



Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021-22

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ON THE COVER

London City Singers on stage at the chorus competition of the Warwick Convention 2022 of the Quartet of Nations (Sweet Adelines International Region 31)

Our purpose

We believe that barbershop singing is one of the most demanding and awe-inspiring ways to make music. That's why London City Singers is committed to mastering skills to challenge and motivate our members, and to create memorable experiences for our audiences.

Message from our Chorus Coordinators

London City Singers has two trustees serving as Co-Chorus Coordinators for the period covered in this report: **Julia Blyth** and **Charl Asuit**.

A year ago, we had an Annual General Meeting, which you'd be forgiven for not remembering because it was - like every rehearsal we'd had for 14 months before that, and everything else in our lives back then - held on Zoom. I personally don't remember it at all, because I was deep in a post-Astrazeneca fever frenzy, but that in itself marked a turning point from the long dark days of pandemic-enforced lockdown to where we are now. Hard to believe it's only been a year.

To be a singing group that cannot sing together is not altogether a great way to be, so I'm very happy to report that we have made significant progress in the last 12 months to approach some kind of normality again. While Simon and the music team continued their heroism to keep us all learning and give us the community of online rehearsals, sterling efforts were made by the previous committee (and assistants) to find our new rehearsal venue, St James Garlickhythe, and in August we made the first tentative attempts to come back together to rehearse. First in masks, at a big distance, breaking every 20 minutes to breathe the outside air, and unable to hear each other, or hug.

But even though it was challenging, we had a lot of little milestones that we could mark through the year. We met all the people that had joined us over lockdown and we'd only ever seen on Zoom screens, we sang songs together we had only

learned (and arranged ourselves!) in our



Julia, Charl and Simon accepting awards on behalf of London City Singers at the Warwick Convention 2022

bedrooms alone. We eventually were able to ditch the masks, then stay indoors (with our big winter coats on!), then stand closer together. And although there were setbacks - Omicron ruining our chance for a Christmas social and robbing us of an evening with Deke Sharon - we were able to have a Christmas activity with Meantime, put together an amazing convention set, have a full retreat with everyone in attendance AND His Majesty Rob Mance to coach, and then go to Warwick and deliver a trophy - and medal-winning performance to be proud of!

All this would not have been possible without the continued passion and tenacity of our members, who have come together every week possible to keep LCS going, whether that's online or back in real life. And who have shown such

commitment to the charitable aims and ethos of the chorus - learning and maintaining great technique, supporting each other creatively, and entertaining the world while spreading our own brand of progressive barbershop. To have been awarded the Most Improved Chorus at the Quartet of Nations Convention just goes to show how hard everyone has worked in really trying circumstances that a lot of other choruses have not been able to survive. To have actually improved when we only had four proper months of singing together in two years - that's the LCS way all right.

As we take stock and enter a new chapter in LCS' story, I'm certain that we can build on this amazing foundation, and we've got a lot of exciting stuff in our future - new music, new events, and hopefully, a chance to collaborate and sing with some amazing US choruses in 2024. I couldn't be prouder and more honoured to be part of such an inspiring and fun group and I hope we go from strength to strength. With you guys, there's no doubt.

Yours in harmony,

Julia

This year was a year of transitions for LCS as we transitioned back to in-person

rehearsals from online (on Zoom). We now have a new rehearsal space right in the heart of the city. Hearing those chords at our first return to in-person rehearsals was such a joy!

We continue to focus on working as a charity. We are reviewing and re-establishing our operational processes and policies. We are also setting new goals to motivate us to achieve our charitable aims.

I'm in awe of every member of this chorus. The commitment and dedication to maintaining good singing and barbershop technique were evident throughout lockdown, and carried on when we got back to rehearsals in real life. These efforts were hugely rewarded when LCS was awarded the Most Improved Chorus and second place in the Division A category at the Warwick Convention. All these accolades with our very own brand of barbershop music. Wow! My jaw literally dropped when LCS' name was announced.

Looking to the future has never been more exciting and I'm honoured to serve and help steer the chorus to even greater heights.

Charl

Events & Communications

Bethany Southworth is the trustee in charge of Events and Communications.

During the period of May 2021-May 2022,



London City Singers in-person recording of **Christmas Lullaby**

we made the transition back to in-person rehearsals and events, although the events calendar has been on the quieter side as the world opens up again to the idea of live performances and gatherings. Our first in-person rehearsal since 2020 was on 3 August 2021 and other than a handful of weeks where illness/self-isolation led us to have rehearsal online, we have continued to rehearse in-person.

Due to Covid safety concerns around the Omicron variant in autumn/winter 2021, we opted to not host a public Christmas concert which would usually be a hallmark of the LCS annual calendar. However, we took the opportunity to be social, hosting a joint rehearsal with London-based men's chorus, Meantime, where we sang seasonal songs for each other and a joint song together. In-house quartets had the opportunity to perform for an audience,

some for the first time in a long time! This event was filmed: our video of [Christmas Lullaby](#) is available for viewing on YouTube, and our song collaboration with Meantime, [Christmas Time Is Here](#) is on Meantime's YouTube channel.

