

Polymnia

CIO 1181422

Trustees' Report

1 February 2024 – 31 January 2025

Trustees' Report

The Trustees present the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the period from 1 February 2024 to 31 January 2025. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies and comply with the charity's constitution and applicable law.

Administration details

The principal address of the charity is currently 43 Monellan Crescent, Caldecotte, Milton Keynes, MK7 8NA.

The Trustees

Paul North (Chair)

Gina Johnson

Sophia Farrell-Reed (Treasurer)

Brian Coulstock

Chris Crispus Jones

Kate Atalay

Perry Williams

The management committee

The Trustees together with Jessica Norton (Musical Director).

Accounts Examiner

David Johnson

Structure, governance, and management

Polymnia was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 4 January 2019 and is governed by a constitution adopted on 20 January 2019. Trustees are elected or re-elected at each Annual General Meeting and are eligible for re-election. At every annual general meeting of the members of the CIO, one-third of the charity trustees must retire from office.

Objectives

The objectives of Polymnia are to advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in, and appreciation of, the art and science of music in all its aspects by any means the trustees see fit, including through the presentation of public concerts and recitals.

Activities

Polymnia is a mixed chamber choir, rehearsing and performing mostly in Milton Keynes and the surrounding area. The choir enjoys considerable critical acclaim and typically performs several concerts a year. The choir of about 22 singers performs a wide-ranging repertoire. The requirements for prospective new members are good sight-reading skills, sufficient

confidence to hold a line with only a small number of singers, and the opportunity to work on the music at home. There is an informal audition for all new members, and voice reviews may be conducted from time to time for the whole choir. Periodic rehearsals take place on occasional Friday evenings, usually at the Bow Brickhill Community Hall.

The success of Polymnia is underpinned by a committed membership with a range of musical expertise, a professional Musical Director and the support of family and friends. The choir is accordingly able to undertake exciting and ambitious choral programmes.

Membership

At the beginning of the year the membership of the choir was 23 singers and at the end of the year it was 23 singers.

Musical Director

Jessica Norton was appointed Musical Director in October 2021 and remains in post.

Achievements and Performances

For our first performance of the year we had the pleasure and privilege of singing at Jessica Norton's wedding on 6 April in Huntingdon, including a piece of her own composition. Congratulations to her and her husband Callum.

Our first concert of the year, "Nature Awakens" was performed at St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford on 13 April. Taking the "Sunrise Mass" by Gjeilo as the foundation, Jessica programmed another varied spread of music from Thomas Morley's madrigals to Sting's "Fields of Gold". We were accompanied on the piano by Alex Aitken.

Following our successful visit in 2016, we returned to Mantua in Italy for a short tour from 31 May to 2 June. To help maintain a balanced choir we drafted in 6 singers from other choirs, and were delighted to be joined again by Anna Le Hair. We had hoped to perform in the same festival as previously, but for bureaucratic reasons this was not possible. Our professional tour operators organised 2 concerts, one in the cathedral in Asola (where we were hosted by a local choir) and one in the church of the beautiful walled town of Sabbioneta. We performed the same programme for each concert, mostly sacred music from a range of eras; composers included Tallis, Taverner, Paulus, and Gjeilo.

"Love's Journeys" was the title of our summer concert on 6 July, again in St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford. This time we were accompanied by Craig Greene. Again, Jessica found a wide range of musical styles to bring under this umbrella title, starting with the Ave Maria by Josquin de Prez and finishing with Carly Simon's Let the River Run in which Jess played the bongos! In between, amongst others, there were pieces from Monteverdi, Stroepe and Gjeilo as well as a Bulgarian folk song for the Sopranos/Altos and the traditional Welsh Calon Lan for the Tenors/Basses.

Choir weddings are like buses it seems! On 7 September we joined the choir of St Peter and St Paul's Olney for another wedding, this time for our soprano Francesca Vernon. Congratulations to Fran and her husband Hugh.

We returned to St Barnabas, Linslade on 9 November, for one of our most ambitious concerts to date, Brahms' "Ein Deutsches Requiem". Craig Greene accompanied us on the piano doing an amazing job of replacing an orchestra, or 4 hands on a piano which is the other usual arrangement. In keeping with the Remembrance theme we started with Elgar's "With proud thanksgiving", his setting of the poem "For the fallen". After a rest while Jess and Craig performed some Mahler, we sang the Requiem with choir members Kylie Turney, Richard Ball and Malcolm Chalmers singing the solo parts.

On 30 November a small group of us went carol singing in John Lewis in the Milton Keynes store. We were well looked after by a staff member and collected donations for the Unity MK homeless shelter. This was certainly the best option we have had for this activity, so we hope to return to John Lewis again.

For our Christmas concert, "Angelsong", on 1 December, Jessica programmed something a little different, with reflective music for Advent in a candlelit St George's, Wolverton. This comprised a variety of pieces for the whole choir, part-choir, solos, duets, quartets - the choreography was challenging! The concert ran in a single movement with Jonathan Kingston playing some wonderful improvisations on the piano that accompanied each new formation of performers in the key and style of the next piece.

During the year we launched a new website; the choir is very grateful to Perry Williams for all his hard work on this.

Public benefit

The Trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance in deciding on the activities which the choir undertakes. Activities for the public benefit have been demonstrated by:

- the provision of detailed programme notes for each concert and / or an explanation of the works during the concert by the conductor
- discounted subscriptions for students and those needing financial help
- tickets at reduced prices or free for children and students
- providing training opportunities for local musicians
- maintenance of a website

Financial review

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the choir. Finances are discussed at all meetings. This enables the Trustees to ascertain the financial position of the choir and to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities legislation. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The choir finances itself by membership contributions, payable on an annual basis and agreed at an annual general meeting, and concert proceeds from sales of tickets and programmes. Other sources of income usually include:

- gift aid from donations and from members' contributions

- sales of online recordings
- revenue from weddings

The choir's direct income funds the full cost of running the choir and contributes towards covering the net cost of concerts in the event of a loss.

