

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

England & Wales - Charity number 1173799

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2017-07-12

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address Jackson Hall
Portland Place
Hastings
East Sussex
TN34 1QN

Phone 07833581644

Email info@libertychoir.org

Website libertychoir.org

Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE:(1) THE PROMOTION OF THE REHABILITATION OF PRISONERS FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY SETTING UP CHOIRS IN PRISONS AS A MEANS TO BUILD THE SKILLS AND CAPACITY OF OFFENDERS SO THAT THEY CAN BREAK THE CYCLE OF RE-OFFENDING ON RELEASE.(2) TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT AMONGST PEOPLE WHO ARE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED THROUGH THE PROVISION OF A PROGRAMME OF HIGH-QUALITY SINGING DESIGNED TO HELP DEVELOP SKILLS AND SELF-CONFIDENCE WITH THE AIM OF ASSISTING THEM TO INTEGRATE INTO SOCIETY.FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS CLAUSE 'SOCIALLY EXCLUDED' MEANS BEING EXCLUDED FROM SOCIETY, OR PARTS OF SOCIETY, AS A RESULT OF ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS: UNEMPLOYMENT; FINANCIAL HARDSHIP; YOUTH OR OLD AGE; ILL HEALTH (PHYSICAL OR MENTAL); SUBSTANCE ABUSE OR DEPENDENCY INCLUDING ALCOHOL AND DRUGS; POOR EDUCATIONAL OR SKILLS ATTAINMENT; RELATIONSHIP AND FAMILY BREAKDOWN; POOR HOUSING (THAT IS HOUSING THAT DOES NOT MEET BASIC HABITABLE STANDARDS; CRIME (EITHER AS A VICTIM OF CRIME OR AS AN OFFENDER REHABILITATING INTO SOCIETY).

Activities: Promote the rehabilitation of prisoners for the public benefit by setting up choirs in prisons to build the skills and capacity of offenders so that they can break the cycle of re-offending on release.Promote social inclusion amongst socially excluded people by providing a programme of high-quality singing to help develop skills and self-confidence to assist them to integrate into society.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£442,787	£445,941	-	-
2024-12-31	£388,499	£375,207	-	-
2023-12-31	£349,103	£268,006	-	-
2022-12-31	£201,792	£249,822	-	-
2021-12-31	£162,284	£158,484	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Alexandra Felix		2020-07-23
Jennifer Holden		2023-02-22
NICHOLAS LIONEL HARDWICK		2025-09-01
Oliver Huggins		2023-06-16
PAUL WEBSTER		2018-04-26
STEPHEN JOHN MANWARING		2025-03-01

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

England & Wales - Charity number 1173799

Accounts



Liberty Choir UK

Registered Charity Number: 173799

**Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31
December 2025**

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

Trustees Annual Report

For the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025

Full Name: Liberty Choir UK

Legal Structure: Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Foundation Model: Registered charity number 1173799

Principal Address: Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1QN J

Trustees

Paul Webster - elected 2018

Alexandra Felix - elected 2020

Jennifer Holden - elected 2022

Oliver Huggins - elected 2023

Steve Manwaring – elected 2025

Nicholas Hardwick – elected 2025

Founders

MJ Paranzino Ginny Dougary

Bankers

Lloyds Bank, PO Box 132, 1 Butler Place, Westminster SW1H OPR

Independent Examiner

Joseph Greenslade FCCA – Partner

Gibbons Mannington & Phipps LLP, 24 Landgate, Rye, East Sussex TN31 7LJ

Governance and Management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 13 July 2017 and registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Trustees are elected for three years on a rotational basis. Any trustee retiring after their three-year term is eligible for re-election.

The day-to-day running of the organisation is delegated to a team, with the trustees being responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation.

Trustee Induction and Training

The methods adopted for the recruitment and appointment of new trustees are as laid down in the constitution. All potential trustees are interviewed, follow an induction process, and sign an eligibility declaration on election to the position of trustee. Trustees are invited to join the board because of their skills, knowledge and expertise.

All trustees are expected to have experienced the programme and supported fundraising initiatives within the first year of being a trustee.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

The trustees are confident that Charity Commission aims, objectives and activities accommodate a range of activities that are relevant, accessible and affordable and improve and enhance the lives of people, while encouraging and developing partnerships and networks and are in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

Aims and Objectives

Liberty Choir UK is a full-circle charity. Our mission is to transform lives and reduce reoffending through the joy of music and the power of community.

We believe in a future where no-one is thrown away because of their past actions, and everyone has a chance to rebuild their lives

Each week, our professional musicians and local volunteers go into prison to sing alongside the prisoners, creating a safe space that encourages fellowship and camaraderie. The connections formed behind bars continue through the prison gate when the same volunteers, wider Liberty Choir team and partner organisations support these individuals with practical and emotional guidance as they re-enter society.

Liberty Choir's work is taking place against a backdrop of increasing strain on the prison system

A report from November 2025 by Parliament's Justice Committee¹ highlights the profound challenges facing rehabilitation in prisons, including overcrowding, understaffing and limited access to meaningful activity. And the consequences for prisoner wellbeing are catastrophic. Official MoJ statistics published in October 2025² show that violence is escalating, self-harm is commonplace and suicide a constant risk.

Liberty Choir: It Works

Liberty Choir delivers under these conditions. Week after week, despite challenges and red tape, we return, offering prisoners reliability and a sense of hope to counterbalance uncertainty and despair.

Our sessions not only teach musical skills but also foster social bonds, build self-esteem, and provide a sense of community and purpose addressing the multiple challenges faced by prisoners, including mental health issues, social isolation, and lack of purposeful activity.

When we first launched at HMP Send in January 2023, 50% of the women prisoners who came along to our first session were on the At-Risk Register. Within a few weeks every woman who had previously been on the list had come off it. As one participant noted: *"coming to Liberty Choir weekly has really helped stabilise me"*

HMP Send's latest inspection report³ specifically noted Liberty Choir's contribution to the promotion of wellbeing among prisoners.

"That's the beauty of music. Somehow, through the squeaking and squawking, magic happens!"
MJ Paranzino – Liberty Choir Music Programme Director

However, this is just the starting point. What makes Liberty Choir unique is that we work to create community both inside and **outside prison** with our dedicated volunteer network.

One might imagine that release from prison is a blessing for those who have suffered the indignities and humiliations of being locked in a cramped and dehumanising cell smeared with blood and faeces. But the reality for many is that 'outside' is a world which can be even more hostile than the one behind the gates – a world blighted by childhood trauma, mental illness and substance dependency.

On the ‘outside’, newly released prisoners flounder in a system that most believe has set them up to fail. Poor coordination between prisons and the probation service (leading to high profile errors), combined with patchy healthcare, a national housing crisis and a shuddering benefits system vastly increase the likelihood of repeat offending.

And this is where we demonstrate our real strength. With our network of community choirs in the Southeast and London, and potential to grow this support base in other areas, links to other support organisations⁴ and connections to businesses willing to give our graduates (former prisoners and Liberty Choir members) a chance at a paid job, Liberty Choir works with probation services to offer wraparound care that lays several of the cornerstones acknowledged as the foundations of successful rehabilitation: positive relationships and community; education, skills and employment; personal responsibility and self-belief and safety and stability.

Quite simply, as Liberty Choir Graduate, Tendai puts it:

“Liberty Choir represents community, hope and second chances.”

The 2025 Liberty Choir Calendar: In Highlights

Liberty Choir began 2025 working with **ten** prisons throughout the Southeast and Greater London areas. In April 2025, we **expanded our outreach to an eleventh** with our launch at **HMP East Sutton Park in Kent**. This marked our **fourth women’s prison** and a significant step in our pathway to forging a national model.



Later that month, our co-founders were invited to a **reception at Windsor Castle hosted by HM The King**, recognising our contribution among community music makers across the UK.

In the same month, Liberty Choir was featured as a

case study in the latest report from ***The Times Commission on Crime and Punishment***⁵.

With the report being formally launched at a high-profile event attended by 200 senior figures from politics, crime and policing, our inclusion highlighted Liberty Choir as a serious contributor to the national debate on crime, punishment and reform.

Liberty Choir is featured in The Times Crime & Justice Commission Annual Report

“ In Wandsworth prison, metal gates clang and staircases rattle but on one wing the sound of music echoes down the landing as a group of prisoners sing. One inmate is in tears as the voices join together in harmony, a moment of beauty in a world of ugliness. ”

In the report, Liberty Choir Graduate, Roy Mills credits the programme as a key reason he’s stayed out of prison:

“I’ve not been nicked since 2014 so it’s definitely made a difference to me.”

June 2025 marked a defining moment in Liberty Choir’s history with **our first Friends & Family concert in a women’s prison**, held at HMP Send. Invitees included the former High Sheriff of London, Millicent Grant and former Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick. In addition to a full audience of friends, family, the event was marked by the presence of other women prisoners from the wings who came to watch and support their friends.

Friends & Family performances embody the three aims at the core of Liberty Choir's mission: building community within prisons, sustaining that community beyond release, and engaging the wider public by shining a spotlight on life behind the bars.

"I was so glad my visitor could make it. That was really special. When leaving he even kissed my hand, which made me feel seen and respected. The whole thing just made me feel like a human not a prisoner for 2hrs." Shelby – Liberty Choir Participant at HMP Send.



"I am full of admiration for what you have achieved and indeed for the women who took part. You could see the difference it made to them right in front of you as the concert progressed." Nick Hardwick (Former Chief Inspector of Prisons) - Friends & Family Concert, HMP Send, June 2025



In June, the Liberty Choir story reached 240,000 print readers and 700,000 online viewers in the **BBC Music Magazine**⁶ that featured us as part of a wider piece on community music-making in prisons.

In August, the **Dame Anne Owers' Prison Capacity Review** was published: a government-commissioned assessment of how England and Wales intend to manage the crisis around prison overcrowding. Liberty Choir was a contributor alongside other Criminal Justice charities and representatives from His Majesty's Prison & Probation Service.

In the early Autumn, senior leadership and trustees came together to map **Liberty Choir's strategic direction for the next five years**. This period of reflection and planning has informed the development of a new strategic

framework and supporting materials, laying the foundations for Liberty Choir to become a national model.

October saw us stage our **first Friends & Family concert at HMP Wandsworth since COVID.**

Wandsworth is where Liberty Choir began in April 2014. Where the idea first took root that singing side by side could change prisoners' lives for the better.



That was twelve years ago. And, although our face-to-

face delivery resumed as soon as lockdown restrictions were finally lifted, our Friends & Family concerts (which had formerly been an annual fixture of the prison calendar) remained silent for over 5 years.



The aftermath of the pandemic left Wandsworth, like many prisons, short-staffed and strained. To re-establish a weekly programme was one thing. To stage a full Friends & Family concert with guests, food, decorations and live performance in one of the country's busiest and most pressured prisons where all but the most essential of activities are still severely limited - that required belief on every side. Moreover, it required persistence; a quality that Liberty Choir has become famous for.

At Wandsworth, a significant number of Liberty Choir graduates braved stepping back inside the prison gates.

A couple of these graduates came to the front and spoke with great courage and emotion about their time in prison, and the lasting impact Liberty Choir has had on their lives. These testimonies were deeply moving for the audience: prisoners and guests alike.

October also saw Liberty Choir's co-founders invited to speak at the **Weston Charity Awards** (see photo), addressing more than fifty charity leaders. This invitation reflected Liberty Choir's role not only as a delivery organisation, but as a contributor to learning and leadership across the sector.

November brought with it one of our proudest moments. Liberty Choir was awarded the **2025 Longford Prize**.



The award ceremony was attended by a former Liberty Choir participant on day release from an open prison, who has been supported by Liberty Choir in gaining a Level 6 Royal Society of Musicians Award in Singing Performance while still serving his sentence. His presence embodied proof — also reflected in the work of the Longford Trust — that belief and opportunity can lead to powerful outcomes.

Our work was further reinforced in the final quarter of 2025 with the formative meeting of the **Liberty Choir Advisory Council (LCAC)**. The LCAC will help to shape Liberty Choir's governance, culture and direction — bringing those we seek to support into the heart of the organisation.

2025 also saw us strengthen our governance with Steve Manwaring (CEO of the HVA) and Nick Hardwick, former Chief Inspector of Prisons, joining the Board. Their appointment has brought



invaluable insight and experience to the team at a pivotal time as we move towards a national model.

2025 concluded with a Christmas concert performed by MJ's choirs, including Liberty Choir graduates, at the Brighton Pavilion — a fitting festive finale to the year.

Fundraising

2025 was a record year for fundraising, with income growth commensurate with our expanding activity and reach. Alongside continued support from established multi-year funders such as the Garfield Weston Foundation, Bromley Trust, Tedworth Trust, Maria Björnsen Memorial Fund and the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner, we were grateful for repeat annual grants from the Arts Council England and the National Lottery Awards for All scheme, among others. We also welcomed several new grants supporting specific prison programmes, including funding from the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner for our Southwest pilot at HMP Guys Marsh and from the Lawson Trust for HMP East Sutton Park. In such a tough funding climate, we feel fortunate to welcome sixteen new funders to the work of [Liberty Choir](#) – see our website for a full list.

A number of smaller funders, both long-standing and new, chose to sponsor Friends & Family events - the Victoria Wood Foundation sponsored the concert at Send and the Forte Charitable Foundation funded the performance at Wandsworth – while others provided vital core funding. We were particularly grateful for several unsolicited gifts of this kind received in the final quarter of the year. This flexible funding is crucial to our operations, enabling us to respond quickly and direct support where it is most needed.

December 2025 saw another successful Big Give Christmas Challenge. The campaign raised just under **£75,000** with Gift Aid and figures showed a significant number of new supporters who contributed to over a third of the overall income. As every year, the Big Give 2025 has given us the financial springboard to leap with confidence into a new year. And, as always, it is a magnificent testament to the creativity, commitment and generosity of our ambassadors, Liberty Choir team, volunteers and supporters.

Fundraising activity began early with the *Circle of Liberty* - a gala performance by choirs (including Liberty Choir) in St George's Church in Ramsgate, led by Liberty Choir Ambassadors Ross Bell and his wife Vicky.

Other fundraisers followed - a Beauty Parlour event, sporting challenges, arts and craft sales and social media engagement including personal appeals that helped widen public awareness beyond our usual networks— from our Business Manager dressing in period bonnets throughout the Christmas Challenge to our Prison Music Director using British Sign Language to 'sing' Mariah Carey's *All I Want for Christmas*.



Impact and value

On the Inside

Over the course of 2025, Liberty Choir delivered a total of 392 sessions, generating **2,393** attendances, many from regular participants. Rehearsals are frequently described as a highlight of the week, valued not as an 'escape' but as a space where individuals feel they are treated as human beings rather than prisoners:

"I've been in Prison for a very long time and can honestly say it's the best thing I've ever done being inside! I felt like a human being and treated as an equal, as if I wasn't inside."

Poppy - Liberty Choir Participant at HMP Send

Liberty Choir in The Observer

Paul Webster, Liberty Choir trustee, gives a powerful account of his experience volunteering in a London prison for one of our weekly programmes which he signed up to do on retiring from his editorship of The Observer.

“ Into this toxic mess Liberty Choir brings some relief and humanity, inspired by a belief that singing together can encourage empathy and co-operation, build relationships that might thrive outside prison, and remind ourselves that humans are social beings and part of wider collectives, whatever their individual flaws. ”

Published: Sunday 2 November 2025

Liberty Choir's impact is not limited to immediate participants: prisoners and volunteers. What follows is a ripple effect that spreads out to others on the inside and beyond the prison gates.

In the prison wings, staff-prisoner perceptions visibly shift contributing to a safer and more harmonious environment overall.

As Helen, a prisoner at HMP Send commented after the Friends & Family concert there in June 2025: *"The officers were talking to us differently. One officer who is usually really 'aggy', is now more chatty with us, and looking out for us more after the Concert. He knew about a previous bad experience I had had in another prison, and is now looking out for me with my healthcare etc. A definite shift in attitude."*

On the Outside

Families of Liberty Choir participants tell us about the reassurance they feel knowing that their loved one is engaged in something worthwhile and positive whilst, at the same time, providing them with a joyful topic of conversation for visiting time.

As our prison outreach expands, so do our number of graduates – we now have upwards of 130 men and women who contact us on release. At this crucial time in their rehabilitation, Liberty Choir not only offers a listening ear and a supportive shoulder but practical help in navigating the world beyond the prison gates.

“On release, Liberty Choir continued to walk beside me. That continuity has been vital in helping me to rebuild my life with confidence. I know I would not be where I am today without the support it continues to provide”

Tendai - Liberty Choir Graduate

In the Wider Community



The most significant impact is a reduction in reoffending. Of those graduates who remain in touch with us, only 2.8% versus the national average of 48% have returned to prison having reoffended.

“In the criminal justice system, we consider that each prisoner who does not reoffend has a positive impact on at least 100 people in the community.”

Ian Bickers – Former
Governor of HMP
Wandsworth

“I am forever indebted to Liberty Choir, for I can surely say – the singing saved me”

Stuart – Liberty Choir Graduate 2016

Looking ahead to 2026 – The road to national expansion

2026 is already shaping up to be an exciting year for Liberty Choir; the groundwork for continued expansion has been laid; in the autumn of 2025, Liberty Choir's Board of Trustees met with senior leadership to agree the basis of a 5-year Plan for the charity and to develop a Theory of Change. This will be published in an updated brochure in spring 2026.

To underpin our long-term plans, we will be looking to enhance and develop our funding mechanisms to ensure that we sustain our existing programmes alongside planned growth.

In 2026, we're launching the Liberty Choir programme in a new region. A ten-week pilot in our **twelfth prison**, HMP Guys Marsh in Dorset in the Southwest of England is due to begin in late January. This has been financed by the prison itself and the **Office of the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner**. These tentative steps are just the beginning of our national growth plans. We are also in active discussion with new prisons in the Southwest and Central regions and Kent.

The return of our Friends & Family concert at HMP Wandsworth in 2025 was significant in many ways but especially in that it saw a palpable shift in energy within the prison; staff volunteered their own time to support it and undertook tasks beyond their normal remit to make sure that everything went smoothly.



In 2026, as well as re-establishing Friends & Family performances as a regular part of the prison calendar as at Wandsworth, we are planning to host repeat and new performances, reconnecting families as they struggle to cope with the harsh realities of imposed separation. As each concert becomes its own success story, the underlying formula is strengthened and demand grows, paving the way towards a scalable national model.

2025 saw our graduate numbers increase almost weekly. In 2026 we will build upon our existing support network to consolidate and enhance our 'through-the-gate' offering for these graduates. Crucially, we will be building on the foundations we have already laid for our Liberty Choir Advisory Council.

Throughout 2025, Liberty Choir has been working with Confluence Partnerships on a longitudinal study collating data from a cross-section of our prison programmes and interviews with our graduates to evidence the human impact of Liberty Choir. Results are expected in spring 2026.

Conclusion

Despite sustained pressure within the sector, Liberty Choir continues to make a marked contribution to creative rehabilitation, demonstrating resilience and determination in our long-term goal to bring music and community to every prisoner in the UK.

