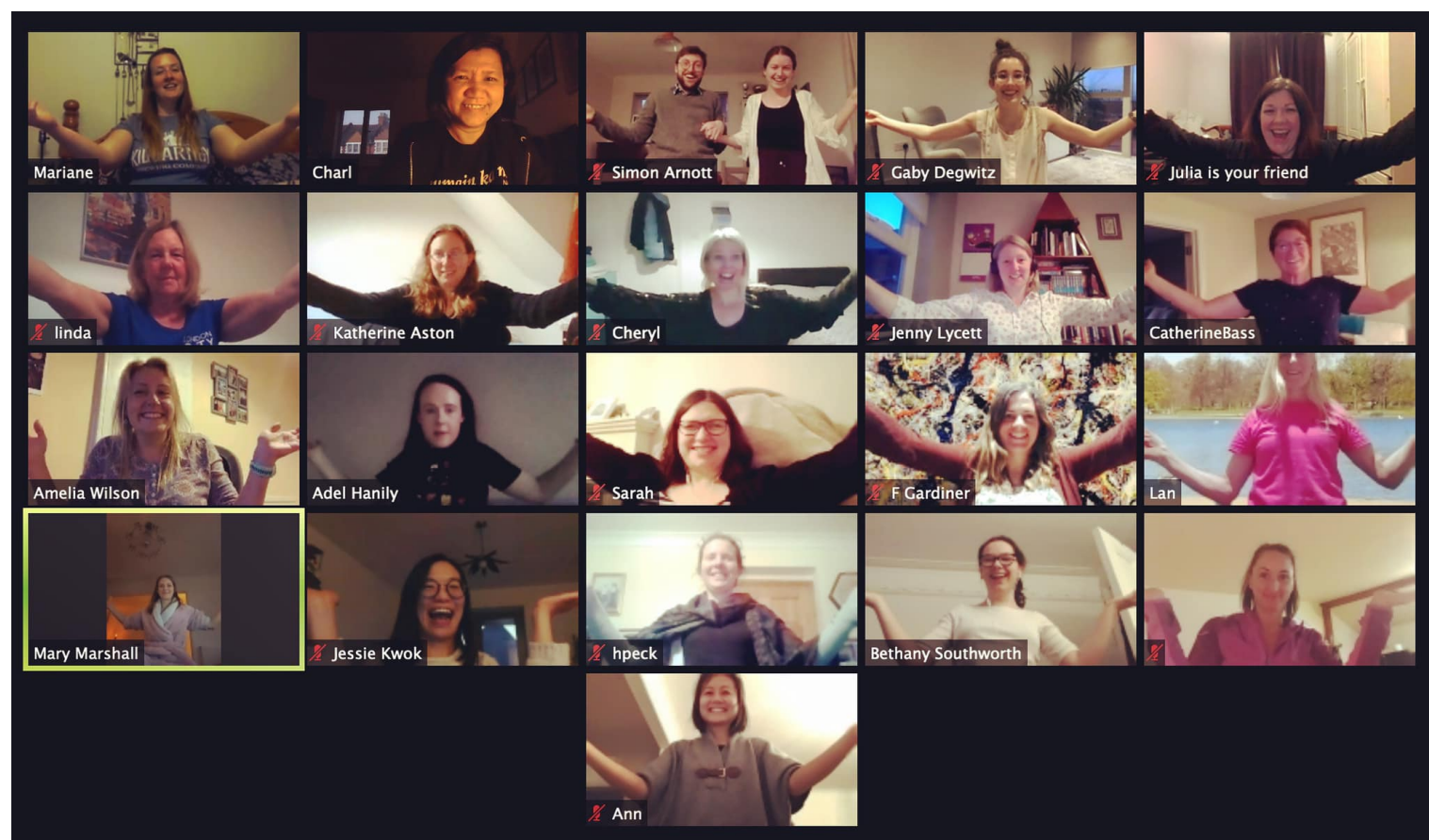


London City Singers

Annual Report

2020-21



London City Singers Annual Report 2020-21

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BLENDED REPORT FOR 2020-21 AND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2021-22

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1

Introductory Note



Introductory Note

London City Singers has been active as a chorus since 2007, set up as an unincorporated organisation. In May 2019, the chorus voted to convert itself into a charity.

