

The Davey Consort CIO

Annual Report for Year Ending 31st December 2023.

In 2023 the trustee body sought to re-focus on the Davey Consort's long-term charitable objects.

This process led the trustees not only to review not only long-term projects and their viability and general succession planning for trustees but also to consider how the CIO might weather an existential crisis, for example the loss of its founders, for career or other reasons.

The trustees strongly believe the charitable objects of the CIO continue to meet a need identified on its foundation and that everything the CIO does should now reflect ensuring the CIO's future sustainability.

Objectives:

The educational and outreach ambitions of the CIO rested initially on raising sufficient funds to acquire the 13.5 rank instrument which had been commissioned from Master Organ Builder, Bernard Aubertin and install it in the home of the consort, the recently restored, Wardell, Grade II Listed, Church of St Birinus in Dorchester on Thames.

Since its installation in November 2021 there have been various matters requiring a deal of trustee time. These arose from the fact that the instrument took rather longer to settle, and the CIO needed to invest in a sustained maintenance programme to improve its voicing and this in turn was further greatly complicated by the decision of Bernard Aubertin to retire and close his workshop.

The trustees therefore had both to delay completion of the contract with Bernard Aubertin (according to its terms) until the voicing issues were satisfactorily resolved. Again, this took longer than was expected and consequently the final payment of the organ contract was not made until the financial year of 2024. However, as these matters are now all successfully resolved, it is possible to report that the organ project is successfully completed.

The Davey Consort's established reliable programme of sacred music at St Birinus each Sunday during Holy Week and Easter, and on other major feasts, continued through 2023 and into the current year of 2024. Our liturgical musical repertoire continues to blend plainchant with sacred polyphony but now it is envisaged that the range of music will include baroque organ masses and other rarely played instrumental music as a general accompaniment to Mass.

Our archivist, Francis Bevan has been transcribing many works by Palestrina which have previously been neglected. These have formed a core part of the programme of music for 2023-4. Continued emphasis is also placed on English composers of the period including Parsons, Tallis and Byrd. The music of Byrd for example was central to the Davey Consort's concert at the St Birinus Music Festival at Dorchester Abbey in 2023.

The inaugural St Birinus Music Festival in 2023 – both at Dorchester Abbey and at the church of St Birinus itself – in November last year proved to be a great success meeting the CIO's objective to bring world class performance of sacred music to a wider non-denominational audience in the South Oxfordshire area. As well as a concert from the Davey consort, concerts included performances from young musicians from the Royal Academy of Music and a recital by Sophie Bevan and Ryan Wigglesworth of a repertoire of lieder later given at the Wigmore Hall.

To sustain both music on Sundays and the Festival, the trustees believe it necessary in the longer term to establish a children's choir as well as vocal and organ scholarships. With

these it would be possible establish a program of wider educational outreach. Educational objects remain the beating heart of the Davey Consort's endeavour thereby creating both a centre of excellence for the performance of sacred music primarily in the context of Catholic liturgy and but also as an active musical enterprise in the wider community of South Oxfordshire.

To take this ambitious mission forward requires a widening and deepening the trustee base. This is not straightforward since our geographical location inevitably reduces the range of suitable candidates who are able to participate actively. We expect in the course of 2025 to have two and possibly three further trustees join the CIO. Trustees meanwhile remain immensely grateful for the support of all the CIO's patrons whilst also recognising the need to find an effective mechanism to use our wonderful patrons to amplify the work of the CIO. This being particularly the case with the music patrons - Sir James MacMillan and Sir Stephen Hough.

Activities:

Music for Sunday Mass as noted includes Renaissance polyphony. Gregorian chant and polyphony form the core of Davey Consort repertoire but with our newly installed organ we have also featured works by Charpentier, Mozart and Haydn in recent times. This year we were able to find sponsors which enabled the Davey Consort for example to include singing of the rarely performed *Credos* from Mozart Masses.

The Consort fully realises both the spiritual and artistic intent of these composers, by offering a unique opportunity for worshippers and a wider public, including artists, students of liturgy and Christian worship and historians, to experience sacred music within the fullest integrity of religious expression.

We have also kept the performance archive of live streams during lockdowns.

We have founded a Children's choir, but its success is now hampered by a lack of properly designed rehearsal space which will meet artistic need but also Health & Safety requirements.