Thanks to strong leadership, an engaged Board and a committed volunteer and supporter base, we are well placed to sustain our current prison programmes and to pursue carefully managed growth during 2026 in line with our developing 5-year strategy.

Risks and Risk Management

The Charity Trustees regularly review and assess the risks faced by the charity in all areas of its work and plan for the management of those risks. Risk is an everyday part of charitable activity and managing it effectively is essential if the trustees are to achieve their key objectives and safeguard the charity's funds and assets.

The Trustees have discussed and set a risk framework that allows them to:

- Identify the major risks that apply to the charity.
- Make decisions about how to respond to the risks they face.

The Trustees have considered:

- Governance risk, including strategy and direction.
- Operational risk, including staff and volunteer safety.
- Financial risk, including cash flow, reserves and diversity of income.
- Environmental risk, including government policy and public perception.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring Liberty Choir is financially resilient and able to deliver consistent, high-quality services. Given the time and complexity involved in establishing our presence in prisons, we should seek to maintain reserves equivalent to three months of operational costs to ensure that we can maintain our key services and respond to periods of unforeseen challenge. We will manage our reserves position through regular monitoring by officers in collaboration with the Treasurer; detailed financial reporting at every Board meeting, including a specific reference to the level of any reserves and any significant changes; liaison with our Auditor/Independent Examiner to review the level of reserves (and this policy) at year end. This policy will be reviewed annually and levels adjusted as necessary.

Financial Review

The charity received income during the accounting period totalling £442,787 and overall had a loss for the year of £3,154. At the end of the accounting period the charity held funds totalling £134,356 of which £51,558 are held for restricted purposes. The remaining unrestricted reserves of £82,798 exceeds the amount stated in the reserves policy agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees on 21 April 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

O Huggins – Trustee

References

- 1 [‘Dire’ prison conditions putting rehabilitation and reoffending reduction ‘at risk’, Justice Committee warns - Committees - UK Parliament](#)
- 2 [Safety in Custody Statistics, England and Wales: Deaths in Prison Custody to September 2025 Assaults and Self-harm to June 2025 - GOV.UK](#)
- 3 [HMP Send's Latest Inspection Report](#)
- 4 National Prison Radio, the Right Reverend Rachel Treweek (Anglican Bishop for HM Prisons in England & Wales), Divert (Bounceback), PACT, Trailblazers, St Giles Trust, Kent Opera, and Amit Suji of My Options (ex-prisoner job hub).
- 5 [TCJC Full Report Download](#)
- 6 [BBC Music Magazine \(June 2025\) - Redemption Song](#)
- 7 [What I learned singing with prisoners every week](#)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF LIBERTY CHOIR UK

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Liberty Choir UK ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by Section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of Section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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 in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

J J Greenslade FCCA
The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Gibbons Mannington & Phipps LLP
Chartered Accountants
Landgate Chambers
24 Landgate
Rye
East Sussex
TN31 7LJ

Date: 23 April 2026

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total funds £	<i>2024 Total funds £</i>
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		244,166	197,021	441,187	388,499
Other trading activities	3	1,600	-	1,600	-
Total		245,766	197,021	442,787	388,499
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds		5,454	-	5,454	7,056
Charitable activities					
Charitable Activities		244,099	187,489	431,588	367,451
Other		1,624	7,275	8,899	700
Total		251,177	194,764	445,941	375,207
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(5,411)	2,257	(3,154)	13,292
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		88,209	49,301	137,510	124,218
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		82,798	51,558	134,356	137,510

The notes form part of these financial statements

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

**BALANCE SHEET
31 DECEMBER 2025**

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total funds £	<i>2024 Total funds £</i>
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	7	4,171	-	4,171	2,099
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	8	32,735	-	32,735	63,368
Cash at bank		50,017	51,558	101,575	80,264
		82,752	51,558	134,310	143,632
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	9	(4,125)	-	(4,125)	(8,221)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		78,627	51,558	130,185	135,411
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		82,798	51,558	134,356	137,510
NET ASSETS		82,798	51,558	134,356	137,510
FUNDS	10				
Unrestricted funds				82,798	88,209
Restricted funds				51,558	49,301
TOTAL FUNDS				134,356	137,510

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 December 2025.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 21 April 2026 and were signed on its behalf by:

O Huggins - Trustee

1. STATUTORY INFORMATION

Liberty Choir UK is a charitable incorporated organisation, registered in England and Wales. The charity's registered number and principle address can be found in the Report of the Trustees.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF PREPARING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: 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 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to make an assessment of the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. On the basis of these forecasts and the fact that the charity has substantial net current assets and net assets, the trustees are confident that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence and to meet its liabilities as they fall due for the foreseeable future. As a result of the above, the trustees have concluded that it remains appropriate to adopt a going concern basis of preparation in these financial statements.

INCOME

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

EXPENDITURE

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost 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.

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Music equipment	- 25% on cost
Computer equipment	- 25% on cost

TAXATION

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

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 restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**
3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2025	2024
	£	£
Fundraising events	<u>1,600</u>	<u>-</u>

4. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2025	2024
	£	£
Independent examiners' remuneration	3,468	2,722
Depreciation - owned assets	<u>1,623</u>	<u>700</u>

5. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 December 2025 nor for the year ended 31 December 2024.

TRUSTEES' EXPENSES

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 December 2025 nor for the year ended 31 December 2024.

6. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	<u>237,243</u>	<u>151,256</u>	<u>388,499</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	6,350	706	7,056
Charitable activities			
Charitable Activities	184,572	182,879	367,451
Other	<u>700</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>700</u>
Total	<u>191,622</u>	<u>183,585</u>	<u>375,207</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	45,621	(32,329)	13,292
Transfers between funds	<u>(5,000)</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	40,621	(27,329)	13,292
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	<u>47,588</u>	<u>76,630</u>	<u>124,218</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u><u>88,209</u></u>	<u><u>49,301</u></u>	<u><u>137,510</u></u>

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Music equipment £	Computer equipment £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 January 2025	-	2,799	2,799
Additions	893	2,802	3,695
At 31 December 2025	893	5,601	6,494
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 January 2025	-	700	700
Charge for year	223	1,400	1,623
At 31 December 2025	223	2,100	2,323
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 December 2025	670	3,501	4,171
At 31 December 2024	-	2,099	2,099

8. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 £	2024 £
Other debtors	14,335	9,118
Accrued income	18,400	54,250
	32,735	63,368

9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	1,227	5,461
Accrued expenses	2,898	2,760
	4,125	8,221

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/1/25 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/12/25 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	88,209	(5,411)	82,798
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	-	2,033	2,033
Fishmongers	1,925	(1,925)	-
OPCC Surrey	30,697	(5,093)	25,604
Network for Social Change	7,431	(351)	7,080
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP Lewes	4,248	(686)	3,562
Victoria Wood - Brixton F&F	5,000	(5,000)	-
Clarion Housing	-	5,000	5,000
Cobtree Charity Trust	-	1,700	1,700
David Family Foundation	-	1,227	1,227
Henry Oldfield Trust	-	2,000	2,000
Wimbledon Foundation	-	3,352	3,352
	49,301	2,257	51,558
TOTAL FUNDS	137,510	(3,154)	134,356

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	245,766	(251,177)	(5,411)
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	69,873	(67,840)	2,033
Fishmongers	-	(1,925)	(1,925)
OPCC Surrey	30,000	(35,093)	(5,093)
Network for Social Change	7,080	(7,431)	(351)
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP Lewes	7,443	(8,129)	(686)
Victoria Wood - Brixton F&F	-	(5,000)	(5,000)
Clarion Housing	5,000	-	5,000
Cobtree Charity Trust	2,500	(800)	1,700
Colyer Ferguson CPN	5,000	(5,000)	-
Community Foundation for Surrey	10,000	(10,000)	-
D'Oyly Carte	6,000	(6,000)	-
David Family Foundation	5,000	(3,773)	1,227
Forte	5,000	(5,000)	-
Henry Oldfield Trust	2,000	-	2,000
Landsec Community Grants	3,000	(3,000)	-
Lawson Trust	4,000	(4,000)	-
Lewes Town Council	1,000	(1,000)	-
Local Initiative Fund - Islington	4,125	(4,125)	-
The National Lottery	20,000	(20,000)	-
Wimbledon Foundation	10,000	(6,648)	3,352
	197,021	(194,764)	2,257
TOTAL FUNDS	442,787	(445,941)	(3,154)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025
10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued**Comparatives for movement in funds**

	At 1/1/24 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/12/24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	47,588	45,621	(5,000)	88,209
Restricted funds				
Arts Council	20,021	(20,021)	-	-
Fishmongers	-	1,925	-	1,925
Bowerman	7,026	(7,026)	-	-
OPCC Surrey	30,000	697	-	30,697
Serco	6,883	(6,883)	-	-
Sodexo	12,700	(12,700)	-	-
Network for Social Change	-	7,431	-	7,431
Pentonville Programme	-	(5,000)	5,000	-
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP Lewes	-	4,248	-	4,248
Victoria Wood - Brixton F&F	-	5,000	-	5,000
	<u>76,630</u>	<u>(32,329)</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>49,301</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>124,218</u>	<u>13,292</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>137,510</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	237,243	(191,622)	45,621
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	41,702	(61,723)	(20,021)
Fishmongers	10,000	(8,075)	1,925
Bowerman	15,000	(22,026)	(7,026)
OPCC Surrey	30,000	(29,303)	697
Serco	22,916	(29,799)	(6,883)
Sodexo	-	(12,700)	(12,700)
Chalk Cliff	5,000	(5,000)	-
Marchus Trust	5,000	(5,000)	-
Network for Social Change	7,431	-	7,431
Pentonville Programme	4,959	(9,959)	(5,000)
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP Lewes	4,248	-	4,248
Victoria Wood - Brixton F&F	5,000	-	5,000
	<u>151,256</u>	<u>(183,585)</u>	<u>(32,329)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>388,499</u>	<u>(375,207)</u>	<u>13,292</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1/1/24 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/12/25 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	47,588	40,210	(5,000)	82,798
Restricted funds				
Arts Council	20,021	(17,988)	-	2,033
Bowerman	7,026	(7,026)	-	-
OPCC Surrey	30,000	(4,396)	-	25,604
Serco	6,883	(6,883)	-	-
Sodexo	12,700	(12,700)	-	-
Network for Social Change	-	7,080	-	7,080
Pentonville Programme	-	(5,000)	5,000	-
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP Lewes	-	3,562	-	3,562
Clarion Housing	-	5,000	-	5,000
Cobtree Charity Trust	-	1,700	-	1,700
David Family Foundation	-	1,227	-	1,227
Henry Oldfield Trust	-	2,000	-	2,000
Wimbledon Foundation	-	3,352	-	3,352
	<u>76,630</u>	<u>(30,072)</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>51,558</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>124,218</u></u>	<u><u>10,138</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>134,356</u></u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	483,009	(442,799)	40,210
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	111,575	(129,563)	(17,988)
Fishmongers	10,000	(10,000)	-
Bowerman	15,000	(22,026)	(7,026)
OPCC Surrey	60,000	(64,396)	(4,396)
Serco	22,916	(29,799)	(6,883)
Sodexo	-	(12,700)	(12,700)
Chalk Cliff	5,000	(5,000)	-
Marchus Trust	5,000	(5,000)	-
Network for Social Change	14,511	(7,431)	7,080
Pentonville Programme	4,959	(9,959)	(5,000)
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP Lewes	11,691	(8,129)	3,562
Victoria Wood - Brixton F&F	5,000	(5,000)	-
Clarion Housing	5,000	-	5,000
Cobtree Charity Trust	2,500	(800)	1,700
Colyer Ferguson CPN	5,000	(5,000)	-
Community Foundation for Surrey	10,000	(10,000)	-
D'Oyly Carte	6,000	(6,000)	-
David Family Foundation	5,000	(3,773)	1,227
Forte	5,000	(5,000)	-
Henry Oldfield Trust	2,000	-	2,000
Landsec Community Grants	3,000	(3,000)	-
Lawson Trust	4,000	(4,000)	-
Lewes Town Council	1,000	(1,000)	-
Local Initiative Fund - Islington	4,125	(4,125)	-
The National Lottery	20,000	(20,000)	-
Wimbledon Foundation	10,000	(6,648)	3,352
	<u>348,277</u>	<u>(378,349)</u>	<u>(30,072)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>831,286</u>	<u>(821,148)</u>	<u>10,138</u>

Description of Restricted Funds

Arts Council - Core costs at Wandsworth, Pentonville, Lewes

Bowerman - HMP Lewes - Music Team costs - their fees and expenses

Chalk Cliff Trust - Core costs at HMP Lewes

Clarion Housing - Costs associated with Friends & Family Concert held at HMP Pentonville

Cobtree Charity Trust - Core costs at HMP East Sutton Park

Colyer Ferguson CPN - Core costs at HMP East Sutton Park

Community Foundation for Surrey - Core costs associated with any of the Surrey prisons

10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

David Family Foundation - Core costs at HMP Pentonville

D'Oyly Carte - General expenditure in relation to weekly prison choirs and vital post-release support

Fishmongers - Part-funding for salary of Partnerships and Operations role (duties subsumed by Business Manager - Shiv)

Forte - Costs associated with Friends & Family Concert held at HMP Wandsworth

Henry Oldfield Trust - Peer mentoring

Landsec Community Grants - Core costs at HMP Wandsworth

Lawson Trust - Core costs at HMP East Sutton Park

Lewes Town Council - Support weekly choir at HMP Lewes

Local Initiative Fund-Islington - Choir programme at HMP Pentonville

Marchus Trust - Costs associated with Friends & Family Concert held at HMP Coldingley

Network for Social Change - Costs associated with Evaluation Report including Confluence Partnership fees

OPCC Surrey - Surrey Prisons - Core costs associated with any of the Surrey prisons: Bronzefield, Coldingley, Send, High Down and Downview

Pentonville Programme - Core costs at HMP Pentonville

SERCO - HMP Thameside - Core costs at HMP Thameside

SODEXO - HMP Bronzefield - Core costs at HMP Bronzefield

Sussex Community Foundation - Core costs at HMP Lewes

The National Lottery - Core costs at HMP Brixton, HMP High Down, HMP Downview, HMP Send

Victoria Wood - Costs associated with Friends & Family Concert at HMP Send

Wimbledon Foundation - Funding towards a creative and supportive rehabilitation programme to be delivered at HMP Wandsworth

11. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

During the accounting period the charity received donations from Trustees totalling £5,000. There were no conditions placed upon these donations.

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

England & Wales - Charity number 1173799

Accounts



Liberty Choir UK

Registered Charity Number: 173799

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

Liberty Choir UK
Contents of the Financial Statements For
the Year Ended 31st December 2024

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LIBERTY CHOIR UK



Trustees Annual Report

For the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024

Full Name: Liberty Choir UK

Legal Structure: Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Foundation Model: Registered charity number 1173799

Principal Address: Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1QN J

Trustees

Paul Webster - elected 2018

Alexandra Felix - elected 2020

Jennifer Holden - elected 2022

Oliver Huggins - elected 2023

Steve Manwaring – elected 2025

Founders

MJ Paranzino

Ginny Dougary

Bankers

Lloyds Bank, PO Box 132, 1 Butler Place, Westminster SW1H 0PR

Independent Examiner

Joseph Greenslade FCCA – Partner

Gibbons Mannington & Phipps LLP, 24 Landgate, Rye, East Sussex TN31 7LJ

Governance and Management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 13 July 2017 and registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Trustees are elected for three years on a rotational basis. Any trustee retiring after their three-year term is eligible for re-election.

The day-to-day running of the organisation is delegated to a team, with the trustees being responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation.

Trustee Induction and Training

The methods adopted for the recruitment and appointment of new trustees are as laid down in the constitution. All potential trustees are interviewed, follow an induction process, and sign an eligibility declaration on election to the position of trustee. Trustees are invited to join the board because of their skills, knowledge and expertise.

All trustees are expected to have experienced the programme and supported fundraising initiatives within the first year of being a trustee.

Aims and Objectives

[Liberty Choir](#) is a full-circle charity whose work starts and ends in the community. 2024 marked our 10th anniversary of operations, bringing dedicated volunteers from community choirs into prison to sing alongside the prisoners, every week, encouraging teamwork, positive relationships and learning around basic literacy and numeracy skills. When the choir's Graduates (ex-prisoners) re-enter society they are supported by the same choir volunteers and team.

Liberty Choir believes that everyone deserves a second chance at life; everyone has the potential to change for the better. We exist to unlock that potential and reconnect prisoners with society by providing a safe, non-judgmental environment where prisoners can engage with each other and the volunteers from the outside in a purposeful, cohesive manner. In this way, prisoners develop an increased awareness of their impact on others and the wider environment which, in turn, helps them to make a better transition into the community on release. By creating a community in prison which is replicated on the outside, we give people in prison continuity between incarceration and release and a social network unconnected to the reasons they were in prison.

Brainchild of co-founders MJ Paranzino and Ginny Dougary, since our inception in 2014, Liberty Choir has sung with over 2000+ prisoners in London, Surrey and East Sussex. It is an experience that transforms lives - not just those of the prisoners themselves, but also those of their families and their wider communities.

The reoffending rate of our Graduates is impressively low (2.8%) in comparison to the national average (48%). We are currently working with Confluence Partnerships on a year-long formal evaluation of our project and hoping to have the input and support of the Royal Society of Statisticians to strengthen the evidence of the impact of our work.

On the outside, Liberty Choir is in touch with over 110 of our Graduates; men and women who have sought us out, recognising the lifeline we offer in helping them navigate the challenges of life on the other side of the bars. Their lived experience is invaluable as an informal advisory board for the Liberty Choir programme delivery. Half of our Ambassadors are Graduates of the Liberty Choir programme which demonstrates a real conviction for what we do.

Life after prison for Liberty Choir Graduates holds many opportunities for change and progression. In addition to being welcomed into our community choirs where they are embraced by the same volunteers who sang with them weekly in prison, Liberty Choir also offers Graduates the chance to perform publicly in prestigious venues such as Highclere Castle, the V&A and (this year) the Music Room in the Brighton Pavillion. These experiences help our Graduates to continue to build their self-confidence and interact with society in a way that they may not have been able to before.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

The trustees are confident that Charity Commission aims, objectives and activities accommodate a range of activities that are relevant, accessible and affordable and improve and enhance the lives of people, while encouraging and developing partnerships and networks and are in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

With prisons at capacity and prison officers leaving their posts in high numbers due to stress, Liberty Choir fills a vital gap in the current prison provision. We offer maximum impact with minimum demands on prison staff as both Liberty Choir staff and volunteers are radio and key trained, making their movement through the prison both secure and efficient.

"I hold a set of keys. But it is organisations like this that open a lot of doors. If we didn't give men and ladies (who get into those situations) hope and an opportunity for a different option, I would be lost.

I implore you to back this organisation – it IS making a difference"

Lee Jones - Custodial Manager at HMP Coldingley since 1994 – speaking at our 10th Anniversary Celebrations

Liberty Choir saves lives. Heralded as one of the most effective voluntary activities by prisons, Liberty Choir is used by prison governors to target their most vulnerable inmates, such as those at risk of suicide or self-harm and young prisoners in gangs.