This report covers all the chorus activities from May 2020-April 2021. Although some of this period was before formal approval was received from the Charities Commission, this report shows how all the activities in this period were aligned to the new charitable objectives.

The new charity, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (or “CIO”) was formally established on 2nd September 2020. The old organisation is being wound up; it cannot be converted into a CIO.

Structure and Governance

London City Singers (“LCS”) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (“CIO”). Its charity number is 1181119 and its company number is CE023771.

LCS is governed by its constitution which describes the charitable aims, how the chorus elects the trustees, the powers and duties of the trustees and how members are involved in the governance of the charity and chorus.

LCS is an official chartered chapter of an international barbershop organisation called Sweet Adelines International. This membership requires LCS to be compliant with their governance rules and regulations, which are translated into a document called the “Standing Rules”. When the CIO was established the leadership team ensured alignment between the Charity Constitution and the Standing Rules.

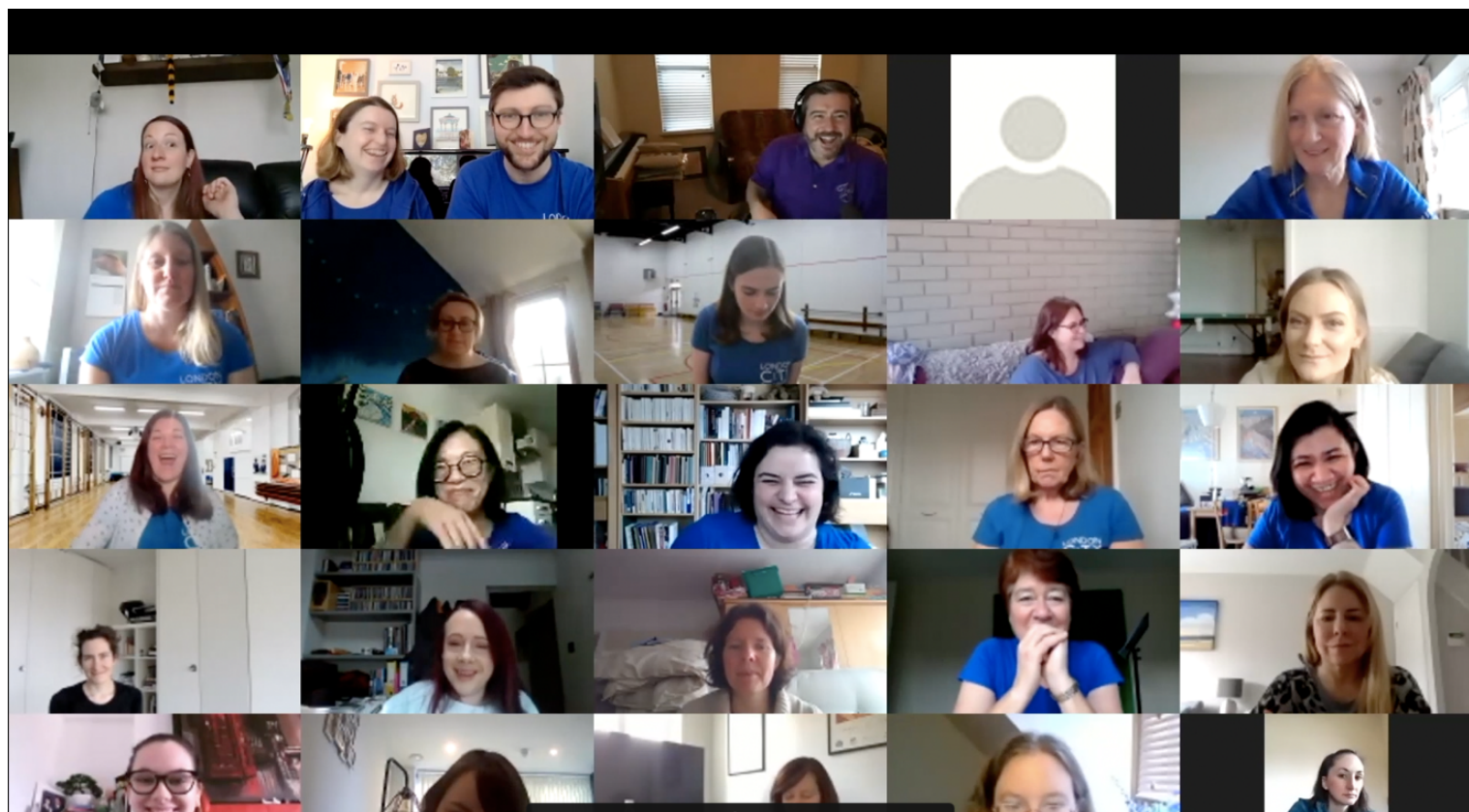
The CIO is run by the Board of Trustees. The trustees at the end of this year were:

