

London City Singers

Annual Report 2022-23



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1. Introductory Note

London City Singers (“LCS”) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (“CIO”). Its charity number is 1191118 and its company number is CE023771. LCS was originally set up as an unincorporated organisation in 2007 before it was converted into a charity in September 2020.

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.

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

Chorus Coordinator	Julia Blyth
Secretary	Lan O’Connor
Finance	Catherine Phillipson
Membership	Ruth Marr
Events & Communications	Aurelie Gandour

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

2. Chorus Coordinator's Report

Julia is the bass section lead and sings in chorus with LCS and in quartet with Horizon.

It's been another busy year in the life of LCS. Looking back, in fact, it has very much felt like the start of a new era, where we are finally out of the shadow of Covid and Zoom rehearsing, and changing our allegiance from the rather distant mother of Sweet Adelines - whose values, although in a phase of development of their own, did not chime particularly well with ours - to the much more LCS vibes of LABBS. This was decided almost unanimously by our membership, which made us feel very unified in our task for the year - get better and better and introduce ourselves to our new friends with a bang that they'll never forget!

But to do that we needed to grow, and our membership and music team have been amazing this year at recruiting lots of new members to LCS, who have settled in like old friends (well, some of them are old friends - delighted to welcome back some members who clearly could never forget us! We are after all extremely charming). It's a credit to new members' hard work and enthusiasm, and the existing members for being so welcoming and inclusive, that we're 26% bigger than we were last year. Our retention rate from open evenings has been superb, so thank you to all of you, old-timers and newbies alike!

But just because we left Sweet Adelines didn't mean we didn't get a chance to compete this year. Taking our Beyonceshop to Spain, to win silver medals, was a dreamy weekend, a great way to bond the chorus and sharpen up our performance. Thanks to some excellent work by our treasurer, we were able to subsidise part of the trip and offer assistance to people who may have needed it, so nobody felt excluded from our activities on a financial basis. We worked so hard to get our show so polished, and that came through in both official and audience feedback - I cannot wait to take our Sandcastles to LABBS and render them speechless, to be frank. Special shout-out to our mascot/deputy director Seren for bringing us luck (and thanks to Simon and Emma for juggling parental duties and top MD/baritoning!)

Along with expanding our chorus and bossing it in Spain, we will now be appointing a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging representative on committee, to help us in our ongoing task to be the most inclusive and welcoming chorus we can be. We've also moved into our new rehearsal space in Pimlico - now feeling very much at home there, and I'm grateful to all of our members for acclimatising to this new location with no fuss. We held an amazing double-header concert at Christmas with Meantime, and we have a summer concert to look forward to. We've been able to get everyone who wanted it one-to-one coaching with Rob Mance, who has confirmed that we have improved no end in our singing, we've had a great retreat including an amazing potluck dinner - so many talented chefs among us! - and we have found redemption in the Way of the Cup. Who would have thought a simple coffee cup could make us - manifesting this now - 80%+ scorers...!

So onwards and upwards into the next year, which will be another exciting one for LCS. I'd like to personally thank everyone who has been on the committee and music team while I have been coord for the last two years, and Charl my former co-coord who sadly had to leave us in January, for all the hard work and dedication going into running LCS so seamlessly to make Tuesday nights a fun, educational and emotionally nourishing time - and thanks for putting up with my general scattiness and verbosity!

Yours in Beyonceshop and in 14G,

Julia

3. Membership

Currently the chorus has 29 active members and 1 musical director. We are composed of 9 basses, 8 baritones, 8 leads and 4 tenors.

This means we are in the mid- size chorus category in Labbs. The next category up starts at 45 members.

Leavers

Sadly this year we said goodbye to Charl, Julia M, and Bethany. We also bid adieu to Cat as she went on maternity leave.

We have 2 members currently taking a leave of absence: Heather and Rachel.

Joiners

This year we welcomed back 4 members who all left to have children: Emma A, Emma O, Cat and Sarah T. It's been great having you back! It has also been mentioned that having a matinee concert really helped people with children to come and support LCS and to then feel ready to rejoin.