HMP Send confirmed that all the women on the risk register prior to joining Liberty Choir had all come off it within weeks of participating in the weekly rehearsals.

"My only regret is that Liberty Choir is not in every prison in the land"

Eddie – Liberty Choir Volunteer and Supporter since 2014

Liberty Choir transforms lives. It can be easy for those who are not persuaded by the transformative power of the arts to dismiss a charity like Liberty Choir as something nice and 'fluffy' – a couple of hours break from the tedium of being locked in a 6' x 12' cell for 23 hours a day - but that would be a mistake, because we have shown ourselves to be a gritty force for change, helping prisoners regain the self-confidence and self-worth which serve to underpin their successful rehabilitation when released.

"At the darkest moment in my life, Liberty Choir helped my transformation to becoming a better person that has since led to a better life, one that has been more purposeful to myself and my family and all those around me."

Ross Bell – Liberty Choir Graduate & Ambassador



Liberty Choir starts and ends with community. In touch with 110 Graduates and working with 100+ community volunteers, Liberty Choir's mission is to reconnect and reintegrate those men and women - marginalised through imprisonment - with society for the benefit of all. One of the ways that we strive to enhance this aspect of our work is through Friends & Family Concerts. These performances play a key role in changing lives and shifting opinions by:

- *Giving prisoners the opportunity to show themselves in a different light to their own visitors as well as prison staff as they demonstrate a newfound pride and purpose in their lives.*
- *Providing a gateway to public performing in the wider community when released.*
- *Helping prisoners build up their self-esteem and confidence and develop skills that will prepare them to face the inevitable challenges of rejection and/or ostracism when they are released.*
- *Allowing prisoners to nurture the vital relationships with family and friends that will provide the essential foundations required for successful rehabilitation.*

According to the MoJ Farmer Review (2017), the odds of reoffending are 39% lower for prisoners who receive visits from family members.

Liberty Choir hosted two Friends and Family concerts in 2024: a debut performance at HMP Brixton in March and a fourth at HMP Coldingley in September. The first Friends and Family concert in a female prison has been requested for March 2025 by the Governor of HMP Send.

Impact Statement

We know from the many personal testimonies of prisoners and Graduates (we remain in touch with over 110) that Liberty Choir has a significant impact on the lives of prisoners and their families. To evidence the transformational effects of our programme on its beneficiaries including a reduced risk of re-offending and a generally more positive outlook on life, we have commissioned a year-long independent evaluation by [Confluence Partnerships](#) of both serving prisoners and Graduates.

This formalised evaluation project will focus on measuring the degree to which participants:

- Experience an improvement in their mental health and wellbeing
- Experience improved confidence and self-esteem
- Develop transferable pro-social skills that would be useful for and facilitate engagement with ETE activities/ Use their developed social skills to engage with positive, meaningful activities post release
- Have a more positive vision for themselves and their future/ Retain and sustain a more positive vision for themselves and their future

Liberty Choir's Living Testament

In October this year, we celebrated 10 years of our work in prisons by holding a party in The Bedford Pub in Balham - long-time supporter of Liberty Choir. Joined by friends, benefactors and supporters from across the years, we were honoured to also welcome many of our Graduates who wanted to pay their respects and give thanks for the huge difference Liberty Choir has made to their lives. We were lucky to be able to record some of the birthday greetings of our guests on camera; words of love and appreciation that are a living testament to the real impact of Liberty Choir.

"Thank you so much for saving me. You gave me something to hold onto in a really terrible time in my life"

Eric – Liberty Choir Graduate

"I didn't know which way was up or down. I was borderline suicidal. Liberty Choir helped me get through that. They made every day worth living"

Kristian – Liberty Choir Graduate

"I have seen what a difference Liberty Choir makes. One prisoner explained to me that it was the only place he could feel like a human being and be himself"

Jenny Agutter – Liberty Choir Ambassador

That same evening, a most touching speech was delivered by the former chaplain of HMP Wandsworth, Tim Bryant who met Liberty Choir during our very first programme there in 2014. Tim worked hard to facilitate our work in Wandsworth which is one of the largest prisons in Europe. Showing true grit and determination, Tim was even known to go and fetch prisoners from the farthest wings of the prison because he was keenly aware that this activity was the difference between hope and despair. One of those prisoners was Ross Bell – now professional musician, Liberty Choir Graduate & Ambassador and 'fundraiser extraordinaire'.



“Lives are changed because people like Liberty Choir are prepared to love even in circumstances where you would say ‘why?’. ‘Why would 20 people go into a rat-infested Victorian jail and sit with people they don’t know and embrace them?’ The guys were suspicious, thinking ‘why do you think better of me than I think of myself?’ It is because there is something deep inside us called compassion – and Liberty Choir is an example – whether you believe or not, this is the Gospel – this is love in action.”

Tim Bryant – Former Chaplain of HMP Wandsworth

From the feedback we have received from families and friends of prisoners, we know that our impact has been life changing, and sometimes lifesaving.

“At the most difficult and distressing phase of Ross's prison sentence, Liberty Choir was able to do something for Ross that I couldn't. They could get into the prison and make sure he was alright. I called them my "Avatars". They gave him a safe space and something to look forward to each week, which in Wandsworth was no mean feat. I will never be able to fully express how much comfort and relief that gave to me and our children, to know that he had contact with the outside world, with people who were there with the sole purpose to connect with him and offer unconditional support and positivity.”

Vicky Ross – Wife of Ross Bell & Liberty Choir Ambassador

Karl – The Story of a Young Offender

Karl is a young offender (early 20s) who had completely retreated into himself upon imprisonment, rejecting all communication with family and interacting seldomly and reluctantly with other prisoners and prison staff. However, involvement with Liberty Choir brought about a gradual but significant and perceivable change. Eventually, Karl broke away from the reticence which had been his shield against prison life up until then and reached out to his grandmother with whom he had previously had a particularly strong relationship. Extending this olive branch was his first step in rebuilding the all-important familial bonds that will help him reintegrate when he is released. Karl’s grandmother demonstrated her devotion and love by coming to a Liberty Choir performance at the prison. Despite (in his own words) being ‘completely out of my comfort zone’, Karl willingly participated in the performance so that he could share that moment of pride and commitment with the person that mattered most to him. Karl is now being mentored by Graduate Ambassador, Ross Bell. As a former prisoner himself, Ross is fully aware of the challenges faced by ex-offenders in finding legitimate employment. His support and strong lead will be invaluable in helping Karl turn his back on a life of crime and re-enter society with a more positive mindset.

Our Wider Impact

It costs on average £51,724¹ per annum to keep someone in prison. This means that, for every year Liberty Choir’s 100+ Graduates do not re-offend, there is an estimated saving of over £5m for the taxpayer. This is before the wider social and societal benefits are

considered: Liberty Choir seeks to equip prisoners with the essential life skills that will see them re-enter society with purpose and positivity. The impact of this on their home communities runs wide and deep, touching all those they come into contact with – from immediate family members, extended family members and friends, neighbours, local shop and business owners to community and local authority workers.

One life turned around has the potential to change many.

“For every prisoner that does not reoffend, this has a positive impact on at least 100 people in the community.” Ian Bickers (Prison Group Director for London Prisons to December 2023)

2024 – Liberty Choir’s 10th Anniversary Year

Looking Back - 2024

2024 Finance

Liberty Choir has gone from strength to strength over the past 10 years. We overcame the challenges posed by the pandemic of 2020-2022 by quickly restructuring our delivery model into radio broadcasts and care packages which could be enjoyed by entire prison estates rather than the lucky few. When restrictions were finally completely lifted in 2023, we resumed our face-to-face delivery; with an increase in our income of 73%, we were able to expand our outreach from 2 prisons to 9 in just one year.

In January of this year, our 10th anniversary year, we added our 10th prison to the list and found ourselves in the slightly paradoxical situation of becoming too big for some of our existing funders to continue to support us. Nonetheless, we have been privileged to be in receipt of ongoing funding from the Surrey Police Commission, the Maria Bjørnsen Memorial Fund and the Bromley Trust with Garfield Weston and the Noel Buxton Trust adding to our multiyear grants this year. We began 2024 in a strong financial position, furthered strengthened by significant new philanthropic donations and fresh grants from the Victoria Wood Foundation, the 1961 Trust, the Aurum Charitable Trust, the Chalk Cliff Trust, and the Network for Social Change. Renewed support from the Arts Council, the John Thaw Foundation, the Hilden Charitable Fund, the Marchus Trust, the Bowerman Charitable Trust, the Tedworth Trust, and the Sussex Community Foundation has further enabled us to strengthen our presence in existing prisons throughout 2024. This support has also allowed us to plan additional in-prison performances, expand our team, enhance our through-the-gate services, and advance our evaluation project, which will form the foundation of future funding bids.

2024 People

Liberty Choir’s growth has led to the further engagement of staff to assist with increased administration and development requirements. We have welcomed Diana Saline as Administrative Assistant to the Prisons Operations Team and Clare McIntosh as Relationship Development Manager on the Development Team.

Expansion into more prisons has also resulted in more and more Graduates getting in touch on release, each one with their own specific needs and hopes for the future. Liberty Choir is committed to supporting them with their rehabilitation as part of our full-circle mission, both inside and outside prison.

To make sure that we have people leading and promoting our organisation who really understand those we are working to help, we approached 2 new Graduates to become Liberty Choir Ambassadors. Mark Downer and Chris Atkins have accepted this role, and we look forward to their valuable input in raising awareness and optimising our delivery strategy.

Mark Downer (Liberty Choir Graduate & Ambassador)



Chris Atkins (Liberty Choir Graduate & Ambassador)

Documentary film-maker Chris Atkins was sentenced to a bit of a stretch in HMP Wandsworth in 2016. His subsequent book, fittingly entitled, 'A Bit of a Stretch: The Diaries of a Prisoner' offers a witty take on prison life, including his experience of Liberty Choir. Chris' latest Podcast series is focused on solutions to the prison problem and features an episode on Liberty Choir - [Sing When You're Winning - A Bit of a Stretch - The Podcast](#) – in which Chris talks about what the choir meant for him and how it affected his fellow inmates: *"It was the impact on me for me to go "Oh my god, I can just let rip for an hour!", but it was also seeing the impact on the others. I think I came at first very sceptically thinking, "These guys are doing it to get out of their cells and swap drugs" because that was what most of the activities were used for, and they didn't with Liberty Choir. They were really into it and you could see them light up."*

2024 Achievements



2024 marked our 10th anniversary; 10 years of operations, serving a total of 10 prisons with our formal expansion into HMP Pentonville in January. This programme is part-funded by Islington Council where the prison is located. Several Islington Councillors have experienced the programme, invited by Liberty Choir's Development Team.

2024 also saw the launch of our Graduate Employment Scheme - a breakthrough addition to our through-the-gate offering - following the commitment of one Brighton based business to prioritise suitable job opportunities for our Graduates. The scheme offered immediate employment for one of our Graduates on his release in January. Our first Graduate employee describes how this made him feel:

"It's a massive confidence boost. My mum, my dad and my children, they could see that, straight out of getting out from prison, I was gonna go into work, earn an honest living."

In April, we were proud to learn that one of Liberty Choir's singers at HMP Coldingley had passed his Level 6 Royal Society of Musicians Award in Singing Performance. He gives credit to the support given to him by the Liberty Choir as he prepared for this examination, in particular our accompanist, David Perkins, who worked with him each week on a one-to-one basis. The relationship continues as 'Matthew' keeps in contact from his new open prison and was able to participate as a singer and musician (playing the violin) at our community choir concert in the historic and splendid Music Room of the Brighton Pavilion.



In November, our co-founders, alongside one of Liberty Choir's Graduates, Roy Mills, were honoured to be invited to address the congregation at the Greater London High Sheriffs Justice Service at Southwark Cathedral. This invitation highlights growing recognition of Liberty Choir's impact on rehabilitation and community integration through music and serves as both an honour and a powerful statement about the role of music in positive change.



Liberty Choir Graduate and Ambassador, Ross Bell's musical success story continues. Along with his band [Rosko Piko](#), Ross released a debut album in October named 'Beautifully Wasted'. In December, Ross asked two of our female Graduates to join him in participating in a **Songwriting Day** with songwriters from the Americana Music Association (AMA). The process was recorded in a documentary to be screened at the AMA Annual Conference at the end of January 2025 in Hackney. Events were held at the London College for Contemporary Music and resulted in 7 fantastic news songs being produced on the theme of 'Can Music Change the World?'. Our Graduates overcame any initial nerves to both fully engage with the songwriting experience and to participate in their live song performances at the end of the day.

2024 Highlights

Friends & Family Concerts

The highlights of 2024 are numerous. However, the Friends & Family concerts at HMP Brixton in March and HMP Coldingley in September especially stand out.

Both concerts were inspirational. HMP Brixton's was organised in a record time of 3 weeks because two of the residents had made it a special request before their release. The performance of an original song, composed by one of these prisoners and sung by the other, was a particularly poignant moment during the concert. On release, these two former prisoners immediately joined MJ's Choirs in the community and are now supported by a team of volunteers to help them access what they need to survive.

Guest attendees at the event at HMP Brixton included Ambassador Jenny Agutter and fellow cast mates she had invited from Call the Midwife: including Linda Bassett, Megan Cusack and Jackie Cast, who volunteers weekly at HMP Pentonville. The Ministry of Justice's Head of Communications, Simon Barrett, also attended with three of his senior colleagues, as well as representatives from multi-year funders such as Garfield Weston, Victoria Wood Trust and King Charles III Charitable Trust.



"It was great for my family to see this side of me and to see us prisoners as emotionally caring and as human beings. They were very, very proud."

'Chris', Brixton Concert Evaluation

Two of our Graduates were also among the guests and took the opportunity to address the men of Brixton about their experiences and the impact that Liberty Choir had on them while in prison and since being released.

The concert at HMP Coldingley was equally special - with Marika Rauscher (Music Director at 3 of our 10 prisons, and an exceptional opera singer) directing the men with such gentle precision and enthusiasm as they proudly delivered a magnificent rendition of 'Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves' and then reducing them all to tears with her performance of Puccini's 'O Mio Babbino Caro'.

Marika Rauscher
Music Director at HMP Coldingley



As with the concert at Brixton, two of our Graduates also attended the event at Coldingley and gave their stories of hope and reassurance that there would be ongoing support from Liberty Choir on the other side of the prison gates.

Coldingley's Governor and staff were delighted that a key figure in prison reform was on the guest list.



Yvonne Abba-Opoku

Mr Taylor was joined by the Head of Operations from the King Charles III Trust, Yvonne Abba-Opoku who confirmed that she would be briefing his Highness about the good work of Liberty Choir, and Dan Frankenburg of Love Productions.



Dan Frankenburg with co-founder MJ Paranzino

10th Anniversary Party

Our 10th anniversary party was held in October at The Bedford Pub in Balham. The Bedford offered both the whole first floor of their building, with its impressive ballroom and other reception rooms, as a gift to the charity, alongside their kitchens, equipment, a full team behind the (non-alcoholic) bar and waiters delivering canapés created by Liberty Choir Graduate Stuart and his redoubtable assistant, Snowy.



Fresh pomegranate juice was provided by another long-term Graduate, Roy as the basis of welcome mocktails to the 150 plus guests, Liberty Choir Graduates and stakeholders of the charity.

Liberty Choir Ambassador, Jenny Agutter with co-founder, Ginny Dougary

To mark our milestone occasion, the team - lead by Marika Rauscher - performed a set with their own version of Barcelona made famous by Freddie Mercury and Monserrat Caballe adapting the words to celebrate Liberty Choir. Liberty Choir invests heavily in their musicians. Not only are they exceptional in their musical talents, but they also possess that special skill set required to manage the challenges of working in a prison environment.



After the musical entertainment was over, the stage was given over to speeches and awards for remarkable prison staff – those whose help and support over the years have made the challenges of running a prison programme so much easier. This was a particularly touching part of the evening and one that brought cheers of delight and acknowledgement from the Graduates who lined the front row of the audience. Notably, HMP Coldingley’s Lee Jones who was honoured for his unfailing support of the Liberty Choir programme there.

Lee made it clear in his acceptance speech that, despite 30 years’ experience as a Prison Officer, without organisations such as ours going into prison and offering the prisoners a different option, he would be lost.

He concluded: *“It is a privilege to have been part of Liberty Choir – long may it continue.”*



Bonanza Fundraiser

Other noteworthy moments of 2024 include the launch of our Bonanza Fundraiser; a 6-month initiative for supporters of Liberty Choir to get creative with their fundraising ideas and put the ‘FUN’ back into ‘fundraising’. A mind-mapping day was held in early June to whet the whistle of would-be star fundraisers. It proved extremely productive with so many suggestions of how money could be raised in engaging and exciting ways.



A fabulous gala performance in St George’s Church Deal organised by Liberty Choir Ambassador & Graduate Ross Bell and his wife Vicky, topped the bill of Bonanza fundraisers of the year - a wonderful display of the power of music.

Over the course of the following few months, events as wide-ranging as curry evenings to coffee mornings, Desert Island Disc nights to Bring & Buy Sales took place and paved the way into our biggest fundraiser of the year – The Big Give Christmas Challenge.



The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2024



Setting ourselves an ambitious **£80,000** target this year was indicative of the increasing demand on our services and the concomitant costs of delivery as Liberty Choir continues to expand. We were, therefore, extremely pleased to have exceeded our target by over £3,000 this year, raising over **£95,000** in total with Gift Aid.

Looking Ahead: Liberty Choir's Ambitious Plans for 2025

As we step into 2025, we have bold and exciting plans for the year ahead. Key milestones include:

- Establishing the Liberty Choir Advisory Council (LCAC) — a new, national-level strategic body made up of Liberty Choir Graduates. This formal council marks a significant step forward from the previously informal Graduate advisory group, and is intended to provide structured, high-level insight and contribute to shaping the organisation's long-term strategy and impact.
- Our first Awayday to reflect on the past decade and set the vision for the next ten years.
- Expanding our Friends and Family concerts, including a long-awaited return to HMP Wandsworth, where we held annual concerts before Covid, and our first-ever concert in a women's prison at HMP Send.
- Conducting our first in-depth evaluation to measure the long-term impact of Liberty Choir.
- Developing a 3–5-year business plan to guide our future growth.
- Exploring the launch of satellite Liberty Choirs in other regions.
- Strengthening our leadership by expanding our Board of Trustees, Patrons, and Ambassadors.

Additionally, we are advancing our **CARE** strategy, which focuses on:

- **Community-Centred Rehabilitation** – Embedding rehabilitation through community connection as a core element of prison policy, rather than an optional add-on.
- **Attitudes Transformed** – Challenging public perceptions by bringing local volunteers into prisons, fostering real relationships, and creating vocal advocates for prison reform.
- **Recognition of the Arts** – Establishing creative programmes as essential, evidence-based tools for personal growth and rehabilitation.
- **Expansion Across the UK** – Scaling our model to reach more prisons nationwide. With 3 to 4 new prisons in the pipeline, we are set to expand into two new regions – the North and the South-West.