Chorus Coordinator	Heather Wright
Secretary	Sally Rowberry
Finance	Gabriela Degwitz
Membership	Jessie Kwok
Events and Publicity	Bethany Southworth
Music Team Representative	Julia Blyth

In addition, the Music Director, Simon Arnott, is invited to attend all the trustee meetings but does not have a vote.

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Chorus Coordinator's Report



Chorus Coordinator's Report

Heather Wright is the Chairman of the trustees and the Chorus Coordinator. Heather sings bass with the chorus.

I can't quite believe it has been a year since I wrote the last report acknowledging the loss we all felt at not being able to sing together. That loss and sadness is still there, but it's tinged with hope at what we have to come over the coming months and years.

Looking back at the last year, what we've done and achieved has been so different to what we would have expected, but reading the list in the Events section, I'm sure you will agree we still did great! As well as these amazing events, we also managed to recruit a good few new members which is an achievement in any year, but in a pandemic even more so. I hope they stick with us as we venture back into real chorus singing.

It has been a really strange experience, being the coordinator of a singing group that hasn't sung together at all, but we have found so many creative ways to make it work. I am impressed by each and every one of you. To the new members who joined, who we only know as squares on a screen, thank you for bringing some fresh energy and outstanding commitment, we are lucky to have found such fab new London City Singers. To the old members, who know what they're missing by not being able to sing together, thank you for your perseverance and novel ways to stay connected and singing during the last year.

I have mixed feelings about stepping down from my role as chorus coordinator – it has been a pleasure to represent you but it has obviously been a difficult year to do so. I hope I fulfilled my election campaign promises from the 2019 season – selling our risers, getting a new venue (despite losing it again) and I hope that I've made people feel as if they can talk to the committee about any difficulties they might have in the chorus. Going forwards, please do keep approaching the new committee with any questions or queries, including if there is anything preventing you from staying active in the chorus. We want to keep our members! This includes if you need any financial support with dues or other chorus expenses in the future.

I want to say a big thank you to the outgoing committee and wish the best of luck to those incoming. Also, a huge thanks to all the members of LCS who do so much work behind the scenes – including video making, socials, admin (e.g. charity registration). Really my job has been easy because so many in the chorus pull together to get stuff done. Thank you all, I am so happy to be a member of this group.

Virtual hugs and harmony,

Heather

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Membership



Membership

Jessie Kwok is the trustee in charge of membership. Jessie sings as a lead and is usually on the front row in performances.

2020 was a difficult year for many choruses who struggled to motivate and retain members, and could not find a way to manage new recruitment.

By contrast, 2020, was one of the biggest recruitment years in LCS history. At the start of lockdown, we created an entirely new virtual audition process. This did not necessarily assess people for their current barbershop singing skills but aimed to find singers who are willing to put in the work and improvement that being an LCS member requires.