We have also welcomed 6 new members to the chorus: Caecilia, Pam, Ruth, Emma C, Ollie and Jennie. We've loved getting to know you and we hope you are still enjoying yourself.

We also have some prospective members who are very keen to join but waiting to be able to commit fully before they come for their audition which proves how well the chorus is showing the level of commitment that is needed to join.

Thankyous and Recruitment

Thank you to the music team for supporting all our new and returning members through the audition process, and to the rest of the chorus for being fantastically welcoming and supportive during rehearsals.

Thank you to everyone for filling in your attendance and informing me of your absences; it makes the chorus run much more smoothly.

We are currently looking at recruiting basses before we can recruit other voice parts to ensure good balance. If you know of anyone who might be interested, let me know, and spread the word!

Ruth Marr
Membership Coordinator 6th June 2023

Ruth

4. Events and Communications

The Events and Communications role was handed over from Bethany Southworth to Aurélie Gandour during the year. Aurélie is supported by Devi Joshi, Jenny Lycett, Lan O'Connor, Mariane Lingley, Sarah Palframan and numerous other people.

Aurélie is lead section leader and also sings with Endeavour chorus and the quartets Horizon and Peridot. She's a doctoral researcher in Ethnomusicology at SOAS University of London and the new Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging for BABS.

Lots of events this year – none of which would have happened without the hard work of all team members and of the committee. Many people put in huge amounts of work to book things, chase up payments, and overall making sure that what needed to happen happened with as little friction as possible. Many thanks in particular to Julia and CatherineBass for all their hard work!

A little recap of all the events we've had since last AGM:

- **Scratch Quartet Night** (28th June) where six quartets sang a song each which they had worked on over only one month.
- **Double Joint Christmas Concert with Meantime** (2nd December) – shoutout to Alistair Lamyman for jointly organising this and to absolutely everybody who was voluntold into participating in the on-the-day organization.
- **Joint Open Mic with Meantime** (5th February) – with fabulous Sam Woolf as an accompanist and Julian Nicholl on sound, many members of both choruses sang in solos, duos and quartets over the course of a very entertaining afternoon.
- **Retreat** (25th – 26th February – and lots of one to ones in the preceding week) – our annual event with the incredible Rob Mance, who we even got to have for an extra Tuesday rehearsal a few days before.
- **SABS Convention** (14th – 16th April) – Spain, Sun, Sangria, #BeyoncéShop... and medals!

And a little social media roundup (if you're not already following us on all socials... what are you waiting for?!):

- Facebook: 1,709 followers
- Instagram: 992 followers
- Twitter: 896 followers
- YouTube: 163 followers
- LinkedIn: 56 followers
- TikTok: 23 followers

A big shoutout to Mariane for all her work on our website and Harmony Site!

Aurélie

5. Music Team Report

Simon Arnott is our Music Director. 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.

Sophie Sanctuary is the Assistant Musical Director. She has a music degree from Bristol University and now works as a primary school teacher. She also sings with current European champion quartet Avalon, and current BinH quartet champions Met44.

Jenny Lycett is the 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 the Director for Vocal Pedagogy. She has a PhD in Education, a Masters in Teaching and in her PGCE specialised in Higher Education.

This year's Section Leaders were:

Tenor	Mariane Lingley
Lead	Aurelie Gandour
Baritone	Hazel Peck
Bass	Julia Blyth

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. Catherine Phillipson is the Music Secretary and trustee representative on the music team.

In the last year, London City Singers have had great musical success in promoting our own brand of barbershop to the wider public and educating about the style. One major musical decision for the chorus was moving from Sweet Adeline's International to The Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers. One of the most important musical reasons was greater freedom of music choice in competition and a strong education offering from the organisation.

For the first time, we performed a matinee as well as an evening show at Christmas. Singing with Meantime Chorus using both traditional accompanied carols and new a cappella arrangements was a highlight; it was wonderful to do this concert again after the lockdown years without it.

Our yearly retreat weekend with Rob Mance was an excellent educational experience, enhanced by the chorus funded 1:1 vocal lessons throughout the week. As always, the education provided helped advance the knowledge of the singers greatly to improve the performance of the chorus. We are able

to take this knowledge and spread it throughout the barbershop and choral communities through concerts and education sessions.

Both our Musical Director and newly appointed Assistant Musical Director have given educational talks at a variety of events, including BABS QuartetCon, LABBS Harmony College and BABS Sing 2023 Convention.

To bridge the gap between our annual contest dates moving from May to October due to the change in organisation, we attended the Spanish Association of Barbershop Singers convention and took part in the International Chorus Contest. We achieved a high score and great praise from the audience, bringing new arrangements to the barbershop style; this culminated in winning the silver medal.

We continue to strive for excellence in singing and helping to educate others in the style of barbershop.

Simon

6. Music Education Report

Catherine Phillipson is the Music Secretary. Catherine is actively working to promote treble-range harmony brigading in the UK. She sings bass with LCS and lead in mixed-range harmony brigades.

The Music Education budget was established during the year in order to support our charity's educational objectives.

The budget is to be used by the trustees under guidance from the Music Team, and it aims to give the chorus and individual chorus members a broader, deeper education in barbershop singing and vocal pedagogy than they can get from the standard activities of chorus rehearsals, retreat and convention.

The budget can be used for (but is not restricted to):

- Additional coaching for the chorus and individuals;
- Attending a variety of music education choruses;
- Supporting individual chorus members who wish to learn relevant skills such as directing, arranging and quartetting;
- Encouraging members to attend Harmony College and similar specialist barbershop training.

The budget is funded by our Gift Aid reclaims and this year it has also benefited from £650 of donations from individual chorus members.

This year we spent £2,480 on music education and paid for:

- 17 individual coaching sessions with Rob Mance;
- A vocal pedagogy course for Katherine Aston, our Musical Director for Vocal Pedagogy;
- A vocal health training course for Mariane Lingley, one of our Section Leaders;
- Travel bursaries were offered to eight chorus members who attended Harmony College, including Sophie Sanctuary, our Assistant Musical Directors who attended the Director's Stream. Two LCS members, Sophie and Aurelie Gandour, also delivered training courses on that event, and Catherine Phillipson helped to organise a new Extreme Quartetting stream.
- Travel bursaries were also offered to three members who attended Harmony Brigade and one who received quartet coaching at the BABS Directors' College.

The Trustees were also very happy to be able to use the charity's reserves to offer staged payments to non-chorus members attending LABBS Harmony College. This offer carried no financial risk to the chorus as the advances were completely covered by the college's cancellation terms, and we plan to offer this again in the future if necessary.

Going forward, we are developing strong links with both LABBS and BABS educational teams and we look forward to encouraging more chorus members to take part in their activities. We are also targeting more coaching for both the chorus and individuals, particularly with leading US coaches who are already planning visits to the UK

Catherine

7. Charitable Oversight

Julia is the trustee in charge of oversight of our charitable activities. Julia is the bass section lead and sings in chorus with LCS and in quartet with Horizon.

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

Are our activities consistent with our charitable objectives?

This year, London City Singers has concentrated its efforts on reaching into wider communities both within and outwith barbershop music. We have left the more constricting confines of the Sweet Adelines International organisation, and joined LABBS, which has enabled us to forge ties with a wider range of people nationally. Members of LCS have been involved at a committee level in initial moves to blend together various barbershop societies into a more cohesive whole, which will in turn leave us able to expand our educational reach.

We have concentrated on inclusivity this year, amending language in our constitution to make it less constricted by outdated gender norms. We are appointing a new trustee responsible for Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity and Belonging, who will be working hard in communicating our objectives to a wider community. We are proud to be a fully inclusive high-voice choir, with no barriers to entry other than the need to bring core musical skills and a determination to learn.

How have our activities benefited the wider public?