2025 promises to be a transformative year for Liberty Choir, and we look forward to building on our success to reach even more people through the power of music.

Risks and Risk Management

The Charity Trustees regularly review and assess the risks faced by the charity in all areas of its work and plan for the management of those risks. Risk is an everyday part of charitable activity and managing it effectively is essential if the trustees are to achieve their key objectives and safeguard the charity's funds and assets.

The Trustees have discussed and set a risk framework that allows them to:

- Identify the major risks that apply to the charity.
- Make decisions about how to respond to the risks they face.

The Trustees have considered:

- Governance risk, including strategy and direction.
- Operational risk, including staff and volunteer safety.
- Financial risk, including cash flow, reserves and diversity of income.
- Environmental risk, including government policy and public perception.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that we manage our resources responsibly and that we act in the best interests of the organization and the people we serve. The Board has the responsibility for approving and monitoring the implementation of policy.

To ensure that there is no significant disruption to our charitable activities, holding appropriate Reserves will enable the organisation to respond to any unforeseen reduction in income (for example when income does not reach expected levels) or additional expenditure (for example when projects overrun, or unplanned events occur). The reserves held would provide short-term financial security until long-term solutions can be established.

As agreed by the Board of Trustees, Liberty Choir will hold the sum of £30,000 in reserve funds. The reserve amount was based on what had been its contractual responsibilities to its first

employees. Financial risk to the charity has been reduced as freelance consultants have now taken these roles. However, the Board has decided that it would be prudent to keep this amount in reserve anyway.

In 2025, in line with the growth of the charity, the reserves will be higher. The Board of Trustees will review the Reserves Policy in January 2026.

Financial Review

The charity received income during the accounting period totaling £388,499 and overall had a surplus for the year of £13,292. At the end of the accounting period the charity held funds totalling £137,510 of which £49,301 are held for restricted purposes. The remaining unrestricted reserves of £88,209 exceeds the amount stated in the reserves policy agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees onand signed on its behalf by:

O Huggins – Trustee

References

1 [Cost per prisoner England and Wales 2023 | Statista](#)

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
LIBERTY CHOIR UK**

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Liberty Choir UK ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by Section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of Section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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 in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

J J Greenslade FCCA
The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

Gibbons Mannington & Phipps LLP
Chartered Accountants
Landgate Chambers
24 Landgate
Rye
East Sussex
TN31 7LJ

Date:

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total funds £	<i>2023 Total funds £</i>
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		237,243	151,256	388,499	<i>349,103</i>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds		6,350	706	7,056	<i>7,974</i>
Charitable activities					
Charitable Activities		184,572	182,879	367,451	<i>260,032</i>
Other		700	-	700	-
Total		191,622	183,585	375,207	<i>268,006</i>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)					
Transfers between funds	10	45,621 (5,000)	(32,329) 5,000	13,292 -	<i>81,097</i> -
Net movement in funds		40,621	(27,329)	13,292	<i>81,097</i>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		47,588	76,630	124,218	<i>43,121</i>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		88,209	49,301	137,510	<i>124,218</i>

The notes form part of these financial statements

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

**BALANCE SHEET
31 DECEMBER 2024**

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total funds £	<i>2023 Total funds £</i>
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	7	2,099	-	2,099	-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	8	33,368	30,000	63,368	<i>13,606</i>
Cash at bank		60,963	19,301	80,264	<i>115,770</i>
		94,331	49,301	143,632	<i>129,376</i>
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	9	(8,221)	-	(8,221)	<i>(5,158)</i>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		86,110	49,301	135,411	<i>124,218</i>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		88,209	49,301	137,510	<i>124,218</i>
NET ASSETS		88,209	49,301	137,510	<i>124,218</i>
FUNDS	10				
Unrestricted funds				88,209	<i>47,588</i>
Restricted funds				49,301	<i>76,630</i>
TOTAL FUNDS				137,510	<i>124,218</i>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 December 2024.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. STATUTORY INFORMATION

Liberty Choir UK is a charitable incorporated organisation, registered in England and Wales. The charity's registered number and principle address can be found in the Report of the Trustees.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF PREPARING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: 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 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to make an assessment of the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. On the basis of these forecasts and the fact that the charity has substantial net current assets and net assets, the trustees are confident that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence and to meet its liabilities as they fall due for the foreseeable future. As a result of the above, the trustees have concluded that it remains appropriate to adopt a going concern basis of preparation in these financial statements.

INCOME

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

EXPENDITURE

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost 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.

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Computer equipment - 25% on cost

TAXATION

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

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 restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

PENSION COSTS AND OTHER POST-RETIREMENT BENEFITS

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**
3. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2024	2023
	£	£
Independent examiners' remuneration	2,722	6,000
Depreciation - owned assets	700	-
	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>

4. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 December 2024 nor for the year ended 31 December 2023.

TRUSTEES' EXPENSES

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 December 2024 nor for the year ended 31 December 2023.

5. STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	-	3,997
Other pension costs	-	74
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Charitable activities	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	-	1

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

6. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	<u>202,884</u>	<u>146,219</u>	<u>349,103</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	7,974	-	7,974
Charitable activities			
Charitable Activities	<u>178,443</u>	<u>81,589</u>	<u>260,032</u>
Total	<u>186,417</u>	<u>81,589</u>	<u>268,006</u>
NET INCOME	16,467	64,630	81,097
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	31,121	12,000	43,121

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

6. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - continued	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>47,588</u>	<u>76,630</u>	<u>124,218</u>
7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS			Computer equipment £
COST			
Additions			<u>2,799</u>
DEPRECIATION			
Charge for year			<u>700</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 December 2024			<u>2,099</u>
At 31 December 2023			<u>-</u>
8. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		2024	2023
		£	£
Other debtors		9,118	5,840
Accrued income		54,250	7,766
		<u>63,368</u>	<u>13,606</u>
9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		2024	2023
		£	£
Trade creditors		5,461	1,280
Accrued expenses		2,760	3,878
		<u>8,221</u>	<u>5,158</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**
10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/1/24 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/12/24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	47,588	45,621	(5,000)	88,209
Restricted funds				
Arts Council	20,021	(20,021)	-	-
Fishmongers	-	1,925	-	1,925
Bowerman	7,026	(7,026)	-	-
OPCC Surrey	30,000	697	-	30,697
Serco	6,883	(6,883)	-	-
Sodexo	12,700	(12,700)	-	-
Network for Social Change	-	7,431	-	7,431
Pentonville Programme	-	(5,000)	5,000	-
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP				
Lewes	-	4,248	-	4,248
Victoria Wood - Brixton F&F	-	5,000	-	5,000
	76,630	(32,329)	5,000	49,301
TOTAL FUNDS	124,218	13,292	-	137,510

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	237,243	(191,622)	45,621
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	41,702	(61,723)	(20,021)
Fishmongers	10,000	(8,075)	1,925
Bowerman	15,000	(22,026)	(7,026)
OPCC Surrey	30,000	(29,303)	697
Serco	22,916	(29,799)	(6,883)
Sodexo	-	(12,700)	(12,700)
Chalk Cliff	5,000	(5,000)	-
Marchus Trust	5,000	(5,000)	-
Network for Social Change	7,431	-	7,431
Pentonville Programme	4,959	(9,959)	(5,000)
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP			
Lewes	4,248	-	4,248
Victoria Wood - Brixton F&F	5,000	-	5,000
	151,256	(183,585)	(32,329)
TOTAL FUNDS	388,499	(375,207)	13,292

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued**Comparatives for movement in funds**

	At 1/1/23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/12/23 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	31,121	16,467	47,588
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	12,000	8,021	20,021
Bowerman	-	7,026	7,026
OPCC Surrey	-	30,000	30,000
Serco	-	6,883	6,883
Sodexo	-	12,700	12,700
	<u>12,000</u>	<u>64,630</u>	<u>76,630</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>43,121</u>	<u>81,097</u>	<u>124,218</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	202,884	(186,417)	16,467
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	60,886	(52,865)	8,021
Fishmongers	15,000	(15,000)	-
Bowerman	15,000	(7,974)	7,026
KCCF	2,000	(2,000)	-
OPCC Surrey	30,000	-	30,000
Serco	8,333	(1,450)	6,883
Sodexo	15,000	(2,300)	12,700
	<u>146,219</u>	<u>(81,589)</u>	<u>64,630</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>349,103</u>	<u>(268,006)</u>	<u>81,097</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**
10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1/1/23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/12/24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	31,121	62,088	(5,000)	88,209
Restricted funds				
Arts Council	12,000	(12,000)	-	-
Fishmongers	-	1,925	-	1,925
OPCC Surrey	-	30,697	-	30,697
Network for Social Change	-	7,431	-	7,431
Pentonville Programme	-	(5,000)	5,000	-
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP Lewes	-	4,248	-	4,248
Victoria Wood - Brixton F&F	-	5,000	-	5,000
	<u>12,000</u>	<u>32,301</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>49,301</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>43,121</u>	<u>94,389</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>137,510</u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	440,127	(378,039)	62,088
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	102,588	(114,588)	(12,000)
Fishmongers	25,000	(23,075)	1,925
Bowerman	30,000	(30,000)	-
KCCF	2,000	(2,000)	-
OPCC Surrey	60,000	(29,303)	30,697
Serco	31,249	(31,249)	-
Sodexo	15,000	(15,000)	-
Chalk Cliff	5,000	(5,000)	-
Marchus Trust	5,000	(5,000)	-
Network for Social Change	7,431	-	7,431
Pentonville Programme	4,959	(9,959)	(5,000)
Sussex Community Foundation - HMP Lewes	4,248	-	4,248
Victoria Wood - Brixton F&F	5,000	-	5,000
	<u>297,475</u>	<u>(265,174)</u>	<u>32,301</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>737,602</u>	<u>(643,213)</u>	<u>94,389</u>

Description of Restricted Funds

Arts Council - Core costs at Wandsworth, Pentonville, Lewes

Bowerman - HMP Lewes - Music Team costs - their fees and expenses

10. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Chalk Cliff Trust - Core costs at HMP Lewes

Fishmongers - Part-funding for salary of Partnerships and Operations role (duties subsumed by Business Manager - Shiv)

Marchus Trust - Costs associated with Friends & Family Concert held at HMP Coldingley September 2024

Network for Social Change - Costs associated with Evaluation Report including Confluence Partnership fees

OPCC Surrey - Surrey Prisons - Core costs associated with any of the Surrey prisons: Bronzefield, Coldingley, Send, High Down and Downview

Pentonville Programme - Core costs at HMP Pentonville

SERCO - HMP Thameside - Core costs at HMP Thameside

SODEXO - HMP Bronzefield - Core costs at HMP Bronzefield

Sussex Community Foundation - Core costs at HMP Lewes

Victoria Wood - Costs associated with Friends & Family Concert at HMP Send (planned for June 2025)

TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS

A transfer of £5,000 from unrestricted general funds to a restricted fund, Pentonville Programme, is declared in this year's accounts. This transfer corrects the position of the two funds for a misallocation stated within the 2022 financial statements.

11. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 December 2024.

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

England & Wales - Charity number 1173799

Accounts



Liberty Choir UK

Registered Charity Number: 1173799

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Liberty Choir UK
Contents of the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31st December 2023

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LIBERTY CHOIR UK

Trustees Annual Report

For the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023



Full Name: Liberty Choir UK

Legal Structure: Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Foundation Model: Registered charity number 1173799

Principal Address: Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1QN J

Trustees

Pia Sinha - elected 2023

Oliver Huggins - elected 2023

Jennifer Holden - elected 2023

Alexandra Felix - elected 2020

Sheila Jones - elected 2018

Paul Webster - elected 2018

Founders

MJ Paranzino

Ginny Dougary

Bankers

Lloyds Bank, PO Box 132, 1 Butler Place, Westminster SW1H OPR

Independent Examiner

Steve Sampson BFP FCA FCIE DChA - Ashdown Hurrey Auditors Limited, 20 Havelock Rd, Hastings, TN34 1BP

Governance and Management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 13 July 2017 and registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Trustees are elected for three years on a rotational basis. Any trustee retiring after their three-year term is eligible for re-election.

The day-to-day running of the organisation is delegated to a team, with the trustees being responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation.

Trustee Induction and Training

The methods adopted for the recruitment and appointment of new trustees are as laid down in the constitution. All potential trustees are interviewed, follow an induction process, and sign an eligibility declaration on election to the position of trustee. Trustees are invited to join the board because of their skills, knowledge and expertise.

All trustees are expected to have experienced the programme and supported fundraising initiatives within the first year of being a trustee.

Aims and Objectives

[Liberty Choir](#) is a full-circle charity celebrating its 10th year of bringing volunteers from community choirs and prisoners together in song. Strong supportive links between volunteers and prisoners are forged and nurtured behind prison bars and then blossom out 'through the gate' and into the community upon release. Brainchild of co-founders MJ Paranzino and Ginny Dougary, since our inception back in 2014, Liberty Choir has sung with over 2000+ prisoners in London, Surrey and East Sussex. An experience that transforms lives - not just those of the prisoners themselves, but those of their families and of their wider communities.

Liberty Choir acts as the bridge between prison and the community which is fundamental to successfully breaking the cycle of reoffending. Liberty Choir's vision is to help those who have been marginalised by imprisonment to find a voice and to feel connected, to be able to belong, and ultimately, to be able to strive for success in the community. Through the Liberty Choir Music Programme, choir attendees have the opportunity to learn key social skills such as building positive relationships, communicating, teamwork, listening, and reading, as well as social history, musical theory, and coordination. Liberty Choir helps prisoners build their self-esteem and self-confidence, opening doors to rewarding challenges such as an annual Friends & Family Concert (an essential part of the re-integration process) which provides an opportunity for prisoners to demonstrate a new discipline in their lives and re-affirm those bonds with family members which prepares them for release. According to the MoJ Farmer Review (2017), the odds of reoffending being 39% lower for prisoners who receive visits from family members.

Once released into the community, ex-offenders are welcomed into our network of community choirs where they are supported by our volunteers who help with a range of practical as well as emotional needs including probation appointments, applying for employment and education, or just to have a cup of tea and a chat with a friendly face. This connection with the community choirs also offers them the chance to perform in such illustrious places as the V&A Museum, Highclere Castle (Downton Abbey), the Curious Arts Festival and the Brighton Fringe, allowing them to expand their horizons and engage with events that may have once been completely outside their ordinary social compass. Public performances like these also can help ex-offenders rebuild bonds with the family members who come to watch them as incarceration often causes rifts in family relationships that need time and effort to restore.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

The trustees are confident that Charity Commission aims, objectives and activities accommodate a range of activities that are relevant, accessible and affordable and improve and enhance the lives of people, while encouraging and developing partnerships and networks and are in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

Liberty Choir fills a vital gap in the current prison provision at a time when prisons in the UK are at breaking point. With the highest incarceration rates in Europe, the worst reoffending rates and an 80% population explosion in the past 30 years¹, overcrowding coupled with budget cuts and extreme staff shortages have contributed to a ticking time bomb which is so serious that it has prompted an official inquiry into whether our prisons are still able to operate in a safe and purposeful way. [Channel 4 interview with Pia Sinha](#)

It is estimated that, this year, we will be fast approaching a prison population of 94,000 men and women. Men and women who are locked up in squalid conditions for 23 hours a day because it is, quite simply, just easier for an already overstretched staff. With statistics from the Prison Reform Trust showing that 67% of prisoners identify as suffering from some form of mental health disorder and suicide rates being at an all-time high², such an appalling situation is clearly untenable and detrimental to society in general when prisoners are eventually released back into the community. The 'horrific' conditions in Wandsworth, for example, have recently been highlighted in a Channel 4 report³.

Liberty Choir offers a small light of hope and purpose in a dark and increasingly chaotic place. Delivering a maximum impact service with minimum demand on prison resources, Liberty Choir provides access to an all-inclusive, high quality music programme supported by an exceptional music team and a cohort of vetted volunteers, including key-trained members to lock and unlock the many gates safely without recourse to prison staff. These volunteers are the life blood of who we are, attending choir sessions week after week and establishing a familiar routine for the inmates.

Research shows that group singing influences mood (Unwin, Kenny, & Davis, 2002), and physical health (Bungay, Clift, & Skingley, 2010). Singing has also been credited as having a positive effect on the treatment of neurological disorders. Group singing is a musical activity that has been used with marginalized populations and has a positive effect on inmate happiness (Cohen, 2009). Co-designed and developed by our informal Advisory Group of over 100 Liberty Choir Ex-Prisoner Graduates with our Music Programme Director and Board, the Liberty Choir programme is known to be used by prisons for their most challenging prisoners, from young people barely out of their teens desperately trying to beat their alcohol and drug addictions to women/mothers on the At-Risk Register.

To enhance the Liberty Choir 'through the gate' support network, we partner with organisations such as The Clink, Trailblazers and the Bounceback Project. At the beginning of this year, we began a pilot employment pathway programme with a local Brighton business,

a flagship initiative for Liberty Choir graduates with the idea of encouraging other businesses to follow suit, as the employers have committed to acting as advocates for our charity. Our positive collaborative practice has led to a commendation from the NHS Mental Health Awards.

What we do works

Improved self-esteem and mental wellbeing

The greatest testament we have to the impact of the Liberty Choir programme is from the prisoners themselves.

"I've been straight since I left prison and I can honestly say that a lot of what I experienced through the Liberty Choir in prison literally changed my life.

I no longer feel a need to take drugs to bury my head in the sand and face life head on with a different mindset completely... it's 100% down to the Liberty Choir and the support & love they showed to me in those early days that's helped me change.

I only wish that I had been given the opportunity earlier.

I was in the care system from an early age and then into the prison systems.

Meeting new people that take time out of their lives to help others was a alien concept to me. But definitely changed me for the better, I no longer hurt other people with my criminality which is a massive u-turn and have no intention of ever doing anything like that ever again."

Roy – Liberty Choir Graduate 2015

"You never know how dark it can get until you're there. I'm no gangster or hard man, least of all road man, yet I am thrust into the darkness for my deeds. There is NO light in there, and it just gets darker.

One day, I met, what can only be described as an angel, on the landing, rallying people to join the choir. I am forever indebted to the Liberty Choir, fore I can surely say - The singing saved me. These wonderful people giving up their own precious spare time to try and help elevate us. They may not have wings these people are truly angels.!

Stuart – Liberty Choir Graduate 2016



One of the starkest and most touching illustrations of how Liberty Choir impacts lives has been when prisoners look to the only materials at their disposal to give something back to the music team as a token of their appreciation and gratitude.

Clive spent 3 days making us a beautiful origami swan; he says he feels that Liberty Choir is changing him. We feel he is changing us.



Tommy presented this beautiful soap sculpture as a gift to Liberty Choir at his last session before being released. He had crafted it from standard bars of prison soap using a pen lid.

Tommy is now out in the community and has sung with the South London Choir and appeared as a guest on 48 Songs: How Music Saved My Life, Liberty Choir Radio, a year-long partnership with National Prison Radio. We are looking forward to welcoming Tommy to our next F&F Concert in Brixton.



