal engagements, performing a wide range of music to a high standard in locations including the Royal Albert Hall, St Martin in the Fields, the Barbican Centre and Claridges Hotel in London. Closer to home the Choirs' undertook their own very successful concerts as well as performing alongside other local groups and assisting charitable fundraising.

Notable performances from this very busy period included:

- celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Girls Choir with a special 'Birthday' reunion concert, alongside the chamber choir Chorus Sirenum and with many former members joining in a special 'Alumni Finale'
- joining with Southend Choral Society and Southend Brass Ensemble in a Concert of Remembrance,
- performing at a civic Holocaust Memorial Day Service to a large audience comprised mainly but not exclusively of members of the local Jewish population
- Christmas services e.g. at St Mary, Woolnoth, one of the famous 'Hawksmoor' City of London churches, alongside other Christmas events in London and locally, including the Mayor of Southend's annual charity concert at Prittlewell Priory
- the Choirs own Christmas concerts, including an entertaining narrated version of 'A Christmas carol', with choir members performing character parts

## **Impact of Coronavirus**

Everything changed of course, with the onset of the crisis over the winter. Under lockdown, rehearsal halted and the Choirs' diary quickly cleared for the rest of the year through necessary cancellations. Sadly, it also became necessary to cancel arrangements in place for the Choirs' 2020 Tour to the USA, although our hosts there have indicated that, if feasible, they would be happy to try to reschedule for 2021.

The priority has been to retain contact online with choir members, including via weekly 'Zoom' rehearsals. Members also participated in a global 'virtual' choir organised through Boston Childrens' Choir in the USA, following which our Choirs were inspired to record their own 'virtual' song, 'We are one'. The high quality of the result enabled it to be posted in support of NHS Charities Together, raising over £1,300 to date. A further recording followed.

Performing online doesn't appeal to all members, and over the Summer it became possible to arrange some limited outdoor rehearsal, in smaller groups. It may be possible later in the

year to have similarly limited indoor rehearsals in venues where appropriate distancing and ventilation can fully satisfy safety requirements currently in force.

As Chair I'd like to put on record Trustees' appreciation of the tireless work by our Musical Director Roger Humphrey & by Rosemary Pennington (supported of course by an excellent team of volunteers) to enable choir members still to have these opportunities for making music together during such difficult circumstances.

## **Volunteers**

Our volunteers are definitely 'key workers' for the choirs' operation in any form. They are DBS checked to ensure safeguarding is at the centre of choir work, with the choirs' specific policies on safeguarding and child protection regularly reviewed to reflect current guidance and any government policy changes. All volunteers and helpers undertake specific safeguarding training - some volunteers are also Southend Council registered chaperones, ensuring a high degree of regard for the welfare of the choristers when they are with the choirs.

## **The future – planning for 're-launch'**

The Trust Board has been giving much thought to how we can be in the best possible position for a successful resumption of activities, whether these can mirror the pre- Covid situation or whether it's necessary to undertake some strategic re-assessment of the Choirs overall goals or methods of operation.

Our first step has been to identify risks facing us, given the continuing uncertainty as to how long the crisis may continue (see 'Financial Review' below re financial aspects):

- a critical risk is that, with an extended break from normal regular rehearsals & opportunities for performance, some current members may over time have developed other interests or commitments and not join a resumption. Alongside retention we will also need to enhance our recruitment & communication methods to reach more widely across local school populations;
- similarly, continuity depends on retaining & recruiting adult volunteers and key choir organisers so that a 're-launch' is possible with potential succession arrangements should we face significant gaps
- our communication channels with all our stakeholders, including supporters and parents as well as members, have been improving gradually via media technology but we have some way to go in raising the Choirs' profile amongst new potential donors, promoters, volunteers (incl. new Trustees!) and supporters.
- Last but definitely not least, we must have an immediate musical focus to re-engage members – Roger and Rosemary are already exploring possibilities for a potential new commission, subject of course to available funding support .

The Trust Board is meeting more frequently (via Zoom) to ensure realistic plans are put in place as soon as feasible to address these areas

## Financial Review

At each of their meetings, the Trustees receive and consider a detailed statement of the CIO's current financial position. Appropriate financial controls are in place, with the Reserves Policy reviewed and updated during the year.