Income for the period from 1 February 2024 to 31 January 2025 totalled £23,661. Expenditure amounted to £23,204. Profit for the year was £457. On 31 January 2025, Polymnia had a cash balance of £3,469 held in the MetroBank Polymnia account and £80 in petty cash.

Reserves policy

Reserves are held to help fund major concerts and to acquire and maintain assets.

Risk management

The Trustees have a responsibility to identify, assess and manage risks. They keep abreast of legislation which may affect charities through the Charities Commission website and through the 'Making Music' organisation to which the choir is affiliated. They ensure that the choir complies with copyright and performing rights law. The choir's insurance is arranged through 'Making Music'.

Policies

The choir has policies regarding Safeguarding and Data Protection. Policies are reviewed annually and current policies may be viewed on the choir's website www.polymnia.org.uk.

Future Plans

Since the choir's inception it has typically presented concerts in April, July and November, along with a Christmas offering in most years. These dates roughly correspond to "end of term".

It has been a constant challenge to find dates that don't clash with concerts by other local musical groups (who typically perform in the same end of term pattern) and have availability in our preferred venues.

Starting in the autumn of 2025 the choir will move to a new schedule, with our main three concerts taking place a week before half term. For the autumn this will be 18 October, followed by 7 February and 16 May in 2026. It is hoped that this change will help to fill a fallow period for live music mid-term. Where possible concerts will start at 4pm, which has proved very popular with the choir's audience.

To avoid a long gap until the next concert after April, Jessica Norton has programmed a June concert of our favourites from previous repertoire.

The 2025 schedule includes:

5 April: The Lark Ascending at St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford with Fenella Humphreys (violin) and 3 other string players from Perpetuo.

14 June: Polymnia Gold, *A cappella* concert of favourites at St George's, Wolverton

18 October: Autumn concert at St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford, with Craig Greene

7 December: Christmas concert in St George's Wolverton, with Jonathan Kingston

Approved by the Trustees on 27 March 2025

POLYMNIA FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - 2024/25 Financial Year

Charity number: 1181422

Statement of Financial Activities

Notes	2024 / 25	2023 / 24 £
	Income	
2	Donations and legacies	6,449
3	Charitable activities	4,718
4	Other trading activities	0
5	Other receipts	12,494
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	23,661	18,031
	Expenditure	
6	Raising funds	90
7	Charitable activities	10,712
8	Other	12,402
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	23,204	17,610
	Surplus / (Deficit)	457
		421
	General fund b/fwd	2,266
	General fund c/fwd	2,723
		<hr/>
		2,266

The notes on the attached pages form part of these accounts

POLYMNIA FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - 2024/25 Financial Year**Charity number: 1181422****BALANCE SHEET**

		as at 31 January 2024	as at 31 January 2024 £
Notes			
	Current Assets		
	Bank	3,469	2,053
	Cash in hand	80	80
9	Debtors and prepayments	316	288
		<u>3,865</u>	<u>2,421</u>
	Current Liabilities		
10	Creditors and Accruals	1,142	155
	Net Assets	<u>2,723</u>	<u>2,266</u>
	Represented by:		
	Unrestricted Funds		
	General Fund	<u>2,723</u>	<u>2,266</u>

The notes on the attached pages form part of these accounts

Paul North - Chair

Date: 27 March 2025

Sophia Farrell-Reed

Date: 27 March 2025

For and on behalf of the Board

POLYMNIA FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - 2024/25 Financial Year

Charity number: 1181422

Notes to the Accounts

1 Accounting Policy

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting by Charities (FRS 102, second edition)

	2024 / 25	2023 / 24 £
INCOME		
2 Donations and legacies		
Member subscriptions	3,705	3,658
Other donations and legacies	1,489	838
Gift aid recovered	1,255	202
	<u>6,449</u>	<u>4,698</u>
3 Charitable activities		
Ticket and Programme Sales	4,718	8,006
	<u>4,718</u>	<u>8,006</u>
4 Other trading activities		
Rehearsal refreshments	0	15
	<u>0</u>	<u>15</u>
5 Other receipts		
Members purchases:music	852	1,037
Members purchases: tour facilities - Edinburgh	0	1,275
Members purchases: tour facilities - Mantua	11,535	3,000
Members Purchases: Other Social Activities	107	
	<u>12,494</u>	<u>5,312</u>
EXPENDITURE		
6 Raising funds		
Publicity	90	0
	<u>90</u>	<u>0</u>
7 Charitable activities		
Rehearsal and concert expenses		
Fees	7,440	8,881
Venue hire	2,126	2,976
Programmes and other	466	700
Alina concert loss sharing payment	0	40
Administration costs }	230	
Corporate subscriptions }	450	550
	<u>10,712</u>	<u>13,147</u>
8 Other		
Purchases on behalf of members: tour facilities	11,513	3,000
Purchases on behalf of members: music & clothing	802	1,462
Purchases on behalf of members: Other	87	
	<u>12,402</u>	<u>4,462</u>
BALANCE SHEET		
9 Debtors and Prepayments		
Rehearsal venue	238	288
Subscriptions due	15	
Music purchase due	63	
	<u>316</u>	<u>288</u>
10 Creditors and Accruals		
PRS fees due	115	115
Balance of loss on Xmas to Alina	0	40
Accruals	1,027	
	<u>1,142</u>	<u>155</u>