Feedback from Liberty Choir and prison staff who witness the changes in prisoners over the course of several rehearsal sessions, report significant improvements in self-esteem and mental wellbeing. Indeed, HMP Wandsworth cites the programme as one of its most successful voluntary organisations there to date. Attendance data from HMP Coldingley shows a commitment from prisoners which, we are told informally by staff, is remarkable and HMP Send has been delighted to advise that women prisoners attending the choir session had subsequently come off the At-Risk Register, citing the programme for their significantly improved mental health.

“The introduction of Liberty Choir at HMP Send brings a much needed creative and musical outlet for our prisoners. This is particularly helpful for those feeling vulnerable, those suffering with mental health issues and those needing a safe, emotional release. A beneficial side-effect of being in a choir is the sense of cohesion and community that it brings with it.” **Sunita Dobisz, Head of Safety, HMP Send**

Improved safety and staff morale

Prison staff also appear to be affected positively by choir sessions and confirm that inmates are easier to handle afterwards. They note improvements in their confidence, eye contact, social interaction and behaviour. They are also moved by the opportunity to relate to their prisoners on a more human level.

What stuck (with) me the most is seeing the prisoners almost having an outer body experience and feeling like for that short time, they were in fact not in a jail.

Prison Officer at HMP Coldingley

The importance of improving prison safety and morale among prison staff cannot be underestimated at a time when the state of our prisons is so dire that officers are leaving their jobs in droves.⁴

Positive impact on prisoners' families

It is estimated that approximately 300,000 children are affected each year by the imprisonment of a parent⁵ with far-reaching implications for their welfare.⁶

The wife of a Liberty Choir graduate speaks of the comfort and reassurance she and her children felt knowing that her husband and their father was 'safe' and had contact with the outside world during his time in Wandsworth's Liberty Choir:

At the most difficult and distressing phase of Ross's prison sentence, the Liberty choir was able to do something for Ross that I couldn't. They could get into the prison and make sure he was alright. I called them my "Avatars... - when the kids asked about the Choir, they could see how much it lifted their Dad. It became our go to "happy topic".

Vicky Bell (Ambassador & Wife of Liberty Choir Graduate, Ross Bell)

Reduced risk of reoffending

In the words of Ian Bickers (Prison Group Director for London Prisons to December 2023), *'for every prisoner that does not reoffend, this has a positive impact on at least 100 people in the community.'*

Of the Liberty Choir graduates (Choir members who have since been released from prison) that we are still in touch with, only 2.8% have re-offended since their release. This is a staggering reduction on the national average.

"..more than two in five adults (42%) are reconvicted of another offence within one year of release...for those serving shorter sentences of less than 12 months, the rates are even higher (63%)" **Prison Reform Trust 2023**

One of our graduates, Richie, who had never spent two consecutive Christmases out of prison while his son was growing up, has now celebrated his 10th Christmas as a free man and his grandchildren have only ever known him as such. Richie celebrated the 10th anniversary of his release with his community choir in South London.



Richie's son, Ricardo, explains what it means to him to have his father back:

“Where do I start, the Liberty choir is such an important part of my life and I am eternally grateful. I spent the first 25 years of my life having to deal with my father being in and out (mostly in) the prison system. This all changed when he met MJ and the Liberty choir team. It felt like he was given a whole new purpose and perspective, that allowed him to see why we, his family mattered and loved him. These last 10 years of having him here present has meant so much to me and my family. We have the Liberty choir to thank for that.”

Ricardo – Son of Liberty Choir Graduate Richie from Liberty Choir's first year in Wandsworth 2014

We are currently working on a year-long structured evaluation project with Confluence Partnerships, alongside the Royal Society of Statisticians, to better understand the full impact of our programme on prisoners, their families and wider communities upon their release. We expect to have the results of this initiative by early 2025.

Key Impact Statistics

A prison place costs £44,640 per annum (MOJ 2020). Based on an anticipated running cost per prison of £34,274 with a potential outreach over the year of 100 prisoners (allowing for natural fluctuations in attendance), the cost of Liberty Choir per capita is around £342/year. Given that an average prison term is in the region of 23 months, if Liberty Choir succeeds in preventing just one prisoner from re-offending, then the cold hard cash saving is around £85,000 even before wider social and societal benefits are considered. From these figures, we can estimate that **our graduates over the past 10 years have saved the taxpayer in the region of £8m.**

2023 – A year of Growth and Milestones

Looking Back

As we look back on our decade working in the Criminal Justice System, the 9 years that have led us to this point have been paved with golden opportunities and incredible moments. It all started in April 2014 when 15 singers from the Brighton and London community choirs entered HMP Wandsworth for our very first in-prison session funded with seed money from the Arts Council and Pink Floyd's David Gilmour. David went on to become one of our Patrons and, in 2015, invited us to perform on his hit record [Rattle That Lock](#). With personal experience of having a loved one in prison, David comments:

"I have been into prison and seen the joy the Choir brings to the prisoners and I have also met the guys singing in MJ's community choirs when they come out of prison. Now it is exciting to see it enter more prisons – which will mean more hope for prisoners and more hope for society when they come out."

Over the years, we have developed numerous high-profile press and marketing relationships that have raised awareness of our work and the appalling situation in UK prisons, including being featured twice on the BBC's flagship current affairs **Today Show, with Mishal Husain** visiting our choirs in both HMP Wandsworth and Coldingley. [Liberty Choir on the Today show](#).

We had to demonstrate extreme resilience and innovation during the lockdown period when we completely restructured our delivery; our face-to-face programme was temporarily replaced during this period with a radio programme broadcasting to over 100 prisons, care packages and volunteer letter-writing. We came out the other side of this stronger and all-the-more determined as a result of the challenges the pandemic brought to the prison system.

Since 2014, we have had the privilege of working shoulder to shoulder with more than **100 Graduates** (Liberty Choir members who have since been released), watching them rebuild their relationships with their families (see Richie's story above) and turn their lives around and onto a more purposeful trajectory.

A passionate spokesperson for our work, Liberty Choir graduate and Ambassador Ross Bell, alongside his Ambassador wife, Vicky have formed the Ramsgate Fundraising Committee in support of our cause. Ross' experience with the choir back in Wandsworth's in 2014 opened his eyes to a whole new world of arts and culture where he learned very quickly that he had an exceptional aptitude for music. Since his release, he has formed his own band, Rosco Piko and released an album including a hit single. Ross' songs have also been covered by other bands at festivals. Ross tells of his 'salvation in music' here: [Ross Bell: Salvation in Music](#).



2023: 10 years - 10 prisons

2023 has been a pivotal year for Liberty Choir in terms of growth. After a creative restructuring of our delivery during COVID and the prolonged post pandemic period, Liberty Choir re-launched our face-to-face programme in the spring of 2022 with HMP Coldingley and Brixton. In 2023 we began the year in just these 2 prisons. However, by the end of 2023, we **had launched/re-launched in a further 7 prisons**: HMP Send in January, Wandsworth in March, Lewes in May, Downview and HighDown in September and Bronzefield and Thameside in November. This has been no mean feat when the logistical implications of each launch are considered; the cooperation of the prison governor in the first instance, a steady and reliable volunteer base to underpin the sessions and, crucially, an exceptional music team to maintain the high standards that have come to be expected from the Liberty Choir programme. With HMP Pentonville coming onboard in January this year (2024) - the year of our 10th anniversary - this means that we now have an outreach in 10 prisons, 50% of London prisons, **all 5 of the Surrey prisons** and 1 in Sussex. This incredible growth is as much a testament to the stalwart support of Liberty Choir's ambassadors, Trustees and funders as it is to the hard work and dedication of our music teams.

Our Board has also grown and strengthened during 2023 with Pia Sinha, former Head of women's prisons in England and Wales coming onboard in May. We also welcomed back Oliver Huggins, Chief Risk Officer of MarketAxess, as Treasurer. The internal team has been complemented with the addition of two new faces; Kate Steere joined as Development Administrator in September 2023 and, more recently, Nialah Rowe came onboard as our Prisons Administrator.

As Liberty Choir continues to grow and strengthen, we are also **welcoming more and more 'graduates' into our community choirs**. These now exceed 100. Family members of serving prisoners are also joining our choirs on the outside to pave the way for when their loved ones are released. This shared interest gives them a bond that transcends any prison wall, offering them a positive mutual choir experience to share on their weekly prison visits.

Other links with the wider community are also being established. In particular, we are nurturing our career partnerships and forging links with both job hub organisations and businesses. One Brighton business has confirmed that they will be looking to **prioritise employment opportunities for our graduates**. This has been a particular blessing for one of our choir members at HMP Coldingley who participated in our second Friends & Family Concert (attended by other prison partners, funders, ambassadors, graduates, and other supporters, as well as the Liberty Choir men's families) in September. He was offered a position with the business upon his release in January 2024 and reports to date that he is very happy in his new role. He is also a member of MJ's Choirs in the community, receiving wraparound attention from the volunteers of Liberty Choir and spoke emotionally about this specifically at our Brixton Friends & Family concert in March.

Demonstrating our resilience and growth in a time where charities are feeling the pinch, the expansion of Liberty Choir over 2023 has been supported by a **73% increase in turnover to £349k** (our highest in 10 years of operations) with half a dozen trusts joining our repeat funders and multi-year grant providers.

2023: Events & Achievements

Liberty Choir was the subject of considerable press coverage during 2023 which was instrumental in raising our profile and promoting growth.

Our 2nd Friends & Family Concert held at HMP Coldingley on the 25th of September 2023 was, as the previous year, a moving and uplifting event for prisoners and their families alike.

Life in prison can be mundane and bland - and this shows that it is possible to do something different and be human. As a group of singers in prison, we have a really strong sense of solidarity, camaraderie and we are always looking out for one another. My sense is that the prison officers looked at us singing and suddenly we weren't just prisoners - they look at us differently, as human beings.

Matthew – Liberty Choir Member

A showcase for all the hard work, determination and commitment shown by prisoners throughout rehearsals, this concert is an event full of pride and purpose and one that we are looking forward to replicating at our 3rd concert at Coldingley this coming September.

Having never attended a Prison Concert before, I didn't know quite what to expect, but as my son was performing I wanted to be there. Once the Liberty Choir and the performers started, I realised that I was in for a treat.

Yvette – Liberty Choir Family

The concert, as always, was a remarkable experience. Witnessing men who face immense pressure due to incarceration come together to sing in harmony truly showcased the power of the Liberty Choir.

Kate - Liberty Choir Ambassador

In the autumn of 2023, Dame Sheila Hancock came into HMP Brixton's Liberty Choir and wrote about the experience in her Long Life column in Prospect magazine on 1 November.

[Sheila Hancock - Kindness is Everywhere](#)

In the lead up to Christmas, our 2nd MojoVember campaign saw supporters from all corners of the Liberty Choir network come together to undertake a 7-day sponsored challenge designed to take them outside their comfort zone. The purpose of this challenge purpose is to draw attention to the men and women who are being challenged daily by prison conditions.



Each day of the MojoVember challenge, despite being on set of 'Call the Midwife', our wonderfully creative and proactive Ambassador, Jenny Agutter wrote and performed her own haiku.

*"The light will lead us
And the darkness falls behind
Don't turn back to look"*



Mandy Duncan Smith treated us all to 'Make-up through the ages'



Kate Steere sang karaoke tunes chosen by her family and friends

Once again, this fundraising exercise was a resounding success, both raising funds and awareness and leading into our most important fundraising campaign of the year, The Big Give.

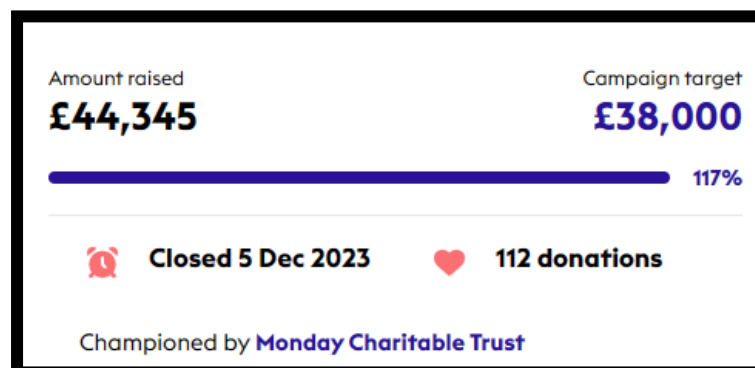
Incredibly, out of 1000s of charities, in 2023, The Big Give selected Liberty Choir as their media partner and this opened the forum for our Ambassador, Jenny Agutter to talk about her

involvement with Liberty Choir and The Big Give on Good Morning Britain and in Hello magazine.
[Jenny Agutter talks to Hello Magazine](#)



[Jenny Agutter on Good Morning Britain - YouTube 2023](#)

Each year, the Big Give Campaign allows us to double our fundraising efforts by matching every pound raised. In 2022, Liberty Choir smashed its original target of £66k, raising almost £90,000 with Gift Aid. In 2023, our target was half that of the previous year - a reflection of the tougher economic climate. However, within a day of the campaign launch, we had reached our initial target thanks to a most generous contribution from the author, Matt Haig and his wife Andrea and were subsequently able to stretch our original target after our amazing Ambassadors, Ross & Vicky Bell offered to pledge a further £4000. In all, with Gift Aid, the Big Give campaign brought nearly £52k to the Liberty Choir coffers. Considering that, behind every donation received during the Big Give Christmas Week lies a whole network of supporters, every one of them wanting to see prisons change for the better, we are confident that there is a real appetite in the public for prison reform and support.



Christmas 2023 brought with other traditional activities; carol singing in tube stations, a wonderful opportunity for all the community choir singers including Liberty Choir Graduates to come together at the V&A museum in London in true Christmas spirit, sporting their Christmas jumpers and other festive attire.



Finally, to cap off a most exciting and productive year, Liberty Choir was featured as one of the Christmas Countdown Choirs on BBC Radio London ([BBC Radio London - Christmas Choir Sing Out](#)), singing out the year with Christmas (Baby Please Come Home) – a most poignant and fitting reminder of the impact of imprisonment on the families of prisoners at Christmastime.

Looking Forward

2024, our 10th anniversary year opened with a bang with us launching into our 10th prison, HMP Pentonville, in late January.

Already this year, we are delighted to have held our 1st Friends and Family concert at HMP Brixton in March 2024 and are preparing for a 3rd concert at HMP Coldingley in the Autumn and a 1st at HMP Bronzefield later this year.

Our focus this year will be to further preliminary discussions with new prisons to add to our 10 as well as exploring possible satellite choirs elsewhere in England.

We will also be concentrating on our Evaluation Project which we hope will really highlight the transformative power of the Liberty Choir programme on prisoners and illustrate the wider social and societal benefits this brings to the communities they are released into.

Risks and Risk Management

The Charity Trustees regularly review and assess the risks faced by the charity in all areas of its work and plan for the management of those risks. Risk is an everyday part of charitable activity and managing it effectively is essential if the trustees are to achieve their key objectives and safeguard the charity's funds and assets.

The Trustees have discussed and set a risk framework that allows them to:

- Identify the major risks that apply to the charity.
- Make decisions about how to respond to the risks they face.

The Trustees have considered:

- Governance risk, including strategy and direction.
- Operational risk, including staff and volunteer safety.
- Financial risk, including cash flow, reserves and diversity of income.
- Environmental risk, including government policy and public perception.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that we manage our resources responsibly and that we act in the best interests of the organization and the people we serve. The Board has the responsibility for approving and monitoring the implementation of policy.

To ensure that there is no significant disruption to our charitable activities, holding appropriate reserves will enable the organisation to respond to any unforeseen reduction in income (for example when income does not reach expected levels) or additional expenditure (for example when projects overrun, or unplanned events occur). The amount of reserves held would provide short-term financial security until long-term solutions can be established.

As agreed by the Board of Trustees, Liberty Choir will hold the sum of £30,000 in reserve funds. The reserve amount is based on the direct costs of running activities in ten choirs for two months.

The reserve amount can only be spent when:

- The charity is experiencing financial difficulty and the amount of the unrestricted fund available is insufficient to pay the monthly consultancy fees of the core team members
- The charity is ceasing operations and the funds are required to settle outstanding payments

When the amount of unrestricted funds held reaches the reserve fund amount of £30,000, the project director will convene an urgent financial planning meeting with the Board of Trustees.

In the interim:

- Prison programme operations will be paused pending the outcome of the discussion with the Board of Trustees
- Freelance contractors and consultant arrangements not required for the essential core operations of the charity will be paused pending the outcome of the discussion with the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees will review the reserves policy in January 2025.

Financial Review

The charity received income during the accounting period totalling £349,103 and overall had a surplus for the year of £81,097. At the end of the accounting period the charity held funds totalling £124,218 of which £76,630 are held for restricted purposes. The remaining unrestricted reserves of £47,588 exceeds the amount stated in the reserves policy agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 27 June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

O Huggins – Trustee

References

1. [Prison Reform Trust 2023 Report](#)
2. According to the MOJ, 92 prisoners killed themselves in the 12 months to September 2023, a 24% increase on the year before. [Prison suicides in England and Wales rise by nearly a quarter | Prisons and probation | The Guardian](#)
3. [Inside the 'horrific' conditions at Wandsworth prison – Channel 4 News](#)
4. [Prison Operational Workforce Survey](#)
5. [Children of Prisoners: Fixing a broken system](#)
6. [Children-with-a-Parent-in-Prison-Factsheet-and-letter-writing-tips-2020.docx.pdf \(prisonfellowship.org.uk\)](#)

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. 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.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF LIBERTY CHOIR UK

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Liberty Choir UK

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Liberty Choir UK (the Trust) for the year ended 31 December 2023.

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 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

S R Sampson BFP FCA FCIE DChA

Ashdown Hurrey
Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers
20 Havelock Road
Hastings
East Sussex
TN34 1BP

Date: 27 June 2024

LIBERTY CHOIR UK**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	31.12.23 Total funds £	31.12.22 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		<u>202,884</u>	<u>146,219</u>	<u>349,103</u>	<u>201,792</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds		7,974	-	7,974	12,288
Charitable activities					
Charitable Activities		<u>178,443</u>	<u>81,589</u>	<u>260,032</u>	<u>237,534</u>
Total		<u>186,417</u>	<u>81,589</u>	<u>268,006</u>	<u>249,822</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		16,467	64,630	81,097	(48,030)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		<u>31,121</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>43,121</u>	<u>91,151</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>47,588</u></u>	<u><u>76,630</u></u>	<u><u>124,218</u></u>	<u><u>43,121</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

LIBERTY CHOIR UK**BALANCE SHEET
31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	31.12.23 Total funds £	31.12.22 Total funds £
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	7	13,606	-	13,606	-
Cash at bank		39,140	76,630	115,770	43,121
		<u>52,746</u>	<u>76,630</u>	<u>129,376</u>	<u>43,121</u>
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	8	(5,158)	-	(5,158)	-
		<u>47,588</u>	<u>76,630</u>	<u>124,218</u>	<u>43,121</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		<u>47,588</u>	<u>76,630</u>	<u>124,218</u>	<u>43,121</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>47,588</u>	<u>76,630</u>	<u>124,218</u>	<u>43,121</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>47,588</u>	<u>76,630</u>	<u>124,218</u>	<u>43,121</u>
FUNDS	9				
Unrestricted funds				47,588	31,121
Restricted funds				76,630	12,000
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>124,218</u>	<u>43,121</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 27 June 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

O Huggins - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1. STATUTORY INFORMATION

Liberty Choir UK is a charitable incorporated organisation, registered in England and Wales. The charity's registered number and principle address can be found in the Report of the Trustees.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: 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 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to make an assessment of the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. On the basis of these forecasts and the fact that the charity has substantial net current assets and net assets, the trustees are confident that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence and to meet its liabilities as they fall due for the foreseeable future. As a result of the above, the trustees have concluded that it remains appropriate to adopt a going concern basis of preparation in these financial statements.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost 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.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

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 restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charity's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

continued...