We have also revised our membership fee structure, moving towards a voluntary donation of £30 per month. Any member who is not able to afford this can elect to pay less.

These two changes support our charitable objective to be accessible to singers from the widest possible pool of potential members.

From 28 members of last year, we are now 35 members strong (plus 1 director) – we are currently 10 basses, 7 baritones, 14 leads and 4 tenors.

This year we welcomed, into the bass section, Sophie Wilson and Anna Saernefaelt; into the baritone section, Kate Roberts; into the lead section, Julia Mandziy, Maggie Heslin, Rachel Gibbs and Mary Hill; into the tenor section, Sally Chestnutt and returning member Jo Holmes.

This year, we also said goodbye to Sarah Palframan and Cheryl Pardey. We hope that they will rejoin us in the not too distant future.

Thank you all for being such good team members and for your participation in these difficult times. Thank you to our new members who went through a slightly stranger audition process and persevered with coming to virtual rehearsals and events when you might not have even met any of us in person. Thank you to the team for being flexible and understanding with people's situation in general. Hopefully very soon we will be singing together again.

Jessie

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Events and Communications



Events and Communications

Bethany Southworth is the trustee in charge of events and communication, supported by Charl Asuit, Jenny Lycett, Adel Hanily, Mary Marshall, Lan O'Connor and numerous other people.

Bethany sings lead and also sings with Hot Ticket quartet and LABBS Youth Chorus. She works for the National Youth Orchestra as a fundraiser.

In what could have been a very quiet year for LCS, during the last year we have kept ourselves busy with numerous events and projects.

17th May 2020 – As part of the [Region 31 Online Convention](#) many of our members took part in the *How We Sang Today* mass sing video, and nominated Daisy Blench as our [Woman of Note](#). Another one of our members, Charl, was also nominated by the regional management team as their [Woman of Note](#).

29th June 2020 – We recorded and released our [first lockdown performance video](#) of *This Is Me* which amassed 1,831 views on YouTube, in support of London Black Women's Project. The song was arranged by our own Music Director, Simon Arnott.

20th October 2020 – We hosted an **online open evening** which led to us welcoming several new members as well as connecting with other singers from our region (UK and the Netherlands) and beyond.

20th November 2020 – Our first **LCS Sessions**, an open mic style event featuring members of the chorus; this was a private event for the chorus members.

1st December 2020 – We released our first [Christmas EP](#) in collaboration with Meantime Chorus.

11th December 2020 – Our **online Christmas concert** premiered on YouTube, joint with Meantime Chorus and featuring several quartets from both choruses, racking up 1,948 views. The chorus songs were also uploaded individually to respective YouTube channels.

[Christmas Lullaby](#) - 475; [Interference](#) - 187; [Fab-YULE-us](#) - 60; [Sham](#) - 57; [Sublime!](#) - 573; [Not So Mean Girls](#) - 111; [Christmas Time Is Here](#) - 323

We took donations totalling £533 through ko-fi.com, which was split evenly between the two choruses.

12th January 2021 – **LCS Sessions 2** - as above.

20th-21st February 2021 – We took our [annual retreat](#) online with Rob Mance; quite different to our usual retreats but including workshops on the performance side of *There Are Worse Things I Could Do* from our Assistant Music Directors, Jenny Lycett and Katherine Aston, *What The Voice Is* from Aurelie Gandour, and on *Performance Anxiety* from Emma Arnott. Simon ran a stream of arrangement workshops during which we arranged *Oops I Did It Again* as a chorus (which has now been published on [Sheet Music Plus](#)). We also had two great social evenings plus the **LCS Sessions 3**.

We ran these workshops again for Meantime Chorus, and in return they ran two of their workshops for us – Alex Sanctuary covered *Chorus Identity* and James Whittick covered the *Cycle of Fifths and Arranging*.

