

The Davey Consort CIO

Annual Report for Year Ending 31st December 2024.

In 2024 the trustee body continued with its re-focus on the Davey Consort's long-term charitable objects.

This process led the trustees to review the viability of their long-term projects and general succession planning for trustees and 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 to install it in the home of the consort, the recently restored, Wardell designed, 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 final voicing of the Aubertin ran through 2024 and into 2025 when the works were completed this last Spring. Despite these difficulties, the Davey Consort sustained its programme of sacred music at St Birinus each Sunday, during Holy Week and Easter, and on other major feasts. Its liturgical musical repertoire continues to blend plainchant with sacred polyphony. It has also had some notable success in performing sacred music by Mozart for which the revoiced organ is well suited.

Our archivist, Francis Bevan, has continued his project of transcribing many previously neglected works by Palestrina which have been performed by the

consort. They have formed a core part of the programme of music for 2024-5. The Palestrina for example was central to the Davey Consort's concert at the St Birinus Music Festival at Dorchester Abbey in 2024. There is also continued emphasis on performing works by English composers of the period including Parsons, Tallis and Byrd.

The inaugural St Birinus Music Festival in 2023 – both at Dorchester Abbey and at the church of St Birinus itself – was succeeded by our second festival which proved a similar 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 masterclass by Sophie Bevan and Ryan Wigglesworth and a talk featuring Dr David Starkey with Catholic music from the post Reformation century.

The 2024 festival also featured a liturgical festival featuring the Southwell Consort and Davey Consort singing the entire sequence of Sacred Hours and the Masses for All Saints and All Souls. These parts of the festival were free and open to the public. They drew a large new audience into the Abbey.

This led trustees to consider whether a festival showcasing Catholic music in the context of its ceremonial worship, much as the Edington Festival does for Anglican Communion, might offer model for the future. Noting that Dorchester on Thames was once again on a new pilgrimage route, it was also thought there would be advantages to moving such a festival into July when the summer feast of St Birinus was observed in medieval times. Trustees decided future organisation of this festival should be collaborative enterprise, which might be managed without consuming too much trustee time.

It was noted further that our ambitions to establish a children's choir as well as vocal and organ scholarships might be more readily developed in the context of this newly focused St Birinus Festival as it offers a platform to showcase the program of wider educational outreach.

Educational objects remain the beating heart of the Davey Consort's endeavour to create 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 has not proven straightforward since our geographical location

reduces the range of suitable candidates who are able to participate actively. In the course of 2025, we plan to for two and possibly three further trustees join the CIO. We have also reorganised our structure to enable the CIO to draw on new talent for specific fundraising endeavours.

Future years will also be devoted to using this new structure to amplify the parts played by our wonderful patrons. This being particularly the case with the music patrons - Sir James MacMillan and Sir Stephen Hough.

This year sadly marked the death of our founding patron and inspiration, HRH Katherine, Duchess of Kent whose love of music was widely known. The Requiem Mass at Dorchester Abbey which forms part of the 2025 St Birinus Festival will be offered for the repose of her soul. It will feature the Victoria setting of the requiem, with sagbutts and cornetts.

We are immensely grateful to the duchess's son, George, Earl of St Andrews who has very generously agreed to become patron in his mother's place.

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. In 2024 we were able to find sponsors who enabled the Davey Consort 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.

The Children's Choir is now established but its success is hampered by a lack of properly designed rehearsal space which will meet artistic need but also Health & Safety requirements.

This is now the priority for the next phase of CIO fundraising.

The Aubertin Organ:

Since its installation, the Aubertin Organ has attracted much interest. Several renowned organists have come to play at St Birinus including Robert Quinney and Matthew Martin. We are considering 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 relating to both the management of singers and of potential scholars continues as a priority for the trustees.

It has developed policies for Scholarships and their award.

It has established a Children's Choir.

It has identified a focus for its festival which will give it a unique place in the region.

It has widened its trustee body and created a mechanism to involve younger skilled professionals in the project.

It has identified the need to establish systematic sponsorship for the CIO and the festival. And it is now embarked upon a process of fundraising for the larger second project of creating a dedicated rehearsal space for a children's choir and use of scholars.

John Murphy, Chair

The Davey Consort CIO

Michaelmas Day, 2025

Davey Consort CIO

Receipts & Payments Accounts

For the year ended 31st December 2024

Receipts & Payments

Receipts	Year to 31.12.24 £	Year to 31.12.23 £	Payments	Year to 31.12.24 £	Year to 31.12.23 £
Fundraising	8,010	8,832	Choir	10,781	12,282
Grants	-	-	Organist	1,100	700
Gift Aid	-	-	Concerts/pilgrimage	3,215	2,645
Choir (Friends)	2,175	1,330	Website	340	432
Concerts & events	5,049	8,271	Administration & printing*	1,418	1,730
Bank refund	-	32	Legal & Professional fees	403	416
			Instrument maintenance	2,475	4,411
			Office equipment	-	4,167
			Organ payments	4,000	18,186
			Architectural plans	-	2,237
Total Receipts	15,234	18,465	Total Payments	23,732	47,206
Cash Funds at period end	18,069	26,567			

2: Statement of Assets & Liabilities

Assets	£
Pipe organ (paid to date)	305,835
Transcribed music	1,750
Harpsichord	500
Streaming equipment	1,650
Vestments	12,250
Ombrellino	1,000
Photocopier	3,000
Cash funds	18,069
Total Assets	344,054

Liabilities	£
Total Liabilities	0

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Print name:

Print name:

Date of approval:

Date of approval: