



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for 2024

From: 01-01-2024 financial year start date

To: 31-12-2024 financial year end date

Charity name: HURN COURT OPERA

Charity registration number: 1177609

Objectives and Activities

| | SORP reference | |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document | Para 1.17 | To advance, improve, develop and maintain public appreciation of the art and science of music in any way that the trustees see fit, including through public concerts, recitals and competitions. |
| Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts. | Para 1.17 and 1.19 | See attached sheet 'Summary of main activities'. |
| Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit | Para 1.18 | We confirm that the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit in deciding upon the activities of the charity. |

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

| | SORP reference | |
|--|----------------|---|
| Policy on grant making | Para 1.38 | N/a |
| Policy on social investment including program related investment | Para 1.38 | N/a |
| Contribution made by volunteers | Para 1.38 | Trustees and other volunteer members of the management team bring a wide range of skills to the charity, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director-level business management• Opera production• Artistic direction• Vocal coaching• Governance and policy• Strategic and business planning• Financial management and planning• Fundraising |

| | | |
|-------|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and PR • Risk planning and management • Project management <p>In addition, approx £60,000 was provided in kind by volunteers towards the cost of producing this year's opera Don Giovanni</p> |
| Other | | |

Achievements and Performance

| | SORP reference | |
|---|----------------|--|
| Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole. | Para 1.20 | See attached sheet 'Summary of achievements and impact'. |

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| Achievements against objectives set | Para 1.41 | |
| Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set | Para 1.41 | |
| Investment performance against objectives | Para 1.41 | |
| Other | | |

Financial Review

| | | |
|--|-----------|---|
| Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period | Para 1.21 | As at 31-12-2024, HCO had funds amounting to £85,093.80 and a surplus for the year of £8,810.50 |
| Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held | Para 1.22 | <p>The charity's finance policies have been reviewed during the year. The policy on reserves has been re-stated as follows:</p> <p>HCO has no permanent employees and no premises and, as a result, no significant overheads. Therefore, no specific fund for Operating Reserves has been set aside.</p> <p>HCO aims not to enter into any commitments that might leave the charity with a significant deficit in the event of cancellation or disappointing ticket sales. Additionally, HCO will not plan to make a loss on any activity which could not be covered from reserves or additional fundraising.</p> <p>This Reserves Policy is enabled by the unpaid work of the Trustees and other volunteers.</p> <p>Whilst there is no specific reserve set, the Trustees ensure that funds held are sufficient to cover any potential loss.</p> |
| Amount of reserves held | Para 1.22 | The charity currently holds funds of £50,000 in a fixed term deposit account with Lloyds Bank, which are deemed to include sufficient cover for any potential loss |
| Reasons for holding zero reserves | Para 1.22 | See above |
| Details of fund materially in deficit | Para 1.24 | None |
| Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern | Para 1.23 | |

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising) | Para 1.47 | <p>HCO's principal sources of funding in 2024 were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ticket sales • Patrons and Friends subscriptions • Donations and sponsorships from private individuals • Funding from grant-making bodies |
| Investment policy and | Para 1.46 | |

| | | |
|---|-----------|---|
| objectives including any social investment policy adopted | | |
| A description of the principal risks facing the charity | Para 1.46 | The principal risk is that a performance cannot happen or has disappointing tickets sales, leading to a deficit. This drives our caution in financial management. |
| Other | | |

Structure, Governance and Management

| | | |
|---|-----------|--|
| Description of charity's trusts: | | |
| Type of governing document | Para 1.25 | Constitution |
| How is the charity constituted? | Para 1.25 | CIO |
| Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees | Para 1.25 | Appointed by a meeting of trustees after appropriate interviews and references |

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

| | | |
|---|-----------|--|
| Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees | Para 1.51 | |
| The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works | Para 1.51 | |
| Relationship with any related parties | Para 1.51 | |
| Other | | |

Reference and Administrative details

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Charity name | HURN COURT OPERA |
| Other name the charity uses | None |
| Registered charity number | 1177609 |
| Charity's principal address | 113 Middle Hill Road, Colehill Wimborne Dorset BH21 2HL |