9th April 2021 – [LCS and Friends Concert](#) featuring loads of choruses and quartets from the UK and Ireland and within the chorus. This concert was in support of Help Musicians UK and raised £300 for the charity. This has had 1,085 views on YouTube. Individual songs from the chorus were also uploaded.

[Deeper Shade of Blue](#) - 274; [Somewhere In The Crowd](#) - 89; [There Are Worse Things I Could Do](#) - 66

23rd April 2021 – LCS Sessions 4 - as above, featuring a special chorus *Trickle Trickle* project for Simon!

We have a few things to look forward to as we slowly begin to bridge the gap from online to in-person singing.

14th-16th May 2021 – [Region 31 virtual convention](#) featuring our [#WeAreStillSinging video](#) and our [Unsung Champion](#) nomination for Catherine Phillipson for her work in creating the LCS charity.

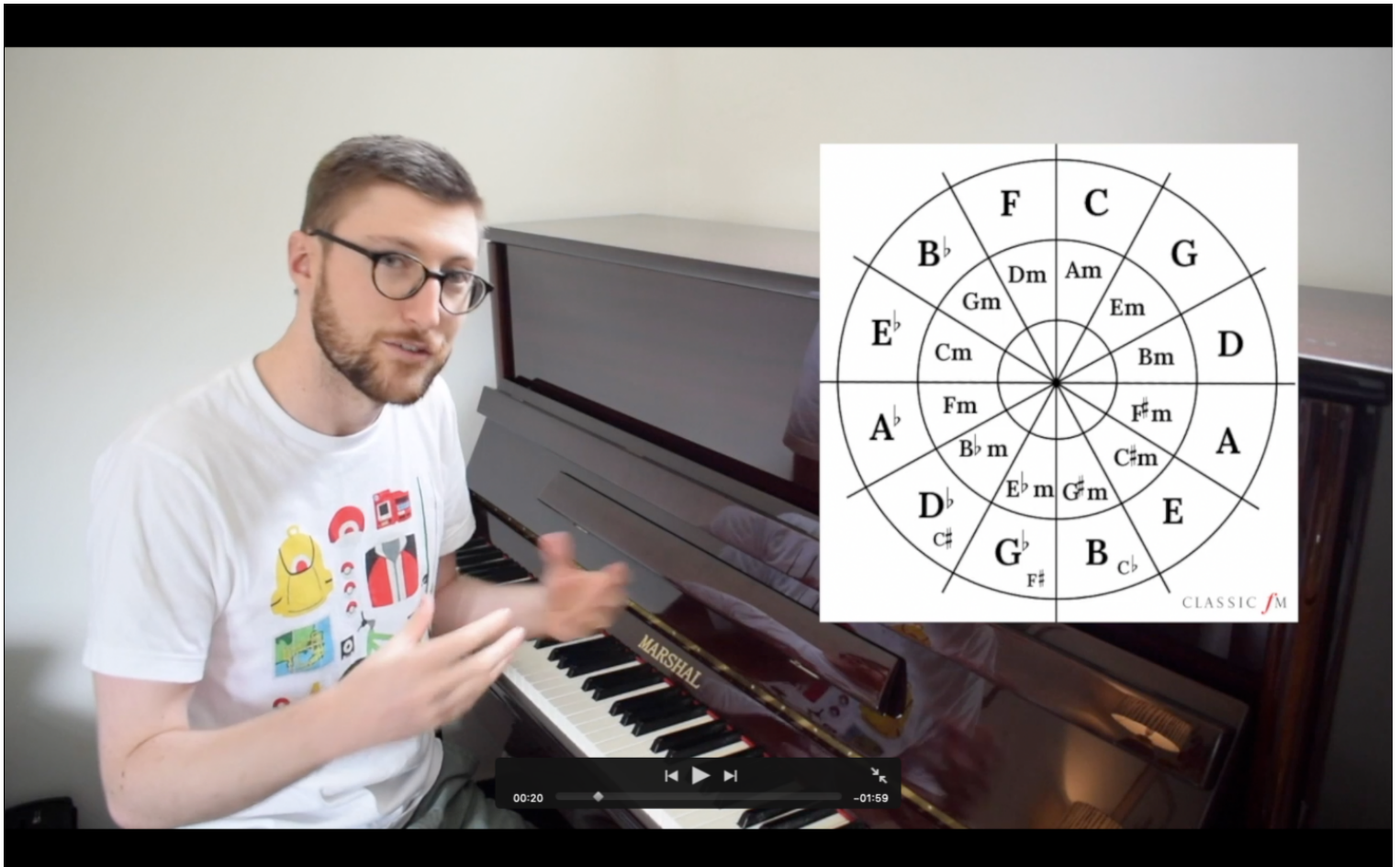
The events and comms team are looking forward to planning future events, whether online or in-person!

