

St Donats Chorale CIO

Chairman's and Trustees' Report for the Eleventh Annual General Meeting, for the year September 2024 to August 2025

This year's report is somewhat different to previous years, as I am sure you will all agree the year has been a little turbulent.

The year started with rehearsals for our Christmas concert and during that period, it became apparent that problems were arising, including falling membership numbers. After the concert the Trustees met and unanimously agreed that we needed to part company with James Bull, our musical director. Not surprisingly he was upset at this decision, but we took the view that it was in the best interests of the choir.

Following James's departure, we were very pleased to engage the services of Stephen Shellard, a process supported in no small part by the Director of the Welsh College of Music and Drama's choral conducting course. The choir has moved into a new era and is evolving, not only with new members joining but also the return of some members who had previously left. Despite his many attempts to play down my role, including frequently commenting on my sartorial choices, Stephen has brought his depth and years of experience in choral singing and conducting to this choir, and we are now in a very different place. The number of new members is testimony to the fun we now all have in choral music rehearsals and concerts, and our understanding of singing has changed dramatically. So thank you Stephen.

I feel it is also very important to recognise Sally Tarlton's unwavering support of the choir, especially through our problems and without her input, and on occasions wise advice to me, we would be in a very different place. So thank you Sally.

After the Christmas concert, we prepared for and sang a more sacred concert as we revisited Holy Cross Church, Cowbridge. This is proving to be a popular venue to perform in, and we had a very appreciative audience. As well as performing choral pieces, including Pergolesi's 'Stabat Mater' and Faure's 'Cantique de Jean Racine', we were really well supported by Sally's solo piece, Philip Aspden on the organ and two visiting soloists from Worcester. Cowbridge seems to be becoming a regular venue for us to perform in and more news about next year's plans for this at a later stage.

Our Summer concert back in St Illtud's church here in Llantwit Major was another success with a varied programme from madrigals through to Bernstein's West Side Story. We welcomed the return of Mathew Welch as our baritone soloist, and we are pleased to be able to see him again at this year's Christmas concert. Sally again supported us both as an accompanist and performing a solo piece.

We have tried to increase our presence on social media and our refreshed website, and I am grateful to those members of the committee and also our general membership for taking time to do this- it really is important to reach as many people as possible about what we do.

Earlier this year Ali, our treasurer, explained that we were heading towards a more challenging financial climate and appealed to members to recognise this and think of innovative ways to bring in more funding. The response to her appeal was overwhelming and perhaps led by Ali at the front gaining significant sponsorship for her walking to choir, we had the sale of fruit preserves, plants, jewellery, bird boxes and other fund-raising efforts- all of which are greatly appreciated. However much this helped as a short-term fix, we need to look to more sustainable funding and Ali will talk about this shortly. As I reported last year our fixed costs are rising whilst our regular income remains static. The key to all of this is choir engagement, both financially and by increasing our membership. It is really heartening

to see so many new members this term. We have a 'Come and Sing' day in November and we hope that this will also encourage new members to come and try us out - hopefully permanently. It would be great to get back to the heady days of over 50 members, and we are well on the way to that. Our singing day is helpfully supported by a £500 grant given to us under the 'Community Small Grants Scheme' and thank you once again to Ali for securing this funding. So it's down to all of you - the choir really is a family in which we all have to play our part and ensure we turn up to rehearsals as much and as frequently as we can.

As always I am hugely grateful to all our professional musicians, Committee members/ Trustees who continue to support me so extensively in my role as Chair. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to run the Chorale, including Sue managing the music, and this should never be underestimated. We are also grateful to David Body who has looked with a professional eye at our constitution and agreed it is certainly fit for purpose. In case anyone is holding back standing for the committee because of fears about Trustees' financial obligations, you do not need to worry. The maximum liability of a Trustee is £1 so please consider standing.

The Trustees and I would like to thank you all, both as professionals and as members of the choir for your commitment to the musical life of Llantwit Major and elsewhere. I hope that this choir continues to offer both friendship and support for members brought together by a love of music.

We will shortly move onto the election of Trustees/Committee members for the year 2025-2026. However, before we do this I would like to revisit something I said at last year's AGM. I did say that after 3 years as chairperson I would be standing down this year and not seeking re-election. Having thought long and hard about this, I have decided that it may be in the best interest of the choir, and in particular our new MD, to provide some stability for another year.

I do not want to continue indefinitely but feel I can continue to offer experience to the choir. Of course, you as members may feel differently and would prefer that someone new takes over. That is your decision which of course I will accept, but I am willing to continue for this year if that is your wish.

Trustees and Committee members during the 2024-25 year were:

Althea Summers (Publicity)	David Body (Tenor Rep)
Peter Dickson (Chairperson)	Chris Evans (Vice-Chair)
Rosemary Samuel (Secretary)	Ali Churchouse (Treasurer)
Rosemary Woodroffe (Alto Rep)	Margaret Owens (Membership Secretary)
Chris Evans (Bass Rep)	Rosemary Samuel (Soprano Rep)
Judith Goldsmith (Concert Manager)	

Dr Peter Dickson, Chairperson, on behalf of the Trustees

October 2025

ST DONATS CHORALE INCOME & EXPENDITURE
ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDING 31st AUGUST 2025

Opening Bank Balance as at 1st September 2024				£	3,040.41
Closing Bank Balance as at 31st August 2025			£	-	£ 5,802.33
Cash in Hand			£	-	£ -
Net Gain for the year				£	2,761.92
Income					
		Subscriptions		£	5,956.00
		Christmas concert profit		£	543.64
		Spring concert profit		£	32.55
		Summer concert profit		£	54.91
		Miscellaneous			
		Loan of the piano		£	50.00
		Tea/Coffee		£	329.24
		Sale of jam/plants/jewellery/bird boxes/CDs		£	334.70
		Sponsored walk		£	788.28
		GiftAid 2023		£	1,239.75
		GiftAid 2024		£	1,088.74
		GVS grant for Come and Sing		£	500.00
				£	10,917.81
Expenses					
		Rehearsal Fees	£	5,940.00	
		Rehearsal Venue	£	1,200.00	
		Miscellaneous			
		Making Music	£	188.00	
		Webservices	£	450.24	
		Net cost of Choir Music	£	308.43	
		New piano and pedal	£	313.50	
		Net cost of scarves/folders	£	55.72	
		Outstanding expenses - Venue Hire	-£	300.00	
				£	8,155.89
		Net Gain		£	2,761.92
Ali Churhouse - Treasurer 15th September 2025					