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

| | Trustee name | Office (if any) | Dates acted if not for whole year | Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Michael Hart | Chair | | |
| 2 | Andrew Foot | Treasurer | | |
| 3 | Rosie Clay | Company Secretary to 31/12/2024 | Resigned 31/12/2024 | |
| 4 | Joy Atkinson | | | |
| 5 | Jeffrey Sutherland-Kay | Company Secretary from 01/01/2025 | Appointed 02/06/2024 | Appointed at a meeting of the trustees on 02/06/2024 |
| 6 | | | | |

Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| Director name | | |
| None | | |
| | | |

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Trustee name | Dates acted if not for whole year | |
| None | | |
| | | |

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

| | |
|---|------|
| Description of the assets held in this capacity | None |
| Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects | N/a |
| Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets | N/a |

Additional information (optional)

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

| Type of adviser | Name | Address |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Independent examiner | Ms S Cowsill MA | 6 Mallard Road, Wimborne BH21 2NJ |
| Social media | Ms Lara Johnson-Perkins | |
| Marketing and PR (from 01/01/2025) | Ms Lizzie Hawes | |
| | | |

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

| |
|------|
| None |
|------|

Exemptions from disclosure

Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

| |
|------|
| None |
|------|

Other optional information

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)



Full name(s)

Jeffrey Edward Sutherland-Kay

Position (eg Secretary,
Chair, etc)

Date

01 May 2025

Hurn Court Opera

Summary of main activities in 2024 in relation to our public benefit purpose

Opera – Mozart's Don Giovanni

9th April, Regent Centre, Christchurch

11th April, Theatre Royal, Winchester

13th April, Coade Hall Theatre, Blandford Forum

Event details

- Three professional performances of a fully staged opera: eight solo roles and nine chorus parts were taken by emerging professional singers selected either through the HCO Singer of the Year Competition (see below) or by open audition
- Production supported by an orchestra of 15 professional players
- Production sponsors drawn from our Patrons, Friends and supporters

Relevance to public benefit

The performances advanced and maintained public appreciation of music in the following ways:

- Over 900 people attended across three largely sold-out venues
- Performances took place in locations where there is little opportunity for live opera, drawing in local people, some new to the art form
- Ticket prices were affordable, ranging from £10 to £38, making high quality opera accessible for a wide group of people, including under 18s and students
- By employing and fairly remunerating singers at the start of their careers, the performances helped a) to provide opportunities for young artists to develop their experience and b) to help deliver a pipeline of talent for the future

Masterclass

14th July, Merley House, Wimborne

Event details

- Led by Roderick Williams OBE, highly esteemed British baritone and composer
- Three young singers, either then at, or recently graduated from, conservatoires, took part; they performed for Roderick who coached each of them in turn
- Event sponsored by a Hurn Court Opera Patron

Relevance to public benefit

The masterclass advanced and maintained public appreciation of music in the following ways:

- Event open to the public, and free to under 18s and those in full-time education, thus increasing understanding of classical vocal music and giving encouragement to interested young people
- 78 people attended in a location where high-quality vocal masterclasses rarely occur
- The participants gained from the experience of performing in a public masterclass and from the feedback given by an eminent member of the profession; again, this contributed to the opportunities for young artists and helped to nurture talent for the future

Prizewinners' Recitals

7th September, St Paul's church, Winchester

15th September, Merley House, Wimborne

Event details

Two prizewinners from the HCO Singer of the Year Competition 2023 were invited to deliver a recital before a public audience in two venues, showcasing their skills.

Relevance to public benefit

The recitals advanced and maintained public appreciation of music in the following ways:

- 95 people attended in two locations where high-quality, professional vocal recitals are unusual

- Admission was free to the under 18s and those in full-time education, so encouraging young people's interest in the art form
- The performers gained from the recital-giving experience, through HCO's provision of such opportunities for young artists and, in so doing, helping to nurture talent for the future
- Recitals help to develop the public's appreciation of the art song repertoire as well as of opera
- These recitals were sponsored by a Hurn Court Opera Patron.