Bethany

viewing figures accurate at time of writing this report, May 2021

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Music Team Report



Music Team Report

Simon Arnott is our Music Director, supported by Jenny Lycett and Katherine Aston as Assistant Music Directors.

Simon studied Music at Bristol University, focusing on performance and composition, and is now a Deputy Director of Music in an independent school in south west London. Simon has been performing barbershop since starting in school and sings with the quartet, Trailblazers. He currently directs Meantime Chorus and London City Singers, creating many custom arrangements for these and other groups. He also runs workshops for the British Association of Barbershop Singers and Sweet Adelines International.

Jenny Lycett is Assistant Music Director for performance. Jenny has been with the chorus since its inception in 2007 and has specialised in choreography and performance. She works as a management trainer and has a background in learning and development.

Katherine Aston is Assistant Music Director for music. She has a PhD in Education, a Masters in Teaching and in her PGCE specialised in Higher Education.

This year's Section Leaders were:

<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Mariane Lingley</i>
<i>Lead</i>	<i>Aurelie Gandour</i>
<i>Baritone</i>	<i>Hazel Peck</i>
<i>Bass</i>	<i>Julia Blyth and Catherine Phillipson</i>

This group makes up the Music Team, which is the group that the Trustees have tasked with ensuring that our music is of the right standard and nature to support our Objects. Julia Blyth is the trustee representative on the music team.

First, I would like to thank every single member of the chorus. You have put so much effort in to maintaining and developing your skills during an entire year without in-person singing.

You have seen from the Events section that we have actually done a huge amount in the year. Our first key success was to create the new virtual audition process and run the open evening, which directly led to several new members joining. They bring a great range of voices and experience to the chorus, and I am really pleased that we managed to do this.

We then set up the LCS Sessions series, which gave chorus members a chance to try different styles of singing – these were such a success that in the end we ran four of them, topped off memorably by your gift to me of a surprise *Trickle Trickle* recording.

The Christmas concert was a great success, bringing together songs by LCS, our partner male voice chorus, Meantime, and quartets which spanned both groups. I was really impressed by the quality of the quartets in this, people had put in a great deal of extra work.

We then managed to construct an entire virtual retreat, including coaching of the whole chorus and smaller sub-groups by Rob Mance. This is the third year we have had coaching from Rob and he continues to support us strongly as we develop our technique and skills. We took advantage of the virtual format to create workshop streams, covering the performance side of *There Are Worse Things I Could Do* by Jenny and Katherine, *What The Voice Is* by Aurelie, and *Performance Anxiety* by

Emma. I led a set of arrangement workshops during which we arranged *Oops I Did It Again* as a chorus, which is going into the chorus's general repertoire and has now been published on [Sheet Music Plus](#).

We also ran an active outreach programme during the year. I ran a workshop with Lace City Chorus, and streams on Barbershop Arrangement for both Sweet Adelines Harmony College, and the British Association of Barbershop Singers. LCS members presented their workshops to Meantime¹ Chorus virtual retreat, and in return they presented workshops on *Chorus Identity* and the *Cycle of Fifths* to us. We also took an active part in the Region 31 workshop week.