The Trustees consider the financial position for the current year remains satisfactory, with an adequate level of reserves in place, but the Coronavirus crisis will have greater impact as we go forward. Looking at income, we face challenges in relation of each of the CIO's three main sources funding:

- grant income: after 2019/20 annual grant contributions from the local authority towards our running costs will end, following a review of arts expenditure and in light of financial constraints. In future only one-off project based expenditure is likely to qualify for a council grant, although the criteria are not yet finalised. While the CIO is able to source some grant finance elsewhere, this again is generally directed more to one-off events or activities rather than ongoing running costs
- third party fee income for booked performances: this has ceased entirely under lockdown and while in time opportunities should resume there's little likelihood of fulfilling such engagements over the usually busy Christmas period in 2020
- our own fundraising, including donations, our supporters scheme (The '100 club') and income from our own promoted concerts. Again the latter is unlikely to resume for some time while Coronavirus restrictions continue.

Expenditure has of course dropped correspondingly in the absence of concert outgoings and costs of fulfilling external engagements. However, significant one-off costs arose due to the cancellation of the 2020 Tour, with some travel deposits proving irrecoverable and borne by the Trust. These costs were taken into account in calculating available reserves for the year.

Even given a lengthy period of reduced activity it should be possible to absorb small deficits using reserves. But as a full programme is restored across all the choirs, the Trust will need to rebalance its budget through a review across the board, including:

- exploring new external sources of funding to replace former Council funding;
- adjusting the mix of activity to strengthen income generation;
- increasing our own fundraising efforts;
- identifying potential cost savings; and
- reappraising outcomes from policy of charging no membership subscriptions

## Structure, Governance and Management

The Southend Boys and Girls Choirs registered with the Charity Commission in 2007 and reconstituted in May 2015 as a Charitable Incorporated Association ('CIO'). This is a legal form enabling a charity to enter into contracts as a corporate body, rather than, with non-corporate status, trustees bearing individual liability for any contracts they enter into on behalf of the charity.

During the year we had our full complement of 7 Trustees, and held four Trustee meetings during the year.

Trustees are expected to show an active interest in the work and benefits of the choirs, and nominees for appointment are given full briefing about these before being considered. In making successor appointments, Trustees have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience offered towards achieving the effective administration of the CIO.

This year, Trustees reviewed and updated the CIO's formal Reserves Policy.

Chris Walker

Chair of Trustees  
2 November 2020



**SOUTHEND BOYS' CHOIR & SOUTHEND GIRLS' CHOIR TRUST**  
(Registered Charity CIO No. 1161752)

## **Reserves Policy**

### **Introduction**

The Trustees' Reserves Policy is designed to meet the Charity Commission's guidance on reserves in ways that are:

- Applicable to the Trust's charitable objectives and aims, and
- Meaningful to the Choirs, funders and other stakeholders.

### **Definition of Reserves**

Reserves comprise two kinds of unrestricted funds:

- General unrestricted funds which can be applied to any of the Trust's aims and objectives, and
- Designated unrestricted funds – any amounts that the Trustees have earmarked for a particular use

Reserves exclude restricted funds, which are funds that the donor or funder has explicitly given to be applied for a particular purpose or aim and only that purpose or aim (or until sufficient conditions are agreed to be met) e.g. a specific grant, fundraising for a project etc.

### **Reserves Policy**

The Trust has a clear and simple reserves policy which the Trustees regard as essential for sound financial management and forward planning.

Our policy requires an agreed band of reserves to support the Choirs' current activities and plans for the future, as well as providing adequate funding if unexpected events were to occur. It also ensures that the Trust does not hold unrestricted funds unnecessarily. The agreed reserves band is £40,000 to £60,000 with the aim of maintaining an end-of-year position close to the central target of £50,000. The Trustees review the reserves policy at least annually.

The policy is designed to assist the Trustees in:

- Keeping sufficient resources to support the Choirs' current activities and future plans.
- Maintaining a sufficient safety net for the Trust, to remain solvent and re-plan as necessary should significant negative events occur, without retaining excess funds that should be applied to charitable purposes.
- Planning for projects that require significant investment. As well as, re-planning or postponing aspects of a project to later years if the Trust's planning estimates or current events result in forecast reserves being below the agreed band.
- Prompting necessary corrective action in an adequate timescale should the reserves approach the lower or upper limits of the band.