HCO Singer of the Year Competition 2024, in collaboration with The Grange Festival

Semi-finals and finals, 2nd November, Harvey Hall, St Swithun's School, Winchester

Event details

- An annual national competition open to emerging professional singers aged 20-29 years
- Attracted 84 entries (up from 70 in 2023)
- Preliminary rounds judged from video recordings submitted online
- Ten semi-finalists invited to attend the live semi-finals and finals held before a public audience and eminent judging panel, chaired by Michael Chance CBE, Artistic Director of The Grange Festival and including Roslind Plowright OBE, British mezzo-soprano and James Black, director of James Black Management
- Thanks to our Patrons, over £6,000 in prizes was available, with the winner of the First Prize also eligible for a place in The Grange Festival Chorus for 2025, subject to suitability

Relevance to public benefit

The Competition advanced and maintained public appreciation of music in the following ways:

- Semi-finals and finals were open to the public, with free admission for under 18s and those in full-time education.
- An audience of 75 attended.
- The singers' programmes and the judges' adjudications increased the audience's understanding of vocal repertoire and the qualities required of a successful performer
- Competitions are a key to advancement for young singers, so HCO adds to the opportunities available, not only through putting on the competition but also by providing a panel of eminent judges; the prizes and feedback for the singers present on the day, and the inherent opportunities for future performance, help to develop talent for the future

Christmas Concert

1st December, Church House, Wimborne

Event details

- Annual Christmas Concert performed by five young professional singers with two professional accompanists
- Admission by donation

Relevance to public benefit

The concert advanced and maintained public appreciation of music in the following ways:

- The venue was packed out with 93 people attended.
- Admission was free to the under 18s and those in full-time education, so encouraging young people's interest
- The performers gained concert-giving experience; the event added to the opportunities for young artists, so helping to nurture talent for the future.

Hurn Court Opera

Summary of main achievements 2024, and impact on beneficiaries and society

Opera – Mozart's Don Giovanni

- Provided 17 professional performance opportunities to young singers who were selected either through HCO Singer of the Year competitions or by audition, roles having been advertised on Audition Oracle
- The production was supported by a 15-strong professional orchestra
- The opera fulfils our objective to provide young singers with quality performance opportunities
- The performances attracted almost sell-out audiences in all venues, totalling over 900 local people; heavily discounted tickets were available to under 18s and those in full-time education
- Production attracted an enthusiastic reception from all audiences, including new Friends and Supporters, and encouraged future donations

Recitals and Christmas Concert

- Three events in different locations in Dorset and Hampshire provided 7 professional performance opportunities for selected young singers, accompanied by well-regarded professional pianists; these included a pair of recitals for prizewinners from our 2023 Singer of the Year Competition
- The recitals and concert fulfil our objective to provide young singers with quality performance opportunities
- Two of the three events were sponsored by a Hurn Court Opera Patron.
- The recitals attracted audiences of 95 people, and the Christmas concert attracted a record 93 people; free tickets were available to under 18s and those in full-time education
- The events brought high-quality vocal performances to local people in areas where such events are unusual

Masterclass

- Led in 2024 by the highly esteemed British baritone and composer Roderick Williams OBE; the masterclass comprised three young singers, who were either then at, or had recently graduated from, conservatoires.
- The masterclass fulfils our objective to provide young singers with quality performance opportunities and assists in their professional development
- The event was sponsored by a Hurn Court Opera Patron.
- It attracted an audience of 78 people; free tickets were available to under 18s and those in full-time education
- The masterclass brought high-quality vocal performances to local people in areas where such events are unusual and helped to advance public appreciation of vocal music

Singer of the Year Competition, October/November

- Semi-finals and finals held on 2nd November at Harvey Hall, St Swithun's School, Winchester
- Competition attracted 84 entrants from across the UK (up from 70 in 2023); the preliminary rounds were held online, making entry available to as wide a group as possible

- In 2024 the Competition was again run in collaboration with The Grange Festival, a respected professional opera festival based at The Grange, Arlesford, Hampshire; The Grange Festival augmented the First Prize with the offer of a place in the chorus of The Grange Festival in 2025, subject to suitability
- The three judges were Michael Chance CBE, Artistic Director and CEO of The Grange Festival (Chair), the highly respected British mezzo soprano Rosalind Plowright OBE and James Black, director of opera artists management agency James Black Management
- Ten semi-finalists performed live at the Finals Day, held before a public audience
- Over £6,000 in prizes, donated by Hurn Court Opera supporters, was awarded to the four finalists; all the singers would also be considered for future performance opportunities with Hurn Court Opera, and the first prize winner for performance opportunities with The Grange Festival; both the prize money and the chance of recital and/or opera work enhance opportunities for young singers in the UK
- Audience day tickets enabled the audience to come and go through the day and hear the adjudications from the distinguished judges
- Audience participation was encouraged through voting to choose the winner of the Audience Prize
- Free admission for under18s and those in full-time education was designed to encourage attendance by young people