As the vaccination rollout continues, we are hoping to move back to in-person rehearsals during the summer. We have a detailed plan for this, helping you to practice your posture and semi-occluded vocal tract (SOVT) exercises to get your voice back to its pre-Covid strength.

Our next goal would usually be the Christmas concert. However, we are going to make this very light-touch this year – if we can do it at all – so that we can use the autumn to move some of the songs we learned on the Zoom rehearsals into the main repertoire, and then start new songs which could be used for next year's convention in Warwick.

We'll discuss as a chorus what we want to do for the convention set – how adventurous or mainstream we want our music to be, and whether we want to be testing the boundaries of the new Sweet Adelines judging rules.

The other things that 2022 could hold is an in-person retreat with Rob Mance coaching us, and the possibility of returning to the Irish Association of Barbershop Singers competition in Ireland or doing a separate trip to perform with some of our Irish friends and supporters, including Blingmasters.

Either in 2022 or 2023, we are hoping to organise a London Barbershop Day in partnership with Meantime Chorus. We would like this to reach as many newcomers to barbershops as possible so are considering the possibility of holding it somewhere like the South Bank. This will require a great deal of work but would be a really inspirational goal to work towards.

2023 might perhaps be the opportunity to try again to organise the GQ concert we had to abandon in 2020. GQ remain one of the top global quartets, and like us, are pushing the boundaries of Sweet Adelines rules, so this would be a fantastic event.

And then in 2024, I am really pleased to be able to tell you that both LCS and Meantime have been invited to Kansas City to perform with Rob Mance's choruses, Central Standard and Vocal Standard. This is an amazing offer although it will take a lot of organisation and preparation, so it is a great three-year goal to have.

Thank you all, and thanks to the rest of the Music Team, for working so hard and consistently during this really challenging year.

Simon

¹ Meantime are Simon's male barbershop chorus. We often do events together to offer audiences the full range of barbershop sound.

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Charitable Oversight



Charitable Oversight

Julia is the trustee in charge of oversight of our charitable activities. Julia is the bass section lead and sings with both LCS and Capital Connection.

In this role, I am asked to scrutinise all of our activities and ask the following questions:

Are our activities consistent with our objectives?

We kept operating during the entire pandemic period, and never missed a scheduled rehearsal. This provided vital mental health support to our members during some very challenging times.

We have used some of our online activities to raise money for other musical charities.

How have our activities benefited the wider public?

We are very proud of our new audition process, which allows us to reach the widest possible pool of potential singers, assessing people for their willingness and ability to learn, rather than their existing barbershop skills. We created a virtual audition process which we were able to use during the lockdowns, allowing more people to join the chorus whatever their current household circumstances.

All our online activities have been available freely on the internet.

Are our activities sufficiently educational?

Our open rehearsal attracted participants from across and beyond the UK, with a very wide range of barbershop skills, allowing some people to try out this style of singing for the first time.

LCS members have taken an active part in the Sweet Adelines virtual convention and in a wide range of online workshops.

We have also run workshops for LCS and Meantime on barbershop arranging, the management of performance anxiety and the voice, and chorus members also worked with Sweet Adelines Region 31 to lead the recording of a new regional polecat.

Have we ensured our membership fees are not a barrier to participation?