The policy is included in the Trust's Annual Report and Accounts.

December 2019

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of  
The Southend Boys' Choir and Southend Girls' Choir Trust

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act), and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

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


In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that

- proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the Act); and
- accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act; or

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

10th Jan 2021

Laura Clegg M.A.A.T  
Independent Examiner

# Southend Boys' and Southend Girls' Choirs

## Summary of accounts for 01/09/19 -31/08/20

	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Balance B/F</b>			<b>£ 57,797.69</b>
<u>100 Club</u>	-£ 695.00	£ 1,540.00	£ 845.00
<u>Admin</u>	-£ 169.49	£ 94.79	-£ 74.70
<u>Concerts</u>			
5/10/19 - Anniversary Concert	-£ 340.00	£ 1,487.34	£ 1,147.34
20/12/19 - A Christmas Carol	-£ 708.75	£ 780.02	£ 71.27
29/03/20 - Spring Concert	-£ 100.00		-£ 100.00
21/06/20 - Southwold		£ 30.00	£ 30.00
			£ 1,148.61
<u>Donations</u>	£ -	£ 2,113.02	£ 2,113.02
<u>Fees - R&amp;R</u>	-£ 17,300.00	£ -	-£ 17,300.00
<u>General</u>			
hall hire	-£ 1,186.75		-£ 1,186.75
sundries	-£ 3,452.78	£ 482.70	-£ 2,970.08
website	-£ 599.00		-£ 599.00
music	-£ 80.16		-£ 80.16
calendars	-£ 258.00	£ 239.00	-£ 19.00
	-£ 5,576.69	£ 721.70	-£ 4,854.99
<u>Grant</u>			
SBC		£ 11,095.00	£ 11,095.00
<u>Hirings</u>			
Carmina	-£ 757.00	£ 700.00	-£ 57.00
Claridges	-£ 2,866.45	£ 5,460.00	£ 2,593.55
St Mary Woolnoth	-£ 25.58	£ 425.00	£ 399.42
SMiF	-£ 475.00	£ 450.00	-£ 25.00
Barbican	-£ 750.00	£ 800.00	£ 50.00
Royals	-£ 175.00	£ 225.00	£ 50.00
	-£ 5,049.03	£ 8,060.00	£ 3,010.97
Jack Petchey	-£ 220.00	£ 750.00	£ 530.00
Little Singers	-£ 442.50	£ 1,650.00	£ 1,207.50
Step Up	-£ 660.00		-£ 660.00
Tour Fund	-£ 200.00	£ 2,625.27	£ 2,425.27



## Uniform

Boys	-£ 603.37	£ 40.00	-£ 563.37	
Girls	-£ 55.00	£ 400.00	£ 345.00	
Hoodies	-£ 402.00	£ 154.00	-£ 248.00	
	<b>-£ 1,060.37</b>	<b>£ 594.00</b>		<b>-£ 466.37</b>

## US Tour

	-£ 9,000.00	£ 25,000.00		
refunds	-£ 11,900.00	£ 1,650.00		
	<b>-£ 20,900.00</b>	<b>£ 26,650.00</b>		<b>£ 5,750.00</b>

## TOTAL

<b>-£ 53,421.83</b>	<b>£ 58,191.14</b>		<b>£ 4,769.31</b>
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## Brought forward

**£ 57,797.69**

## Balance in Bank

**£ 62,567.00**

## Payments outstanding

Zoom (Chris Wallen) -£ 14.39  
Gift Aid for donation from RP

General includes termly hall hire, music, gifts etc

Admin includes website, postage, bank fees etc

## Individual areas

	<u>B/F</u>	<u>2019 - 20</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Tour Funds	£ 9,061.61	£ 2,425.27	£ 11,486.88
Chorus Sirenum	£ 506.25	£ -	£ 506.25
Jack Petchey	£ 392.93	£ 530.00	£ 922.93
Little Singers	£ 1,080.00	£ 1,207.50	£ 1,238.50
Bursary	£ 5,000.00	£ -	£ 5,000.00