The Aubertin Organ:

The Aubertin Organ is now enabling our vision for a world class music repertoire of the Davey Consort to be realised. Since its installation several renowned organists have come to play at St Birinus including Robert Quinney and Matthew Martin. We are now discussing the formal appointment of a deputy organist to enable the programme of music to be sustained throughout the year including summer months.

Achievements and Performance:

Trustees have compiled and updated the Foundation document that sets out a vision for the future of the Davey Consort. Special priority for Safeguarding policy and other matters of practice related to management of singers of potential scholars continue to be a priority for the trustees.

It has developed policies for Scholarships and their award.

It has made approaches to a wide range of music and arts bodies including successful applications to the Portman, Garfield Weston Foundation and Backstage Trust.

We have begun an active search for new donors to take forward the ambitious project for Phase II to build a state-of-the-art rehearsal space which will enable the children's choir to prosper and be a place to house our musical instruments.

The CIO's growing library still needs a proper home. In time we hope to add to it the valuable archive of renowned musicologist Dr Mary Berry, who played a decisive role preserving singing of plainchant and who is buried in the cemetery of St Birinus. However, the trustees believe that development project should be reimagined and hope to complete a review in 2025.

The plans continue to rest of both spaces being located within in the parish demesne of St Birinus Dorchester-on-Thames. Thus, the hardest problem of acquiring suitable land has already been met in principle. Trustees have commissioned a design and preliminary planning work together with an initial budget, as the basis for the next phase of fundraising and as the entire demesne is listed, we have sought Pre-planning which has been agreed with South Oxfordshire District Council.

The Davey Consort will also continue to build links into the wider county - for example by partnering with Oxford County Council Library Service or by partnering with schools and other educational resources. It is also considering a pilot to bring music into Huntercombe Prison which has a high number of Catholics, but the realisation of these ambitions will rest on a scholarship programme.

The future -

The CIO sustained momentum in 2023 although the completion of the Aubertin project has caused trustees to consider how its objects may be met in the future.

The CIO has demonstrated a continuing capacity to engage effectively with donors and to share its vision. It has been able to attract both new trustees and significant new patrons who are able to share this vision more widely and attract new supporters. It recognises the need for a wider range of professional skills and a creating more sustainable devolved structure to implement decisions more effectively and raise funds more dynamically.

Its future rests on launching a successful friends and supporters base to cover running costs of the choir; on establishing scholarships; and on developing a wider educational and performance remit. These objects require trustees to raise funds for proper rehearsal space and equally space for the archive which must include that of Mary Berry. These are central to the works of the next five years.

With these, and with a sufficient endowment to cover scholarships and the modest but essential administration needs, the Davey Consort will be able to deliver its charitable objects. Trustees believe the new St Birinus Festival will also help attract young singers and instrumentalists.

The ambitions to fund to scholarships, and provide a new archive and rehearsal space, must be undergirded by strong financial controls. All future works must have costs underwritten by grants or donations. They can proceed only once fully funded.

The charitable objectives still require much from trustees. However, we have secured notable success in the recent past which still makes possible to be pragmatically optimistic for the CIO's long-term future.

John Murphy

Chair

The Davey Consort CIO

Michaelmas Day 2024

2: Statement of Assets & Liabilities

Assets	£	Liabilities	£
Pipe organ (paid to date)	301,835		
Transcribed music	1,500		
Harpichord	500		
Streaming equipment	1,650		
Cash funds	26,567		
Total Assets	332,052	Total Liabilities	0

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Print name:

JOHN MURPHY

Print name:



Date of approval:

21st October 2024

Date of approval:

Davey Consort CIO

Receipts & Payments Accounts

For the year ended 31st December 2023

Receipts & Payments

Receipts	Year to 31.12.23 £	Year to 31.12.22 £
Fundraising	8,832	1,065
Grants	-	61,000
Gift Aid	-	-
Choir (Friends)	1,330	990
Concerts & events	8,271	-
Bank refund	32	-
Total Receipts	18,465	63,055
Cash Funds at period end	26,567	55,308

Payments	Year to 31.12.23 £	Year to 31.12.22 £
Choir	12,282	10,807
Organist	700	-
Concerts/pilgrimage	2,645	-
Website	432	347
Administration & printing*	1,730	1,550
Legal & Professional fees	416	384
Instrument maintenance	4,411	4,180
Office equipment	4,167	-
Organ payments	18,186	-
Architectural plans	2,237	-
Total Payments	47,206	17,268