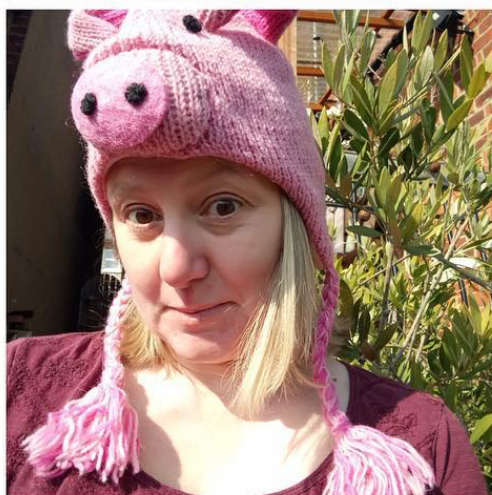
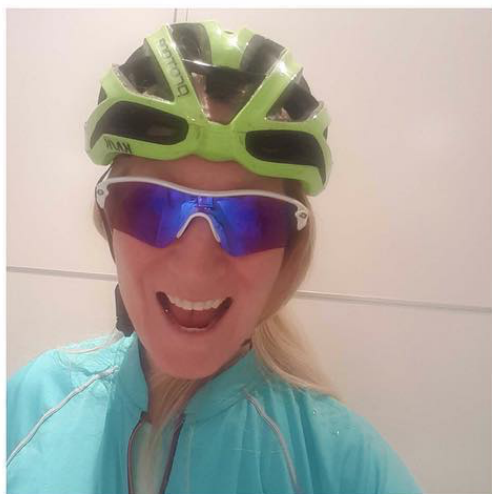
During the lockdown period we introduced a bursary system and a flexible fee scale for any member who is not able to donate the full £30 each month. We do not intend membership donations to be a barrier to singing with the chorus.

The trustees agree that we have fulfilled our charitable objectives this year.

Julia

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Financial Report



Financial Report

Gaby Degwitz is the trustee in charge of Finances.

This past year was pretty unique, as the chorus went virtual. Since we had no in-person rehearsals or events, and were fortunate to have more new singers joining us than leaving, we closed this financial year with a sizeable budget surplus. Despite not holding any live concerts this year, the chorus received income from online donations and CD sales/streaming.

This coming year, we expect to gradually return to in-person activities. As such, I have accounted for the hire of a new rehearsal space and have also allocated some of the budget to next year's retreat. Since the next in-person convention is scheduled for 2022, there is no money allocated for convention in May 2021, but we should have enough money left over at the end of this coming year to cover the cost of our next live convention. We also have money to use toward new costumes, new music and music education.

Huge thanks to Catherine for officially making London City Singers a charity in 2020. This means we can now benefit from tax reliefs, charity grants, and greater public recognition. Huge thanks also to Aurelie for making my job as treasurer so smooth and manageable with her beautifully detailed spreadsheets and documents—I am sure the next finance coordinator will agree. Thanks for trusting me with this job!

Gaby

During this year, the new London City Singers charity received approval from the Charities Commission and was formally incorporated on 2nd September. Members were given a choice of having their surplus historic membership fees refunded to them individually, or donating their share of the money to the new charity. These donations are shown as income in the new charity's accounts.

The next page contains the financial report for the charity for the part-year from 2nd September to 30th April.

Financial Report from 2/9/2020 to 30/4/2021

Income

Members dues	6,940
Other fundraising	583
Members contributions	11,168
	18,691

Expenses

Musical Director's Salary	3,000
Music sheets & tracks	443
Website	247
Sweet Adelines	422
Misc. expenses	98
Retreat - coach fee	661
	4,872

<i>Income - Expenses</i>	13,819
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BALANCE SHEET

Opening balance	0
Profit or (loss)	13,819

<i>Closing balance</i>	13,819
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CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name

No (if any)

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date

To

Period end date

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Members dues	6,940	-	-	6,940	-
Other fundraising	583	-	-	583	-
Members contributions	11,168	-	-	11,168	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	18,691	-	-	18,691	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	18,691	-	-	18,691	-
A3 Payments					
Musical Director	3,000	-	-	3,000	-
Music	443	-	-	443	-
Website	247	-	-	247	-
Sweet Adelines	422	-	-	422	-
Misc expenses	98	-	-	98	-
Retreat - coach fee	661	-	-	661	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	4,872	-	-	4,872	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	4,872	-	-	4,872	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	13,819	-	-	13,819	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	13,819	-	-	13,819	-

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at bank	13,819	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	13,819	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
Rachel Gibbs	RACHEL GIBBS	23-Jan
Julia Blyth	JULIA BLYTH	21-Jan