We have concentrated this year on expanding our membership, by holding free and open rehearsal education sessions. These have been vital in communicating our version of modern barbershop and vocal pedagogy to the wider public. We have had excellent uptake on these sessions. We have expanded our social media to reach more people. We have also moved rehearsal venues to one which is larger and more accessible by public transport.

Are our activities sufficiently educational?

We have this year appointed a new music team secretary, who has worked with the treasurer to ensure that we have a robust music education budget that we haven't previously been able to access. As a result, we have been able to provide free one-to-one world-class coaching to all our members. We have enabled bursaries for members and non-members to attend educational sessions such as Harmony College. We have kept our online activities, both performances and educational materials, freely available.

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

We work on a system of pay-as-you-can donations for participation, rather than a set membership fee. We have a suggested amount that members donate per month, but they are free to donate more or less as they wish depending on their financial situation. We have been able to subsidise many costs

incurred by taking part in events such as the Spanish Association of Barbershop convention in Spain. We continue to ensure that cost will never be a barrier to participation in LCS.

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

Julia

8. Financial Report and Plan 2022-25

Catherine Phillipson is the trustee in charge of Finances.

We switched to having a paid MD just as Covid happened, so this is the first full year that we have paid for both an MD and a rehearsal venue as well as an in-person retreat and convention. We had saved quite a bit of money over the last three years, including our initial Gift Aid reclaim, and even though we had been able to do very little fundraising, we went into the year with reserves (above the money required for cash flow) of around £10,000. Here is how we are shaping the chorus budget going forward, allocating our three different sources of income to specific chorus activities, and how we are planning to use some of those reserves.

1. Core Activities. The members' monthly donations are allocated to cover the “core” chorus activities, which are the rehearsal venue, MD costs, music, retreat and convention tickets. This year this comes to £14,635. Almost all these costs are fixed and so if we get more members they don't increase very much. However our core income is directly proportional to the number of members, which is targeted to increase now that we have joined LABBS. We are using the reserves to support this in the short term as the trustees have committed to rebuilding and growing membership numbers.

2. Music Education. We are now receiving over £2,500 per year Gift Aid, and the plan is to use this, together with any one-off donations received, to form our music education budget. This budget is indicative and could be flexible if the Music Team require it. Music education can include personal or group coaching, attending barbershop education events and training. Music education does not always align well to financial years, so unused music education budget can be carried forward to the next financial year. The trustees may also decide to use some of this money to reduce additional costs for some or all of the members.

3. Reducing Additional Costs. Any additional fund raising will allow us to subsidise some of the costs of retreat and convention, to reduce the number of times we have to ask members for more money to cover a particular event. Because we will have two conventions in calendar year 2023 (although in different chorus FY's), we have allocated up to £2,000 of reserves to subsidise these costs where appropriate. Going forward we are intending to do more fundraising in order to cover these costs in a sustainable way.

THREE YEAR PLAN 2022-2025				May 2022- April 23		May 2023-Apr 24	May 2024-Apr 25
				BUDGET	ACTUAL		
Chorus size	KEY METRIC 	Rebuild to	26	26	Grow to	32	Grow to 36
SURPLUS OR LOSS				(£6,315)	(£3,609)	(£3,420)	(£751)
EXPENDITURE							
Core Activities							
MD costs				£4,800	£4,220	£5,000	£5,200
Main rehearsal venue				£4,375	£4,200	£5,000	£5,625
Music sheets and tracks				£1,000	£765	£1,200	£1,400
Convention				£2,160	£2,042	£2,700	£3,060
Retreat				£2,300	£2,321	£2,500	£2,800
Misc. core admin costs				£500	£613	£600	£700
Total core activities				£15,135	£14,161	£17,000	£18,785
per member				£631	£545	£567	£553
Music Education							
Additional coaching							
Weekend days with other coaches (in				£0	£0	£1,000	£1,000
Rehearsals with other coaches				£200	£0	£250	£500
Personal/small group coaching				£0	£1,726	£1,750	£2,000
Sectionals venues				£150	£88	£250	£350
Music education				£1,050	£522	£750	£1,000
Quartet support (coaching, brigading)				£800	£145	£300	£400
Outreach activities							
Total music education				£2,200	£2,480	£4,300	£5,250
per member				£92	£95	£143	£154
Reducing Additional Costs							
LABBS Transition payment (one-off)				£900	£1,060		
Convention accom paid for by chorus				£3,000	£2,760	£2,800	£1,700
Retreat accom paid for by chorus				£0	£1,180	£750	£850
Dress deposit refunds (2023 only)					£40		
Additional costs budget				£3,900	£5,040	£3,550	£2,550
per member				£163	£194	£118	£75
TOTAL ACTUAL/PLANNED EXPENDITURE				£21,235	£21,681	£24,850	£26,585
per member				£885	£903	£828	£782

THREE YEAR PLAN 2022-2025				May 2022- April 23		May 2023-Apr 24	May 2024-Apr 25
				BUDGET	ACTUAL		
INCOME							
Core Income							
	Membership Fees			£10,600	£10,673	£14,400	£16,320
	Prospective Members Fees				£220		
	Total core income			£10,600	£10,893	£14,400	£16,320
Charity-related Income							
	Gift Aid			£2,620	£4,157	£2,880	£3,264
	Other donations			£0	£650	£0	£0
	Total charity-related income			£2,620	£4,807	£2,880	£3,264
Additional Fundraising							
	Concerts	VERY IMPORTANT		£1,000	£1,963	£2,500	£3,000
	Gigs			£350	£350	£1,000	£2,000
	EasyFundRaising			£250	£86	£500	£750
	Branded goods			£100	£0	£150	£500
	Internet music sales			£0	-£27	£0	£0
	Total additional fundraising			£1,700	£2,372	£4,150	£6,250
TOTAL ACTUAL/FORECAST INCOME				£14,920	£18,072	£21,430	£25,834
Total Surplus/Shortfall				(£6,315)	(£3,609)	(£3,420)	(£751)

Catherine

 CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES	LONDON CITY SINGERS			1191118	CC16a
	Receipts and payments accounts				
	For the period from	01-May-22	To	31 Apr 2023	
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	10,673	-	-	10,673	-
Prospective members fees	220	-	-	220	-
Gift Aid reclaims	4,157	-	-	4,157	-
Music education donations	650	-	-	650	-
Paid gigs income	350	-	-	350	-
Recording sales	- 27	-	-	- 27	-
Other donations	-	-	-	-	-
Other income	86	-	-	86	-
Performance income	1,963	-	-	1,963	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	18,072	-	-	18,072	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	18,072	-	-	18,072	-
A3 Payments					
Musical Director	4,220	-	-	4,220	-
Rehearsal venues	4,200	-	-	4,200	-
Music sheets & tracks	765	-	-	765	-
Convention chorus costs	2,042	-	-	2,042	-
Retreat chorus costs	634	-	-	634	-
Retreat coaching costs	1,687	-	-	1,687	-
Sweet Adelines	- 33	-	-	- 33	-
Misc.core expenses	581	-	-	581	-
Cash movement	65	-	-	65	-
Additional coaching costs	1,726	-	-	1,726	-
Sectional support	88	-	-	88	-
Education	522	-	-	522	-
Quartet Support	145	-	-	145	-
LABBS	1,061	-	-	1,061	-
Convention per-person costs	2,760	-	-	2,760	-
Retreat per-person costs	1,180	-	-	1,180	-
Image	40	-	-	40	-
Sub total	21,681	-	-	21,681	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	21,681	-	-	21,681	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 3,610	-	-	- 3,610	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	14,389	-	-	14,389	-
Cash funds this year end	10,780	-	-	10,780	-

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		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	10,780	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		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	Details			
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name		Date of approval
	Catherine Phillipson	Catherine Phillipson		06-Jun-23
	Julia Blyth	Julia Blyth		06-Jun-23