LIBERTY CHOIR UK**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023****3. INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REMUNERATION**

	31.12.23 £	31.12.22 £
Fees payable to the charity's independent examiners for the independent examination of the charity's financial statements	2,760	-
Fees payable to the charity's independent examiners for the independent examination of the charity's financial statements - Prior year	3,240	-
	<u>6,000</u>	<u>-</u>

4. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 December 2023 nor for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 December 2023 nor for the year ended 31 December 2022.

5. STAFF COSTS

	31.12.23 £	31.12.22 £
Wages and salaries	3,997	33,312
Other pension costs	74	-
	<u>4,071</u>	<u>33,312</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	31.12.23	31.12.22
Charitable activities	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

6. COMPARATIVES (2022) FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	<u>159,792</u>	<u>42,000</u>	<u>201,792</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	12,288	-	12,288
Charitable activities			
Charitable Activities	<u>136,372</u>	<u>101,162</u>	<u>237,534</u>
Total	<u>148,660</u>	<u>101,162</u>	<u>249,822</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	11,132	(59,162)	(48,030)

continued...

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

6. COMPARATIVES (2022) FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - continued

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	19,989	71,162	91,151
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>31,121</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>43,121</u>

The 2022 financial statements were prepared on the receipts and payments basis.

7. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.12.23 £	31.12.22 £
Other debtors	5,840	-
Accrued income	7,766	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<u>13,606</u>	<u>-</u>

8. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.12.23 £	31.12.22 £
Trade creditors	1,280	-
Accrued expenses	3,878	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<u>5,158</u>	<u>-</u>

9. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.1.23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.23 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	31,121	16,467	47,588
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	12,000	8,021	20,021
Bowerman	-	7,026	7,026
OPCC Surrey	-	30,000	30,000
Serco	-	6,883	6,883
Sodexo	-	12,700	12,700
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	12,000	64,630	76,630
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>43,121</u>	<u>81,097</u>	<u>124,218</u>

continued...

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

9. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	202,884	(186,417)	16,467
Restricted funds			
Arts Council	60,886	(52,865)	8,021
Fishmongers	15,000	(15,000)	-
Bowerman	15,000	(7,974)	7,026
KCCF	2,000	(2,000)	-
OPCC Surrey	30,000	-	30,000
Serco	8,333	(1,450)	6,883
Sodexo	15,000	(2,300)	12,700
	<u>146,219</u>	<u>(81,589)</u>	<u>64,630</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>349,103</u>	<u>(268,006)</u>	<u>81,097</u>

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.1.22 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.22 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	19,989	11,132	31,121
Restricted funds			
Albert Hunt	2,000	(2,000)	-
Arts Council	31,467	(19,467)	12,000
Big Give	34,707	(34,707)	-
Rayne Foundation	2,988	(2,988)	-
	<u>71,162</u>	<u>(59,162)</u>	<u>12,000</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>91,151</u>	<u>(48,030)</u>	<u>43,121</u>

continued...

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

9. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	159,792	(148,660)	11,132
Restricted funds			
Albert Hunt	-	(2,000)	(2,000)
Arts Council	24,000	(43,467)	(19,467)
Big Give	-	(34,707)	(34,707)
Fishmongers	5,000	(5,000)	-
Marchus Trust	5,000	(5,000)	-
Pentonville Programme	6,000	(6,000)	-
PWCF Grant	2,000	(2,000)	-
Rayne Foundation	-	(2,988)	(2,988)
	<u>42,000</u>	<u>(101,162)</u>	<u>(59,162)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>201,792</u>	<u>(249,822)</u>	<u>(48,030)</u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.1.22 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.23 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	19,989	27,599	47,588
Restricted funds			
Albert Hunt	2,000	(2,000)	-
Arts Council	31,467	(11,446)	20,021
Big Give	34,707	(34,707)	-
Rayne Foundation	2,988	(2,988)	-
Bowerman	-	7,026	7,026
OPCC Surrey	-	30,000	30,000
Serco	-	6,883	6,883
Sodexo	-	12,700	12,700
	<u>71,162</u>	<u>5,468</u>	<u>76,630</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>91,151</u>	<u>33,067</u>	<u>124,218</u>

continued...

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

9. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	362,676	(335,077)	27,599
Restricted funds			
Albert Hunt	-	(2,000)	(2,000)
Arts Council	84,886	(96,332)	(11,446)
Big Give	-	(34,707)	(34,707)
Fishmongers	20,000	(20,000)	-
Marchus Trust	5,000	(5,000)	-
Pentonville Programme	6,000	(6,000)	-
PWCF Grant	2,000	(2,000)	-
Rayne Foundation	-	(2,988)	(2,988)
Bowerman	15,000	(7,974)	7,026
KCCF	2,000	(2,000)	-
OPCC Surrey	30,000	-	30,000
Serco	8,333	(1,450)	6,883
Sodexo	15,000	(2,300)	12,700
	<u>188,219</u>	<u>(182,751)</u>	<u>5,468</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>550,895</u>	<u>(517,828)</u>	<u>33,067</u>

Description of Restricted Funds

Arts Council: Funding towards music teams at Send, Wandsworth and Brixton prisons.

Bowerman: Funding towards frontline costs at Lewes prison.

Fishmongers: Funding towards business manager role.

KCCF: King Charles III Charitable Foundation - Funding towards music team training.

OPCC Surrey: Surrey Police Commission towards costs of charity activities at five Surrey prisons.

Serco: Funding towards music teams at Thameside prison.

Sodexo: Funding towards music teams at Bronzefield prison.

continued...

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

10. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 December 2023.

LIBERTY CHOIR UK**DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	31.12.23 £	31.12.22 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	94,371	88,967
Gift aid	19,513	5,825
Grants	235,219	107,000
	<u>349,103</u>	<u>201,792</u>
Total incoming resources	349,103	201,792
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Fundraising costs	7,974	12,288
Charitable activities		
Wages	3,997	33,312
Pensions	74	-
Postage and stationery	1,164	186
Promotion and publicity	14,786	9,944
Choir costs	101,981	50,886
Charitable and project development	39,850	39,734
National prison radio	12,000	36,000
Travel and subsistence	9,416	1,077
Licences	50	50
Administration and office costs	43,340	22,635
IT and website	50	144
Freelance staff costs	25,305	41,637
	<u>252,013</u>	<u>235,605</u>
Support costs		
Finance		
Bank charges	106	86
Governance costs		
Independent examiners' remuneration	6,000	-
Accountancy and bookkeeping	1,913	1,843
	<u>7,913</u>	<u>1,843</u>
Total resources expended	<u>268,006</u>	<u>249,822</u>
Net income/(expenditure)	<u><u>81,097</u></u>	<u><u>(48,030)</u></u>

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

England & Wales - Charity number 1173799

Accounts



Liberty Choir UK

Registered Charity Number: 1173799

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2022

Liberty Choir UK
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For the Year Ended 31st December 2022

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LIBERTY CHOIR UK

Trustees Annual Report

For the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022



Full name: Liberty Choir UK

Legal structure: Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Foundation model: Registered Charity No 1173799

Principal address: Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1QN

Trustees

Pia Sinha – elected 2023

Oliver Huggins – elected 2023

Jennifer Holden – elected 2023

Alexandra Felix – elected 2020

Sheila Jones – elected 2018

Paul Webster – elected 2018

Founders

MJ Paranzino, Ginny Dougary

Bankers

Lloyds Bank, PO Box 132, 1 Butler Place, Westminster SW1H 0PR

Independent Examiner

Steve Sampson BFP FCA FCIE DChA – Ashdown Hurrey Auditors Ltd, 20 Havelock Rd, Hastings TN34 1BP

Governance and Management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 13 July 2017 and registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Trustees are elected for three years on a rotational basis. Any trustee retiring after their three-year term is eligible for re-election.

The day-to-day running of the organisation is delegated to a team, with the trustees being responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation.

Trustee induction and training

The methods adopted for the recruitment and appointment of new trustees are as laid down in the constitution. All potential trustees are interviewed, follow an induction process, and sign an eligibility declaration on election to the position of trustee. Trustees are invited to join the board because of their skills, knowledge and expertise.

All trustees are expected to have experienced the programme and supported fundraising initiatives within the first year of being a trustee.

Aims and objectives

Liberty Choir's core mission is to support prisoners both inside prison and post-release through a singing and educational programme – combining outside volunteers from community choirs with prisoners in a mixed choir – which contributes to better mental health, positive outcomes and reduced reoffending.

The charity also works with forensic patients and the Liberty Choir programme has been highly commended in NHS-funded mental health awards. Liberty Choir's vision is that the reoffending rates among ex-offenders can be significantly reduced through a network of choirs located within prisons and the community. We believe that the economic and social case for the choirs is overwhelming.

Public benefit statement

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

The trustees are confident that Charity Commission aims, objectives and activities accommodate a range of activities that are relevant, accessible and affordable and improve and enhance the lives of people, while encouraging and developing partnerships and networks and are in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

2022 – PRISONS IN CRISIS AS THEY RE-OPEN THEIR DOORS TO VISITORS

As prisons attempted to resume normal service post-Covid, Liberty Choir discovered, as with so many aspects of society after the pandemic, that life in them had changed – not necessarily for the better.

Indeed, prisons are now in such crisis that an independent inquiry was commissioned to investigate the reasons behind the chaos. Liberty Choir, ourselves, has witnessed scenes in some prisons that resemble a modern-day Bedlam, with prisoners out of their minds in mental distress, not coping with the heat and unable to escape into fresh air sometimes for whole days on end because they have been left locked in their stifling cells.

On one occasion, as we left rehearsal, we witnessed the aftermath of an attempted suicide: a naked man, covered in blood, slouched on a chair in the middle of the wing, surrounded by medics. Touchingly, it was prison inmates who apologised to the volunteers that they had to witness such a shocking sight.

Prisons are more short-staffed than ever with a fall of 600 staff in prison officer and custodial manager roles with the numbers leaving the service increasing. Days lost through sickness have also risen in the last five years. **The Justice Committee, November 2022*

As the Chair of the Justice Committee, Sir Bob Neill said, when launching the inquiry, such conditions are dangerous for the staff as well as prisoners: *"Understaffing in the prison system has serious consequences for prisoners and prison officers alike. Without sufficient staff, their safety is at risk. It also limits the ability to provide the vital services that support the physical and mental health of the inmates, and prepares them for release."*

Half the prison officers surveyed in the report do not feel safe at the prisons they work in and over 80 per cent of the prison officers surveyed say that staff morale is poor (published on June 23, 2023). Sir Bob Neill said, *"The government risks failing in its duty of care to prison staff and prisoners alike. We are sitting on a potential time bomb. It must be defused."*

Staff shortages and low morale have a devastating impact on an already volatile environment. Prisoners are being locked up for 23 hours or longer, as they were during Covid because it is easier for staff, particularly when there are not enough of them. Voluntary organisations such as Liberty Choir are filling a vital gap and it is often down to our collective services that inmates have a chance for their mental health to improve and for them to have something they look forward to every week where they can feel human and forget their despair.

It is in the women's prisons that the increases in both self-harm (a rise of 37%) and assault incidents (21%) during the 12 months to December 2022 is most striking and troubling.

"There continues to be considerable differences in self-harm trends by gender, with the differences increasing substantially in the latest 12 months. The rate in female establishments has increased by 36% (5,035 per 1,000 prisoners; some women are repeat self-harmers), whereas it has decreased 9% in male establishments (507 per 1,000 prisoners), meaning the rate is now almost ten times higher in female establishments." ²⁰²³

Women in prisons suffered inordinately during the lockdown years. Prison staff describe the day they had to announce that the prisoners could not see their children due to Covid restrictions and are still haunted by the memory of women sinking to their knees in anguish.

"A hard day today as it is my third daughter's birthday but glad I got choir. Can't wait to see MJ and all the gang"

A letter from "Sally", a prisoner in the women's estate who has weekly correspondence with a Liberty Choir volunteer.

Liberty Choir's weekly rehearsals, the commitment of the team and volunteers, the precious bonds that are made in the room, are sustaining, and not only for the prisoners. Volunteers cherish their weekly rehearsals; prison officers report that the prisoners are calmer and more positive in the days that follow and that their improved mood permeates the wings.

The members of the Liberty Choir know that they can count on us to come in week in, week out – throughout the year. The singing and the community spirit is proven to reduce stress and mental strife and is recognised by prison governors as having a significantly positive outcome on the

welfare of their residents – as well as opening them up to pursue other educational initiatives – hence the demand for Liberty Choir to expand into ten prisons and more.

HOW LIBERTY CHOIR HELPS

Liberty Choir UK is a charity whose work begins inside prisons – through weekly rehearsals of a choir made up of prisoners and volunteers from community choirs – and which blossoms when the choir's ex-offender graduates leave prison and are supported by the team and volunteers.

Its mission is to engage local communities with prisons through shared music-making – building friendship and creating the conditions for rehabilitation.

Prisons are commissioning Liberty Choir to target the most challenging prisoners under their care: high-risk prisoners, where there is most concern about their welfare; prisoners who are trying their best to wean themselves off the drugs and alcohol which are often the reason for their incarceration in the first place and young, vulnerable prisoners barely out of their teens.

Within weeks of coming to sing and sharing a new community of people who care, prisoners have come off the risk register, citing Liberty Choir as the reason they feel calmer and more positive, as well as appreciating volunteers who write to them.

"That was the best two hours I've ever spent inside jail. So looking forward to next week. Like you say, my time can be spent doing good things like finding a different way in life and new people. So I can sort my issues out and find myself once again."

A letter from "Pete" a prisoner in a new men's prison who has weekly correspondence with Liberty Choir.

LIBERTY CHOIR: A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF...

Liberty Choir makes sure that prisoners are never forgotten. Our quick response to restructuring our delivery within two weeks of Lockdown being imposed in March 2020 is evidence of the charity's robustness and flexibility.

“Liberty Choir is a Gold Standard charity”

Sir Richard Eyre

The consequence of those challenging years is that although the live rehearsals will always be at the core of what Liberty Choir does, we now provide the extra services honed in the Covid months of regular letter-writing to prisoners, care packages – as well as our digital delivery of Liberty Choir Radio. We are exploring expanding into Liberty Choir Television, too.

Here are some of the highlights of 2022



- A successful Big Give Christmas Challenge (our second, in 2021) took us into 2022 with the confidence of a strong financial buffer
- We continued to research, write scripts, do interviews for *48 Songs: How Music Saved My Life* – a year-long project between Liberty Choir Radio and National Prison Radio, part-funded by the Arts Council. The shows (which are on repeat) go into more than 100 prisons in England and Wales, with an audience of around 80,000 prisoners. We were so happy that half the subjects were Liberty Choir graduates even though they found it a challenging and emotional experience as it brought back some of their most distressing times. The rest were volunteers and high-profile supporters, ambassadors or patrons such as Jenny Agutter, Cherie Blair, Doon Mackichan and Robert Bathurst
- We opened in new prisons – HMP Coldingley in March and another launch at HMP Brixton in May 2022. Soon after, we were delighted to be contacted by new Liberty Choir graduates (ex-prisoners); the core of attendees remain in touch with Liberty Choir, attending the community choir, events and concerts, appearing as guests on *48 Songs: How Music Saved My Life*.

At the end of the first eight weeks of the Liberty Choir launch in Brixton, Tommy presented the choir with this sculpture carved out of soap, the only material had to create something so precious. He is now out in the community and has sung with the South London Choir and appeared as a guest on *48 Songs: How Music Saved My Life*, Liberty Choir Radio, a year-long partnership with National Prison Radio.



- In May, Liberty Choir was honoured to be invited as speakers to an international conference Prison Insights 2022 in Lisbon by Reshape (who generously paid all expenses), alongside other well-known UK initiatives that support prisoners, the founder of The Clink restaurants and Redemption Roasters.

COLDINGLEY HMP FRIENDS AND FAMILY



- In September, our first post-Covid Friends and Family concert was held at HMP Coldingley – a joyous event, attended by those close to serving prisoners, as well as volunteers, supporters from trusts and foundations and other interested prison governors. Liberty Choir graduates, longstanding and new, in the audience – along with their family members – stood up to speak movingly about what a difference the choir and its ongoing support had made in their successful rehabilitation. Volunteers, as well as one of the graduates who is a superb chef made the food.



In November, Liberty Choir launched its first fundraising challenge campaign, MojoVember. Contestants committed to raise money putting themselves outside their comfort zone with a daily challenge for seven days. Our Social Media Editor created a MojoVember community Facebook page, with challengers championing each other and drawing in new supporters as the network expanded. Challengers included ambassadors, Liberty Choir graduates, volunteers and their friends. Jenny Agutter, ambassador, even filmed herself on the set of *Call the Midwife* for her 7-day challenge (“I love you” in seven difficult languages).

- This fed into our third year – and another effective social media campaign – with The Big Give Christmas Challenge, a new champion, The Monday Trust and raising a record £74,569 (pre Gift Aid). The organisers informed us: *“Your charity was one of the ‘higher achievers’ in the Christmas Challenge 2022, which featured 1021 charities.”*



In December, Liberty Choir and the community singers returned to perform at the Victoria & Albert Museum, a thrilling annual highlight before Covid, in the glorious rotunda.

We also had the honour to be featured in a ten-minute documentary by Mishal Husain on the Today show on Radio 4 who came to record Liberty Choir for the second time (in 2019 it was in HMP Wandsworth) and this was at HMP Coldingley.

The segment aired on December 21st 2022, a great Christmas present for the charity.

It was the Best of Today – please use the link below to be uplifted.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/nndhqi2p4kfk2pb/05%20LIBERTY%20CHOIR%20MISHAL%20PKG.wav?dl=0>

Throughout the year, there were a great many meetings with Prison Governors (some prisons were still having to cancel visits because of severe Covid outbreaks affecting the already shrinking staff numbers) but preparations were made to set up launches of Liberty Choirs in eight more prisons in 2023 (HMP Send in January; a return to Wandsworth in March; Lewes launch in May and five more lined up for 2023).





Liberty Choir continues to plug away, believing that it is worth making the effort even if the rewards aren't always secured. We made a submission, for example, for the Longford Trust annual prize and were pleased to hear that we had made it to the shortlist. The director Peter Stanford urged us to try again, saying: "There was much support for the work that Liberty Choir has done, especially your courage and innovation in continuing during the Covid lockdown."