Patrons and Friends

- The revised two-tier supporter scheme introduced in 2022 (Patrons £500pa for one person/£750pa for a couple; Friends £40/60pa) continued to attract new members
- By the end of 2024 membership had increased to 30 Patrons and 83 Friends

Fundraising

- £13,450 was raised from individuals to sponsor roles in support of the 2024 production of Don Giovanni; this represents an increase in sponsorships of £4,800 against the previous year, demonstrating HCO's increasing success at developing deeper ties with the membership
- £7,160 was received from trust funds
- Plans were made for an appeal to raise funds for our 2025 opera (Rossini's La Cenerentola), focusing on recitals in December 2024 and February 2025

Communications

- The database comprising Patrons, Friends and Supporters (the last being those who sign up to receive our mailouts) is managed on a Mailchimp platform, enabling us further to improve the quality of our communications, to obtain feedback on how they are received and to support data protection

HURN COURT OPERA SUMMARY ACCOUNTS FOR 01 JANUARY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

| | Notes | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2024 | Total 2023 |
|-------------------------------------|-------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| INCOME | | | | | |
| Charitable activities | 1 | 115.00 | 29,770.21 | 29,885.21 | 26,403.53 |
| Subscriptions, donations and grants | 2 | 20,392.48 | 30,660.00 | 51,052.48 | 34,407.89 |
| Gift Aid | | 8,578.70 | - | 8,578.70 | 6,818.95 |
| Bank interest | | 349.04 | - | 349.04 | 822.74 |
| Total | | 29,435.22 | 60,430.21 | 89,865.43 | 68,453.11 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | | |
| Charitable activities | 1 | 21,205.40 | 56,270.21 | 77,475.61 | 60,234.30 |
| Promotion of charitable activities | | 2,547.02 | - | 2,547.02 | 7,383.46 |
| Central expenses | 3 | 1,032.30 | - | 1,032.30 | 675.00 |
| Total | | 24,784.72 | 56,270.21 | 81,054.93 | 68,292.76 |
| NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) | | | | 8,810.50 | 160.35 |

Notes

1. Charitable activities are focused on meeting the charity's public good objectives through the provision of performance opportunities for young professional singers in areas which have limited access to live opera and operatic recitals
2. Friends and Patrons' subscriptions plus general donations (unrestricted funds) represent 40% of the total, with donations towards specific performances and funds from grant-making bodies (restricted funds) represent 60%
3. Insurance and general admin costs

HURN COURT OPERA BALANCE SHEET 31 DECEMBER 2024

| | Notes | 31 December 2024 | | | 31 December 2023 | | |
|--|-------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds |
| FIXED ASSETS | | | | | | | |
| None | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | | | | | | |
| Debtors | | 10,400.00 | - | 10,400.00 | 7,251.42 | - | 7,251.42 |
| Cash at bank | | 78,933.80 | 6,160.00 | 85,093.80 | 74,283.30 | 2,000.00 | 76,283.30 |
| NET CURRENT ASSETS | | 89,333.80 | 6,160.00 | 95,493.80 | 81,534.72 | 2,000.00 | 83,534.72 |
| CREDITORS | | | | | | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES | | 89,333.80 | 6,160.00 | 95,493.80 | 81,534.72 | 2,000.00 | 83,534.72 |

Notes

1. The charity has no premises and no other tangible assets

Hurn Court Opera Company
113, Middlehill Road

Registered Charity Number 1177609

APRIL 4, 2025

Dr Andrew Foot

RE: Examination of 2024-2025 Year end accounts for Hurn Court Opera Company.

Dear Andrew,

I have completed my examination.

I confirm that no matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- proper accounting records were not kept
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached. As in previous years, I was very grateful for your assistance in producing clear and complete records for examination.

Warm regards,

S J Cowsill



Ms. Susan Cowsill MA

**6 Mallard Road
Wimborne
Dorset
BH21 2NJ
04/04/2025**