Our focus on returning to in-person regional convention hosted by Sweet Adelines International Region 31 (Quartet of Nations) means that, at time of writing, we are not considering hosting a summer concert this year. We look forward to planning future concerts now that our rehearsals are considerably less impeded by Covid.

To prepare for the contest we hosted our first in-person retreat since 2020 - attended by 27 members including seven first-timers. Robert Mance, an award-winning barbershop chorus director and vocal coach, returned to host the weekend in Sutton.

In May 2022, we competed at the Quartet of Nations convention, the first in-person since May 2019. We enjoyed not only the competition but also the chance to spend time together socially and strengthen the chorus bond. Achieving the Most Improved Chorus award and second place in our category (Division A for small choruses) was the cherry on top!

We will be bringing back an old favourite chorus event, the scratch quartet night, on 28 June 2022. This helps to promote and encourage the art of barbershop quartet

singing within the chorus. The event will only be presented to an internal audience.

Aurelie Gandour was added this year to the Events & Comms committee to assist with several tasks. Her skill for long-term planning and vision will be immeasurably useful as we plan ahead to future concerts and outreach events, including a plan to host a chorus exchange between London and Kansas City, with Meantime, Central Standard, and Vocal Standard choruses. This is due to take place in 2024 and will be a considerably high-profile event promoting barbershop music to new audiences on both sides of the pond.



*London City Singers and Meantime Chorus in-person recording of **Christmas Time Is Here***

We continue to use and grow our social channels, including the launch of our new TikTok channel, [@acaninjas](https://www.tiktok.com/@acaninjas). We look forward to experimenting with fun content to help the joy of barbershop reach far and wide!

Bethany

Membership

Jessie Kwok is the trustee in charge of Events and Communications.

At the time of writing this report, we have 27 singers at London City Singers: three tenors, nine leads, seven baritones and eight basses. In addition, we have one music director.

While we saw strong participation in chorus activities during Covid lockdown, the return to in-person rehearsals meant that some of us had to re-evaluate our life priorities while others relocated to different cities. With that in mind, we said our goodbyes to Daisy, Deborah, Maggie, Mary, Mea and Mesi.

This year, we welcomed back a returning member, Sarah, a brand new member, Devi.

An extra well done to those who compete with LCS for the first time in the Sweet Adelines International Region 31 convention. They are Ann, Anna, Bethany, Devi, Julia, Kate, Rachel, Sally and Sophie.

Thank you all for your support in the last three years as I step down as membership coordinator. Good luck to Ruth, who is taking over the role.

Jessie

Music

Simon Arnott is our Music Director and also heads the Music Team. Music Team members are:

Jenny Lycett - assistant director

Katherine Aston - assistant director

Mariane Lingley - tenor section leader

Aurelie Gandour - lead section leader

Hazel Peck - baritone section leader

Julia Blyth and **Catherine Phillipson** - bass co-section leaders

Bringing the chorus back from the virtual chorus world of the pandemic was always going to be a difficult task; however, I believe we have managed to come back very strongly to promote our brand of barbershop.

Knowing that a Christmas concert would be difficult to navigate with the ever changing situation regarding Covid, we opted to do a recording. The recording was sung in person and involved a collaboration with Meantime Chorus. Although distanced and wearing masks, it was a wonderful experience to perform together again. The videos were released on multiple platforms to reach a wide audience. We released Christmas Lullaby and Christmas Is Here, the latter sung with Meantime Chorus both arranged for the choruses by myself.

With restrictions beginning to lift in 2022, we were able to hold our in person retreat with Rob Mance, a vocal pedagogy expert from one of the top barbershop choruses in the world. We were able to learn a huge amount from the weekend to help us towards our musical objectives. Having brought Rob to the UK along with Meantime Chorus, we were able to share his work with other groups and individuals

throughout the week. The annual retreat is a huge part of the chorus calendar and it was wonderful to have this back in person.

Having not been in a Sweet Adelines contest since May 2019, we decided to bring exciting new music to the competition despite the probable outcome of the music category not scoring them well. We felt it important to be ourselves and promote the music we love to a barbershop audience. Using *Pulled* and *Almost There* as our contest set, we were able to win the most improved chorus and second place division A with our highest score and placing to date. I have always thought it one of the best achievements to win the Most Improved trophy and this year in particular really shows the dedication of the chorus through a difficult couple of years.

We now have a large list of repertoire suggestions to look through and a year with greater potential for performances. I look forward to continuing the musical development of the group to achieve the goals the chorus sets.

Simon

Charitable oversight

Julia Blyth is the trustee in charge of oversight of our charitable activities.

Are our activities consistent with our objectives?

We have been able to transfer smoothly from rehearsing online to rehearsing in real life, whilst still maintaining a streaming option for those who could not attend due to reasons of location or personal risk levels.