We also submitted our Liberty Choir radio shows for the ARIA Awards and will continue to do so as we expand our digital delivery. These shows are now with BBC Radio 4 who are considering how to adapt them.

The year ended with us building our board of trustees, from four to six members – with a Secretary (Jennifer Holden) and (returning Trustee) Oliver Huggins as Treasurer, as well as Pia Sinha, formerly head of the women's estate of all prisons in England and Wales and the new CEO of the Prisons Reform Trust.

We changed our accountancy firm and are now under Steve Sampson, Head of Philanthropy, at Ashdown Hurrey with a new bookkeeper, also, Ros Thomas of Rother Bookkeepers. They were recommended by HVA (Hastings Voluntary Action) whose support has been phenomenal, right back to when they helped Liberty Choir become a charity in 2017 (from a CIC in 2014) and every step of the way. Whatever the challenges, they are always there for us. They are a cherishable organisation; the director Steve Manwaring, and deputy director Peter Thorpe and team are not only effective but really care about all the Hastings charities which are under their protective wing.

2022 was also a year in which new funders came on board, as well as those who renewed their support. The Arts Council must be top of our list to thank, as they have believed in Liberty Choir right from the start when they gave us seed funding to launch in HMP Wandsworth on 1 April 2014 and continue to be our largest and most consistent funding support. But we took their advice in not relying on one income source, and now we are very grateful indeed to our additional 30-plus funders, including trusts and foundations, as well as private donors.

A new strategic approach of building multiple-year funding streams for sustainability, led to a number of funders agreeing to substantial donations: the Bromley Trust, the Fishmongers' Company Charitable Trust and the Maria Bjornson Memorial Fund, as well as the Prince of Wales Charitable Fund. We also thank new funders in 2022, such as The Swire Charitable Trust, The Foyle Foundation, the Monday Charitable Trust, the Chapman Charitable Trust, Charles Hayward Foundation, the Hilden Charitable Fund, The Marchus Trust and Islington Council. And although we will be thanking them again, Garfield Weston, the Bowerman Trust and the Tedworth Charitable Trust.

Six months into 2023, Liberty Choir's expansion continues apace. Music teams are being trained – each prison has an accomplished music director as well as an accompanist. Volunteers are undergoing security vetting by prisons and are also being key-trained; our aim is to be as independent as possible, so that prison staff are left to get on with their work rather than cater to us.

We are also investigating how to protect what we have achieved, as Liberty Choir looks forward to celebrating ten years in prisons in April 2024, while following our mission of making a positive impact on as many prisoners' lives as we can. As our profile becomes bigger, we have been approached by many prison governors as well as individuals who have asked us to create the Liberty Choir programme in areas beyond our patch of London and the South-East (in 2023, we will be in all five prisons in Surrey).

There have been meetings and discussions about this, responding to serious offers in the north as well

as in Dorset. The logistics around creating not a franchise but some satellite choirs in other regions is something that will need sober consideration and preparation. This is one of our challenges for the future as well as diversifying and building on our digital content to run alongside our live programmes.

Liberty Choir would like to conclude by thanking our hard working and skilled board of trustees, our amazing ambassadors and patrons and our dedicated team. Working in prisons presents daily challenges; our perennial joke is that it is as hard to get into one [if you haven't committed a crime] as it is to get out. It takes real grit and determination to push through the obstacles and bureaucracy; most staff try to be as helpful as they can in straitened circumstances but, alas, some do not.

Special thanks must go to development friends of Liberty Choir: Gill Morgan, David Bermingham, Clare Conville, Lisa Gordon and Christine Costello. As well as Ian Hislop who believed in Liberty Choir before it even launched and has continued to support us ever since, Stephen Fry, Olga Polizzi, Cherie Blair and Michael Gove. It is a testament to Liberty Choir's mission and work that we have influential supporters across the political board.

We would be nowhere without our volunteers – 100 and growing – who are steadfast, compassionate, loyal and just 'get it'. Sometimes, a Liberty Choir graduate leaves prison and he or she has burned every bridge; there is no family left or a single friend. The volunteers and team lift that man or woman up and, on occasion, will form a protective network to help with all the fraught negotiation back into society: probation, social services, finding housing or a GP. Other times, they will just extend a hand of friendship and offer a chat over coffee. They are the lifeblood of Liberty Choir.

Last but by very much not least, our thanks go to the prisoners themselves who participate in the weekly programmes – who take the dare and the ragging "CHOIR?*@!!! You're having a laugh, mate, ain't ya?" (as one graduate shared). The prisoners who allow themselves to be vulnerable and drop the macho front in that small room, even to weep when a song moves them. There, the healing starts and their own belief that they can change; it is there where hope comes and shines a little light in the darkness.

"It is a beautiful escape, even if only for a few hours. Many times I'm reduced to tears of joy in the choir – the volunteers are all so helpful, friendly and kind."

Letter from 'Simon'

"I liked the energy and the feeling of no macho-ness and that you weren't really in prison in that time, it was just a lovely vibe. And when I told my family about it, I felt really proud."

"Rob" evaluation after F+F concert.

"I'm going to miss singing with you all immensely. What you do makes a world of difference. It helped me feel more human in a difficult and oppressive environment. It gave me something to look forward to each week."

Letter from "Jim" transferred to a faraway prison

"I've not had a visitor for six years. The choir is my social community."

"Chris" evaluation after F+F concert.

"Thank you for all the love and happiness you have shown me. I love the choir and the special ways of learning music."

Letter from "Tim".

"After my husband joined Liberty, in the following weeks every time we talked it was about the choir, the music pieces, the songs, the movements etc. But what I really heard was, he is happy when he is at the choir and afterwards."

"Margot", wife of a Liberty Choir singer, "Nick" in a letter.

"There is a buzz around the prison. Prisoners sing along back in cells from the windows as the choir rehearse."

Evaluation form, "Rich".

"The big day came for the Friends and Family concert. It was a great day, not only for me but even for those who had no visitors. We started to sing, I look and see my wife with tears flowing. I became tearful, I do not know why. She told me later she cried because it is the first time she saw me happy for a very long time."

A letter from "Rajid", RIP, a gentle civilised man who we all miss.

"MJ, Liberty Choir, Governor Thompson, you made sure the day was about 14 unfortunate men. It is seldom we are centre stage in this place. This bright day, in this dark place, will never be forgotten."

Letter from W after a Friends and Family concert.

Please check out our website libertychoir.org which we try to keep updated regularly.



Summary of main activities undertaken for the public benefit

- Bringing the outside community into prisons creating awareness and tolerance of marginalised communities by launching into two new prisons with our weekly singing programme: HMP Coldingley and HMP Brixton, while working on the launch or return to eight more prisons in 2023
- Bringing the outside community into prisons, beyond our volunteers and visitors by extending it to a wider audience for a Friends and Family concert. Giving hope and optimism to the family members and friends of the prisoners that their loved ones are doing something worthwhile, which gives them joy, during their incarceration. Also witnessed by other partners in the Criminal Justice System and leaders in trusts and foundations who observe the Liberty Choir graduates, bravely re-entering prison (a place with bad memories), wanting to share their stories of rehabilitation and positivity
- Supporting the reconciliation of Liberty Choir graduates with their family members
- Maintaining contact with a large proportion of ex-offenders, supporting them in their rehabilitation
- Influencing key members of the Criminal Justice community in the benefits of the arts towards behavioural change
- Developing a model that can be replicated across the prison estate
- Maintaining and developing relationships with prison partners in preparation for a return to live rehearsals in prisons
- Working alongside Probation to support Liberty Choir graduates to attend choir rehearsals and extend their curfew to enable them to do so, and work as a team toward the graduate's successful rehabilitation
- Supporting prisoners during Covid restrictions and beyond by providing donated art and craft materials, reading glasses and educational materials
- Weekly radio shows – Liberty Choir Radio – broadcast in prisons across England and Wales
- Development, production and broadcast of 48 Songs: How Music Saved My Life, broadcast via National Prison Radio in 100+ prisons, 80,000 prisoners audience
- Local newspaper articles about Liberty Choir, as well as social media campaigns, brought our work in prisons to new audiences and led to new volunteers signing up to the weekly rehearsals
- The ten-minute documentary short on Liberty Choir's work by leading broadcaster Mishal Husain on Radio 4's Today show, featuring our Coldingley choir members, the Governor and co-founder MJ, means that an audience of 5.76 million listeners engaged with the reality of life in prison and the need for engaging arts programmes like ours to turn lives around.

Summary of the main activities during the period

- Return to prisons and the live weekly programme at two new prisons, HMP Coldingley and HMP Brixton
- First Friends and Family concert post-Covid held at HMP Coldingley (with follow up in diary for 2023)
- Continued regular meetings with Governors in eight prisons to launch in 2023
- Ongoing recruitment and training of new musical directors and accompanists for new prisons and imminent prisons
- Ongoing recruitment of volunteers with security checks and key training liaison with each prison
- Ongoing work on developing our business plan
- Liberty Choir co-founders were honoured to be invited to speak at an international prisons conference in Lisbon, (expenses paid by organisers), along with founders of The Clink (thelinkcharity.org) and Redemption Roasters, as leading prison organisations and charities in the UK
- Continued development and recording of Liberty Choir radio shows for 100 prisons, 80,000 listeners, weekly programmes
- Continuing support, via a P.O. Box and checks, of letter-writing between volunteers and prisoners
- Setting up local press articles in newspapers close to our new prisons
- Setting up leading current affairs programme BBC Radio 4's Today show, with more than 5 million listeners, to cover our weekly Liberty Choir rehearsals and positive outcomes in reducing reoffending, conducted in October and broadcast in December 2022
- Launch of new MojoVember challenge: a novel way to raise funds, create a bond between stakeholders and extend the message about prisons and the need to support prisoners and their families
- A broad and engaging social media campaign to support our fundraising for MojoVember and during The Big Give 2022 Christmas Challenge week, during which we raised a record £74,569 (pre Gift Aid).

Risks and Risk Management

The Charity Trustees regularly review and assess the risks faced by the charity in all areas of its work and plan for the management of those risks. Risk is an everyday part of charitable activity and managing it effectively is essential if the trustees are to achieve their key objectives and safeguard the charity's funds and assets.

The Trustees have discussed and set a risk framework that allows them to:

- Identify the major risks that apply to the charity
- Make decisions about how to respond to the risks they face.

The Trustees have considered:

- Governance risk, including strategy and direction
- Operational risk, including staff and volunteer safety
- Financial risk, including cash flow, reserves and diversity of income
- Environmental risk, including government policy and public perception.

The Charity's policy on reserves

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that we manage our resources responsibly and that we act in the best interests of the organization and the people we serve. The Board has the responsibility for approving and monitoring the implementation of policy.

To ensure that there is no significant disruption to our charitable activities, holding appropriate reserves will enable the organisation to respond to any unforeseen reduction in income (for example when income does not reach expected levels) or additional expenditure (for example when projects overrun or unplanned events occur). The amount of reserves held would provide short-term financial security until long-term solutions can be established.

As agreed by the Board of Trustees, Liberty Choir will hold the sum of £30,000 in reserve funds. The reserve amount was set based on what was, but is no longer the case, contractual responsibilities to its first employees. Financial risk to the charity has been reduced as freelance consultants have now taken these roles. However, the Board has decided that it would be prudent to keep this amount in reserve anyway.

The reserve amount can only be spent when:

- The charity is experiencing financial difficulty and the amount of the unrestricted fund available is insufficient to pay the monthly consultancy fees of the core team members
- The charity is ceasing operations and the funds are required to settle outstanding payments

When the amount of unrestricted funds held reaches the reserve fund amount of £30,000, the project director will convene an urgent financial planning meeting with the Board of Trustees.

In the interim:

- Prison programme operations will be paused pending the outcome of the discussion with the Board of Trustees
- Freelance contractors and consultant arrangements not required for the essential core operations of the charity will be paused pending the outcome of the discussion with the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees will review the reserves policy in January 2024.

Financial Review

The charity received income during the accounting period totalling £201,792 and overall had a deficit for the year of £48,030. At the end of the accounting period the charity held funds totalling £43,121 of which £12,000 are held for restricted purposes. The remaining unrestricted reserves of £31,121 exceeds the amount stated in the reserves policy agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 7 July 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

O Huggins - Trustee

“These strong men had been so taken over by the singing, by the dancing, by the impact of the visitors, that on Tuesday evenings in the wings, there was no banging of doors, no shrieking, no animal noises, no screaming... there was singing of a kind, there was music.”

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF LIBERTY CHOIR UK

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Liberty Choir UK for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees 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 Trustee'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 2011 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 in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

S. R. Sampson BFP FCA FCIE DChA
Ashdown Hurrey Auditors Limited
20 Havelock Road
Hastings
East Sussex
TN34 1BP

Date: 7 July 2023

Liberty Choir UK
Receipts & Payments Account
For the Period 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022

	Note	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds Y/E 31 December 2022 £	Total Funds Y/E 31 December 2021 £
RECEIPTS					
Donations, legacies and grants	2	42,000	159,792	201,792	157,866
Charitable activities	3	-	-	-	4,418
TOTAL RECEIPTS		42,000	159,792	201,792	162,284
PAYMENTS					
Charitable activities	4	101,162	148,660	249,822	159,498
TOTAL PAYMENTS		101,162	148,660	249,822	159,498
NET RECEIPTS (PAYMENTS) FOR THE YEAR		(59,162)	11,132	(48,030)	2,786
TOTAL FUNDS AT 1 JANUARY		71,162	19,989	91,151	88,365
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 DECEMBER		12,000	31,121	43,121	91,151

Liberty Choir UK
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
At 31st December 2022

Note	Restricted funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Total Y/E 31 December 2022 £	Total Y/E 31 December 2021 £
CASH FUNDS				
Cash at bank and in hand	12,000	31,121	43,121	91,151
	<u>12,000</u>	<u>31,121</u>	<u>43,121</u>	<u>91,151</u>
OTHER MONETARY ASSETS				
	-	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
LIABILITIES				
Social Security & Other Tax and Net Wages	-	1,022	1,022	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,022</u>	<u>1,022</u>	<u>-</u>

These financial statements are approved on behalf of the trustees by:

O Huggins - Trustee

Date: 7 July 2023

Liberty Choir UK
Notes to the Accounts
For the Year Ended 31st December 2022

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**1.1 Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements**

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Y/E 31 December 2022 £	Total Y/E 31 December 2021 £
2. INCOME FROM GRANTS, LEGACIES & DONATIONS				
Grants and donations include the following:				
Donations	-	88,967	88,967	103,178
Gift Aid	-	5,825	5,825	9,538
Grants	42,000	65,000	107,000	45,150
TOTAL	42,000	159,792	201,792	157,866
3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - FUNDRAISING				
Income from Charitable Activities - Fundraising	-	-	-	4,418
TOTAL	-	-	-	4,418

Liberty Choir UK
Notes to the Accounts
For the Year Ended 31st December 2022

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Y/E 31 December 2022 £	Total Y/E 31 December 2021 £
4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES				
Choir Cost	10,333	40,553	50,886	17,085
Charitable and project development	21,145	18,589	39,734	101,347
National Prison Radio	36,000	-	36,000	-
Fundraising Costs	-	12,288	12,288	5,391
Travel and Subsistence	445	632	1,077	6,711
Promotion and Publicity	-	9,944	9,944	-
Accounts	-	1,843	1,843	1,081
Bank Charges	-	86	86	88
Printing Postage and stationery	-	186	186	-
Licences	-	50	50	-
Administration and office costs	3,756	18,879	22,635	5,000
IT & website	-	144	144	1,575
Salaries	15,692	17,620	33,312	21,220
Freelance Staff Costs	13,791	27,846	41,637	-
	<u>101,162</u>	<u>148,660</u>	<u>249,822</u>	<u>159,498</u>
5. STAFF COSTS				
Staff Costs PAYE	15,692	17,620	33,312	21,220
Freelance staff costs	13,791	27,846	41,637	102,359
	<u>29,483</u>	<u>45,466</u>	<u>74,949</u>	<u>123,579</u>

No single remuneration amounted to more than £60,000

During the year, no trustees received any benefits in kind.

During the year, no trustees received any reimbursement of expenses.

LIBERTY CHOIR UK

England & Wales - Charity number 1173799

Accounts

Liberty Choir UK
Registered Charity Number 1173799

Financial Statements
for 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021

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13	Statement of Assets and Liabilities
14-18	Notes to the financial statement

Liberty Choir UK
Trustees' annual report
for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021

Full name	Liberty Choir UK
Legal structure	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Foundation Model
Registered charity number	1173799
Principal address	Jackson Hall, Portland Place, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1QN

Trustees

Sally Hill – Chair – elected 2020, Chair, 2021
Sheila Jones – elected 2018
Paul Webster – elected 2018
Alexandra Felix – elected 2020

Founders

MJ Paranzino
Ginny Dougary

Bankers

Lloyds Bank, PO Box 132, Butler Place, 1 Butler Place, Westminster SW1H 0PR

Independent examiner

David Poynter, Cortlandt, George Street, Hailsham, East Sussex. BN27 1AE.

Governance and management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 13 July 2017 and registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Trustees are elected for three years on a rotational basis. Any trustee retiring after their three-year term is eligible for re-election.

The day-to-day running of the organisation is delegated to a team, with the trustees being responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation.

Trustee induction and training

The methods adopted for the recruitment and appointment of new trustees are as laid down in the constitution. All potential trustees are interviewed, follow an induction process, and sign an eligibility declaration on election to the position of Trustee. Trustees are invited to join the board because of their skills, knowledge and expertise.

All trustees are expected to have experienced the prison programme and supported fundraising initiatives within their first year of being a trustee.

Liberty Choir UK Trustees' annual report for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021

Aims and objectives

Liberty Choir's core mission is to support prisoners both inside prison and post-release through a singing and educational programme - combining outside volunteers from community choirs with prisoners in a mixed choir - which contributes to better mental health, positive outcomes, and reduced reoffending.

The charity also works with forensic patients and the Liberty Choir programme has been highly commended in NHS-funded mental health awards. Liberty Choir's vision is that the reoffending rates among ex-offenders can be significantly reduced through a network of choirs located within prisons and the community. We believe that the economic and social case for the choirs is overwhelming.

Public benefit statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

The trustees are confident that Charity Commission aims, objectives and activities accommodate a range of activities that are relevant, accessible and affordable and improve and enhance the lives of people, whilst encouraging and developing partnerships and networks, and are in accordance with the regulations on public benefit.

2021: Prisons in crisis

In January 2021, as the UK mourned the Christmas that never was and braced itself for a third national lockdown, prisoners the length and breadth of the UK remained isolated in prison cells for up to 23 hours day. With varying degrees of restrictions on every-day activities such as socialising and purposeful activity, the daily routine of prison life was monotonous and suffocating. With little or no contact with family and friends through prison visits, some women in custody were unable to have physical contact with their children until May of 2021. Prison staff described the day they had to tell women at the prison that they could not see their children due to COVID restrictions and recall how the women sank to their knees in anguish.

The picture of life in our prisons; desolate, unengaging, and dirty, was painted by the Chief Inspector for Her Majesties Inspectorate of Prisons in his Annual Report.

In the spring of 2021 HMIP found that in many prisons, prisoners spent more time locked in their cell than they did in 1982. We are yet to see the effects that COVID restrictions will have on men and women in custody, but it is impossible to ignore the negative impact that a lack of rehabilitative programmes, face to face contact, educational stimulus and employment training will have on reducing reoffending rates in the future.

As in the community, mental health and wellbeing has been greatly damaged by prolonged isolation and lack of social connection, with 51% of men and 71% of women in prison telling HMIP that they have difficulties with mental health. Self-harm and suicide remain high across

Liberty Choir UK Trustees' annual report for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021

the estate. HMP Wandsworth, where Liberty Choir first began its prison programme, lost seven men to self-inflicted deaths this year alone. This was a particularly heart-breaking statistic for Liberty Choir, cutting deeper because of our strong bonds with the men and the staff at HMP Wandsworth.

Whilst the draconian COVID restrictions in the wider community were endured by every one of us, the situation behind prison walls was one of utter desolation and hopelessness.

Making a difference

Liberty Choir's mission is to engage local communities with prisons through shared music-making, building friendship and creating the conditions for rehabilitation. Even though we haven't been able to go into prisons, except for one brief period, we have continued to fulfil this mission throughout 2021, recognising that our work was needed more than ever.

To help prisoners cope with the boredom and isolation of near-constant lockdown, we've harnessed the efforts and goodwill of our volunteers to make regular donations of pens, paper, books, puzzles, games, and clothing throughout the year. We organised staff events outside of London prisons, where we served refreshments to the hardworking prison staff, as a 'thank you' for the role they played in keeping prisoners as safe as possible in difficult circumstances.

Following a successful fundraising campaign for The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2020, which saw us raise £34,921, we were honoured to be recognised and awarded Arts Charity of the Year by The Big Give in January. Encouraged by our success, we began planning our strategy for the 2021 campaign in earnest.

Liberty Choir employed its first fulltime employee in March. The role of the Operations and Partnerships Manager is transformational for our organization and allows us to build upon and develop new relationships with prison partners to aid our expansion into prison sites across London and the southeast.

Prior to the introduction of the OPM role, we identified that it would be challenging for the team to manage the relationships and operational aspects associated with the expansion into 8 prisons without a dedicated employee working in this position. Following the prison restrictions during the pandemic (which saw our 3 prison programmes paused), we recognized that our short- and long-term objectives of re-establishing our work at these sites, and broadening our reach to 5 new establishments, would require a substantial investment in the form of a permanent and experienced employee.

We continued to develop our digital delivery of high-quality, engaging, and educational radio programmes through Liberty Choir Radio, broadcast on Radio Wanno and National Prison Radio (NPR). The Six Building Blocks of Modern Music was written and recorded by Liberty Choir Co-Founder MJ Paranzino and co-hosted with Liberty Choir Graduate Richie. These shows played and explored some of the most joyful music ever performed and brought the experience and wisdom of former prisoners, volunteers, and distinguished supporters into 60,000 prison cells across England and Wales. The success of this project paved the way for

Liberty Choir UK Trustees' annual report for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021

48 Songs: How music saved my life, where Co-Founder and journalist Ginny Dougary will interview Liberty Choir Graduates, Ambassadors, volunteers, and supporters about the power of a song and the sustenance it can provide. Funded by The Arts Council, research for the show began in Autumn of 2021 with broadcast scheduled for spring of 2022. Liberty Choir's digital programme supports live rehearsals in prisons by increasing the amount of people we can reach, as well as generating an appetite for Liberty Choirs in more prisons. We receive letters from men and women from prisons across England and Wales, and our dedicated group of volunteers continue to maintain the letter writing programme that began during the first few weeks of lockdown.

In August, we were invited by the Governor of HMP Coldingely to begin a Liberty Choir programme at the prison as soon as COVID restrictions would allow the first new prison since we started singing at HMP Downview in 2018. We also met with Governors from HMP Ford to explore the opportunity of a Liberty Choir for the men at the category D prison, but due to extensive building work and reduced capacity at the prison, plans were postponed until late 2022. Liberty Choir Supporter and former Governor at HMP Wandsworth Ian Bickers met with us in the capacity of his current role as Prison Group Director for London. As part of our expansion strategy into 9 prisons, Ian would make introductions to senior leaders in prisons and mental health teams, so our work could reach as many men and women as possible.

Liberty Choir enlisted the skills of a part-time Social Media Editor in September, to grow our followers across social media platforms and to prepare a campaign for our largest fundraising event of the year, The Big Give Christmas Challenge.

Thanks to a generous benefactor, the Liberty Choir team, supporters, ambassadors, and graduates were able to gather in person (some were meeting for the first time) at a networking event held in London. The event gave us an opportunity to reflect on Liberty Choirs progress since we launched in prisons in 2014, discuss future pathways for the charity and celebrate our Graduates' successes since leaving prison. We launched our first official Liberty Choir merchandise in the form of a handprinted tote-bag, which will be available to purchase at all fundraising events, with all proceeds donated to Liberty Choir.

Our new team of musicians and directors began shadowing Principal Musical Director MJ Paranzino and Deputy Music Director Alex Roberts at our community choir rehearsals in October, to build relationships with our team of volunteers and to prepare for our live prison programmes. The team also led a pilot session at HMP Downview in November (in between COVID outbreaks at the prison), which saw a number of women, all of them mothers, attending with Liberty Choir volunteers to release through song some of the tension and heartache caused by separation from their children. The joy and relief at the end of the session was palpable, and it proved how essential our work would be to women in prison when restrictions would allow a full programme to return.

To build on this experience, we scheduled a live training event for staff and volunteers, focusing on programme delivery, safeguarding and mental health and wellbeing in prisons, with Dr Alex Bunn Lead GP at Wandsworth Prison attending as a key-note speaker. A series of webinar events in prison awareness and safety were delivered to volunteers and staff, to upskill and prepare our people for the challenges of complex prison environments.

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Founded in 2020, The Liberty Choir Development board is a tight-knit, well connected team who work tirelessly to fundraise and network on behalf of Liberty Choir, and in November, they held their first fundraising event. *Prison Isn't Working* brought together a terrific panel of speakers from both side of the prison estate and distinguished figures from journalism and literature. Panellists were Chris Atkins, film-maker and bestselling author of *A Bit of a Stretch: The Diaries of A Prisoners* (Liberty Choir Graduate from Wandsworth); bestselling novelist Deborah Moggach, Marc Conway, ex-offender, now Prison Reform Trust policy officer, Nicholas Hardwick, Professor of Criminal Justice, Royal Holloway, University of London (former Chief Inspector of Prisons and Chair of the Parole Board); discussion hosted by former Panorama and BBC reporter John Sweeney. The event brought in more than £5000 for Liberty Choir as well as raising awareness of the work of Liberty Choir, the terrible conditions in prison and the urgent need for prison reform.

Due the popularity of our online weekly quizzes held throughout lockdown, and as part of our campaign for The Big Give Christmas Challenge, Liberty Choir held a live quiz night in The Tooting Tram and Social in December. The event, hosted by Quiz Master Alex Douglas, gave volunteers, graduates, and team members the opportunity to reconnect, have fun and raise some funds for the charity.

After an engaging and far-reaching social media campaign across all platforms highlighting the importance of singing for mental health and wellbeing, Liberty Choir raised almost £52,000 (with Gift Aid) during The Big Give Christmas Challenge week, smashing our target of £40,000 and raising almost £20,000 more than in 2020.

Our Social Media Editor interviewed volunteers, graduates, and team members about Liberty Choir and why it is so special to them, to feature in a series of short videos shared through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok. This helped to grow this year's donor base to 199. Our success in this campaign has formed part of our strategy for future campaigns, where we plan to emulate the use of social media to reach more people than ever before.

2021 has brought Liberty Choir challenges and many more opportunities, which we have met with tenacity, passion and always with a song in our heart. The sobering realities faced by prisoners every day have been our driving force throughout a year of uncertainty and restriction, with the words written in their letters and cards becoming our mantra when faced with difficulties to overcome;

"If I hadn't joined the choir, I'd never have become the man I am today. It gave me empathy for others, allowed me to open myself up. Liberty Choir helped me to change and make the life I want to lead. It helped me to be open and honest. Choir was like pressing the honesty button and rebooting. I will take everything from that and lead the life I want to lead." - Stuart, Liberty Choir Graduate.

Liberty Choir would like to thank our existing funders, some of whom have supported us from our first year in 2014, including Stephen Fry and Ian Hislop, The Arts Council and Trusthouse.

Special thanks go to our Patrons David Gilmour CBE and Cherie Blair CBE, and our Ambassadors; Jenny Agutter OBE, Michael Gove, Kate Ruby, Ross Bell and Tim Bryan.

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We also extend much appreciation to new and recent sources of support, such as The Bromley Trust, Garfield Weston, The Prince of Wales Charitable Fund, Swire and Chapman Charitable.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit

- Weekly radio shows - Liberty Choir Radio – broadcast in prisons in England and Wales
- Development, production, and broadcast of radio series *The Six Building Blocks of Modern Music*, and the development and production of *48 Songs: How music saved my life* for broadcast in 2022, through National Prison Radio to the whole prison estate in England and Wales (100 prisons, audience share circa 60,000 prisoners)
- Supporting the reconciliations of Liberty Choir graduates with their family members
- Maintaining contact with a large proportion of ex-offenders, supporting them in their rehabilitation
- Influencing key members of the Criminal Justice community in the benefits of the arts towards behavioural change
- Developing a model that can be replicated across the prison estate
- Maintaining and developing relationships with prison partners in preparation for a return to live rehearsals in prisons
- Supporting prisoners during COVID restrictions by providing donated art and crafts materials, books, reading glasses and educational materials
- Supporting prison staff by arranging events outside of prisons at which our volunteer base provided tea, coffee, cake, and refreshments during the staff lunch break
- Bringing the outside community into prison creating awareness and tolerance of marginalised communities by running a workshop session at HMP&YOI Downview (in-between national lockdowns)

Summary of the main activities during the period

- Awarded Best Arts Charity by The Big Give in January 2021, following our participation in The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2020, during which we raised over £34,000
- Continued development of Liberty Choir Radio by producing and broadcasting shows over National Prison Radio to a listenership of over 60,000
- Encouraging volunteers to become safely active during the pandemic by letter-writing, collecting donations of art and reading materials for prisoners, and to attend events to thank and support prison staff
- Recruitment and training of new musical directors and accompanists in preparation for the expansion into new prison sites
- Recruitment of our first full-time permanent employee in the role of Operations and Partnerships Manager
- Enlisting the services of a part-time Social Media Editor
- The Liberty Choir Development Team held their first fundraising event, bringing in £5000 and raising awareness of our work
- Liberty Choir held a workshop with the women at HMP&YOI Downview in-between COVID lockdown restrictions

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- A live quiz night held at the Tooting Tram and Social to provide much needed community and connection to our volunteers, graduates, and team members
- A broad and engaging social media campaign to support our fundraising during The Big Give 2021 Christmas Challenge week, during which we raised almost £52,000

Risks and Risk Management

The Charity trustees regularly review and assess the risks faced by the charity in all areas of its work and plan for the management of those risks. Risk is an everyday part of charitable activity and managing it effectively is essential if the trustees are to achieve their key objectives and safeguard the charity's funds and assets.

The Trustees have discussed and set a risk framework that allows them to:

- identify the major risks that apply to the charity
- make decisions about how to respond to the risks they face

In particular the trustees have considered:

- Governance Risk, including strategy and direction
- Operational risk including staff and volunteer safety
- Financial Risk including cash flow, reserves and diversity of income
- Environmental risk including government policy and public perception

The charity's policy on reserves

The Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring that we manage our resources responsibly, and that we act in the best interests of the organisation and the people we serve. The Board has responsibility for approving and monitoring the implementation of this policy.

To ensure that there is no significant disruption to our charitable activities, holding appropriate reserves will enable the organisation to respond to any unforeseen reduction in income (for example when income does not reach expected levels); or additional expenditure (for example when projects overrun, or unplanned events occur).

The amount of reserves held would provide short-term financial security until long-term solutions can be established.

As agreed by the Board of Trustees, Liberty Choir will hold the sum of **£30,000** in reserve funds. The reserve amount was set based on Liberty Choirs contractual responsibilities to its employees.

This amount will cover salary and the associated pension and National Insurance payments for a period of 3 months for:

- 1 x Full Time Contracted Operations and Partnerships Manager
- 1 x Full Time Contracted Organisation Administrator

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The reserve amount can only be spent when:

- The charity is experiencing financial difficulty and the amount of unrestricted funds available is insufficient to pay the monthly salary of one or both contracted employees
- The charity is ceasing operations and the funds are required to fulfil contractual salary obligations and associated pension and National Insurance contribution of one or both employees

When the amount of unrestricted funding held reaches the reserve fund amount of **£30,000**, the Project Director will convene an urgent financial planning meeting with the Board of Trustees. In the interim:

- Prison programme operations will be paused pending the outcome of the discussion with the Board of Trustees
- Freelance contractors and consultant arrangements not required for the essential core operations of the charity will be paused pending the outcome of the discussion with the Board of Trustees

The reserves policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees in January 2023.

Reserves are to be built up from the unrestricted (earned) income. The level of reserves is to be calculated and monitored every 12 months. The Reserves Policy is to be reviewed annually and whenever there are significant changes for the organisation.

Financial Review

During the year the charity received £162,284 (2020: £206,437) (2019: £172,111) in grants, donations and fundraising and spent £158,484 (2019: £141,001) (2019: £153,277) on its activities, giving a surplus of £3,800 (2020: £65,436) (2019: £18,835) in the year under examination. This, together with the surplus from last year, means the group moves forward into 2022 with £92,165.

Trustees' responsibilities

Under the Charities Act 2011, the Trustees are required to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year which gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year, and of its receipts and payments in the year. In preparing the statement, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently

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- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable Accounting Standards and Statement of Recommended Practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the statement of accounts, and:
- Prepare the financial statements of the ongoing concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its operations.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity at that time and to enable the Trustees to ensure that the financial statements comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) FRS 102.

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.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed Sheila Jones Date: 28 October 2022

Name SHEILA JONES Position Trustee

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**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Liberty Choir UK**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31st December 2021.

Reporting period

Liberty Choir UK was registered with the Charity Commission on the 12th July 2017, but delayed the vesting day until the 1st January 2018. These accounts span the period from the 1st January to 31st December 2021,

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, 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.

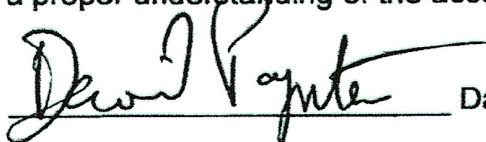
Independent examiner's statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or

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 in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Date 28 October 2022

David Poynter
Independent Examiner

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Receipts & payments account
for the period ended 31st December 2021

	Note	Restricted funds 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Total Funds £	Total Funds 2020 £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
<u>Income and Endowments from:</u>					
Donations, legacies and grants:					
Grants and donations	2	95,654	62,212	157,866	205,987
Charitable activities	3	-	4,418	4,418	451
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		95,654	66,630	162,284	206,437
OUTGOING RESOURCES					
<u>Expenditure on:</u>					
Charitable activities	4	85,959	72,525	158,484	141,001
Governance costs		-	-	-	-
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		85,959	72,525	158,484	141,001
NET INCOME(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR		9,695	(5,895)	3,800	65,436
TOTAL FUNDS AT 1 January 2021		61,467	26,898	88,365	22,928
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 December 2021		71,162	21,003	92,165	88,365

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Statement of assets and liabilities
at 31 December 2021

	Note	Restricted funds 2021	Unrestricted funds 2021	Total 2021	Total 2020
CURRENT ASSETS					
Cash at bank and in hand @ 31.12.20		71,162	19,989	91,151	88,365
Debtor – HMRC		-	1,014	1,014	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year		-	-	-	-
Net assets		71,162	21,003	92,165	88,365
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year		-	-	-	-
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>71,162</u>	<u>21,003</u>	<u>92,165</u>	<u>88,365</u>
REPRESENTED BY:					
Accumulated fund b/f				88,365	22,929
Net profit/(loss)				3,800	65,436
				<u>92,165</u>	<u>88,365</u>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed Sheila Jones Dated 28 October 2022

Print SHEILA JONES Position Trustee

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Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: 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 (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

1.2 Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charities ability to continue as a going concern.

1.3 Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

1.4 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

1.5 Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Gifts in kind donated for distribution are included at valuation and recognised as income when they are distributed to the projects. Gifts donated for resale are included as income when they are sold. Donated facilities are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified, and a third party is bearing the cost. No amounts are included in the financial statements for services donated by volunteers.

Intangible income, which comprises donated services, is included in income at a valuation which is an estimate of the financial cost borne by the donor where such a cost is quantifiable and measurable. No income is recognised where there is no financial cost borne by a third party. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

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Income tax recoverable in relation to investment income is recognised at the time the investment income is receivable. In the year under examination, no investment income was received.

1.6 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on a receipts and payments basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation of activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities, they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Fund raising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities. Support costs are those costs incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity and include project management carried out at the principal address or outreach.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements. In the year under examination no funds were expended on governance costs.

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Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021

2. INCOME FROM GRANTS, LEGACIES & DONATIONS

	Restricted funds 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
	<u>95,654</u>	<u>66,630</u>	<u>162,284</u>	<u>206,437</u>
 Grants and donations include the following:				
Donations from individuals	50,504	52,674	103,178	38,483
Gift Aid on donations		9,538	9,538	3,012
Grants	45,150		45,150	
Arts Council	-	-	-	<u>164,492</u>
	<u>95,654</u>	<u>62,212</u>	<u>157,866</u>	<u>205,987</u>

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3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - FUNDRAISING

	Restricted funds 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Income from charitable activities Fundraising	-	4,418	4,418	451

4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Restricted funds 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Charitable activities				
Choir costs	10,100	6,985	17,085	47,608
Charitable and project development	50,153	51,194	101,347	41,608
National Prison Radio	-	-	-	18,180
Fundraising costs	-	5,391	5,391	102
Travel and subsistence	500	6,211	6,711	29
Promotion and publicity	-	-	-	630
Accounts	-	1,081	1,081	1,478
Bank charges	-	88	88	135
Events	-	-	-	-
Printing, postage & stationery	-	-	-	829
Licences	-	-	-	-
Memberships	-	-	-	25
Administration and office costs	5,000	-	5,000	21,547
Equipment	-	-	-	7,530
IT & website	-	1,575	1,575	1,562
Training	-	-	-	15
Salaries	20,206	-	20,206	-
	<u>85,959</u>	<u>72,525</u>	<u>158,484</u>	<u>141,001</u>

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Staff costs were as follows:	2021	2020
	£	£
Salaries	20,206	-
Freelance staff costs	<u>102,359</u>	<u>109,288</u>
	<u>122,565</u>	<u>109,288</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2021	2020
Management, administration & development	4	4
Choirs & accompanists	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>

No single remuneration amounted to more than £60,000

During the year, no trustees received any benefits in kind

During the year, no Trustees received any reimbursement of expense