We have utilised a very thorough risk assessment to ensure that rehearsing in real life while the pandemic was a factor was as safe for members as possible, including distancing, mask wearing, air breaks, improved ventilation and monitoring air quality. This ensured the mental health and wellbeing benefits of singing with others were maintained with minimal risk to physical health. We did not report any outbreak of Covid from our rehearsals.

We have been able to supply financial support through a bursary for a quartet of our members, to assist their education and progress through the competition system. We have used some of our online activities to raise money for other musical charities.

How have our activities benefited the wider public?

We have introduced a wide range of new social media platforms to our outreach, which allows us to reach a much larger demographic. We are using this as an educational tool to educate and inspire the public in the art of modern barbershop. We continue to develop our open audition system, 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 have been able to take part in public performances which were streamed online.

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

Are our activities sufficiently educational?

Our online activities are the main spur of education for the public. We have been able to receive coaching from internationally renowned vocal coaches for the chorus, and individual members and other non-members have also benefited from the access provided by LCS.

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

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

We have a bursary system and a flexible fee scale for any member who is not able to donate the full membership contributions each month. We have also made any contributions to financing trips to convention or costs involved in retreats or extra training voluntary for members. 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.

Financial statements and report

Rachel Gibbs is the trustee in charge of looking after our finances.

What a year! We have seen the return of in person rehearsals and events after the pandemic. We started hiring the church for in person rehearsals in August, held our in-person retreat with the one and only Rob Mance (and Simon, Simon isn't so bad).

During the pandemic the chorus's finances have benefited from not having to pay for rehearsal space and from starting to claim Gift Aid.

To celebrate the return to in-person events and give back to our members for all their financial support over the pandemic period, the chorus covered just over half of the costs of retreat and convention this year whilst keeping

ourselves in a relatively similar financial position to how we started the year.

Next year, the chorus will need to start thinking about saving a little money and fundraising for our planned trip to the United States.

I've just about kept the chorus finances ticking over in between illness, a busy job and a hectic life so I'm delighted to be handing over the books to the wonderfully knowledgeable Catherine. I'd like to give my huge thanks and appreciation to the others on the committee who have been an amazing, welcoming, and lovely group to work with and wish them the very best of luck for the next year!

Rachel



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

LONDON CITY SINGERS

1191118

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01-May-21

To

30-Apr-22

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Members dues	10,140	-	-	10,140	6,940
Prospective members fees	-	-	-	-	-
Gift Aid reclaims	5,205	-	-	5,205	-
Performance income	-	-	-	-	583
Paid gigs income	-	-	-	-	-
Recording sales	-	-	-	-	-
Other donations	75	-	-	75	-
Members contributions	4,298	-	-	4,298	11,168
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	19,718	-	-	19,718	18,691
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	19,718	-	-	19,718	18,691
A3 Payments					
Rehearsal venues	2,890	-	-	2,890	-
Musical Director	4,275	-	-	4,275	3,000
Music sheets & tracks	271	-	-	271	443
Education	-	-	-	-	-
Retreat chorus costs	600	-	-	600	-
Retreat coaching costs	1,732	-	-	1,732	661
Retreat per-person costs	126	-	-	126	-
Additional coaching costs	15	-	-	15	-
Image	40	-	-	40	-
Convention chorus costs	2,430	-	-	2,430	-
Convention per-person costs	4,924	-	-	4,924	-
Sweet Adelines	1,212	-	-	1,212	422
Marketing	-	-	-	-	-
Website	356	-	-	356	247
Misc. expenses	276	-	-	276	98
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	19,147	-	-	19,147	4,872
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	19,147	-	-	19,147	4,872
Net of receipts/(payments)	571	-	-	571	13,819
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	13,819	-	-	13,819	-
Cash funds this year end	14,390	-	-	14,390	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	14,390	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	14,390	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
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 asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		Catherine Phillipson	CATHERINE PHILLIPSON	09-Oct
		Julia Blyth	JULIA BLYTH	09-Oct

Reference and administrative details

Charity number

1191118

Company number

CE023771

Registered address

310 Garratt Lane, London SW18 4EH

Structure and governance

London City Singers (LCS) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by its constitution, which describes its charitable aims, how the trustees are elected, their powers and duties, and how members are involved in the governance of the CIO.

LCS is an accredited chapter of an international barbershop organisation called Sweet Adelines International. This accreditation requires LCS to be compliant with their governance policies, encapsulated into the Chapter Bylaws and Standing Rules. When the CIO was established, the leadership team ensured alignment between the CIO constitution and Chapter Bylaws and Standing Rules.

The chorus coordinating committee oversees the running of the CIO and is made up of the Board of Trustees and our Music Director. The trustees and Music Director serving for period covered by this annual report are:

Chorus Coordinators

Charl Asuit (appointed 4 May 2021)
Julia Blyth*

Secretary

Lan O'Connor (appointed 25 Jan 2022)

Events & Communications Coordinator

Bethany Southworth

Membership Coordinator

Jessie Kwok

Finance Coordinator

Rachel Gibbs

Music Director

Simon Arnott**

* also serving as Music Team

Representative on the Board of Trustees

** invited to all trustees meeting but does not have a vote