

London City Singers

Annual Report 2023-24



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In



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	Sarah Palframan
Secretary	Lan O’Connor
Finance	Catherine Phillipson
Membership	Ruth Marr
Events	Sally Chestnutt
DEIB	Rachel Knowles
Communications	Adel Hanily

In addition, the Music Director, Simon Arnott, or a delegate, is invited to attend all the trustee meetings but does not have a vote. In this last year meetings have been attended by the Assistant Directors team, Sophie Sanctuary, Jenny Lycett or Katerine Aston.

2. Chorus Coordinator's Report

Sarah has been in London City Singers (LCS) since 2010, she sings Baritone in LCS and is a member of two Barbershop quartets, Sliding Chords and Hail Mary.

This year has continued to be an exciting and fulfilling time for our members and supporters. When reflecting on the varied activities and achievements of LCS in the past year it is my pleasure to highlight these in our annual report.

Our Events Team, led by Sally, has been very active and productive. We have embraced entertaining audiences within our own concerts and delighted in being invited to perform with other groups or at other events.

Starting in September 2024 with our Late Summer Concert, we invited our guest act The Sharrow Vale Blues to London. They are a successful Mixed Barbershop quartet based in Sheffield and complemented our repertoire. The concert brought a wide range of barbershop music to our audience and allowed us to support 2 linked quartets within the chorus to perform with us.

We then performed in our first ever LABBS convention. Making new friends within the wider Barbershop community and reconnecting with old friends in this new organisation. We were incredibly proud to come 5th place amongst our peers. We now feel fully part of the LABBS family and our unique style was welcomed onto the LABBS stage by new audiences.

Following that with an open evening and 2 successful Christmas events, we finished 2023 on a high.

So far in 2024, aside from our normal activities of Retreat and Open Evenings, we were invited to entertain runners and spectators at the London Landmarks Half Marathon. This allowed us to promote our Barbershop music to the public who may not have an opportunity to attend other events.

We have finished with our successful summer concert in June 2024 presenting again new barbershop arrangements to our audience.

Aside from our events, we have achieved much within our Charitable status, as listed within the upcoming pages. Being able to support our members within education areas, achieving coaching and education sessions. This year with Tony Colosimo (Sept 2024) and Rob Mance (Feb 2024) we continue to strive to improve and educate

all members of London City Singers with high quality Barbershop education and will always continue to support this within our education budget.

Within the committee, a lot of work has been done this year to review and align roles and responsibilities. Whilst putting structure in place we have continued to stay flexible and I'm really impressed with how we continue to support each other to deliver what is needed to support the chorus. Going forward we will continue to discuss and review our operations to make sure we can support our members and goals.

The chorus continues to flourish, attracting new people to find out what Barbershop is and can bring to their lives. Ablely led in our Core Music skills by our Directors and our Music team, we have been able to continue to grow our sound. It's been wonderful to see the chorus embrace the new rehearsal structures and methods of learning and the desire from everyone to continue on our journey. It is inspiring to see our skills and sound grow even further.

When considering what we bring to the public, it is important to reflect the increased participation with quartets / quartet activity within the chorus, this leads to even more opportunities for us to promote Barbershop. Within our concerts we have given opportunities for quartets performance and whether these are more established quartets or scratch quartets for the Christmas season or seeing our members developing so well in their individual quartets. So many of our members have also embraced the educational opportunities within this sphere too and we will look to support as much as we can.

On the membership side, it's been great to see us maintain our size and great to see our members returning after taking a Leave of Absence. Being able to support our members in changes in family circumstances or other needs, it is a complement to our members and the culture of our chorus that so many wish to return.

I couldn't sign off without saying a big Thank You!

To our Directors and Music Team for their musical leadership.

To the Trustees for all their hard work in keeping the chorus running.

To every member who has practised, baked, 'liked', chatted, volunteered, inspired, listened, used their cup or watched until TE tuner until the face turned green!

Each and every effort contributes towards our success and for that we are all thankful.

Here is to another successful and inspiring year for London City Singers

Sarah

3. Membership

Currently the chorus has 28 active members and 1 musical director. We are composed of 9 basses, 8 baritones, 8 leads and 3 tenors. This means we are in the mid- size chorus category in Labbs; the next category up starts at 45 members. We have 4 members of the chorus currently on Leave of Absence.

Leavers

Sadly this year we said goodbye to Rachel G and Devi but we are hoping we will see them both again when their circumstances change.

We have 4 members currently taking a leave of absence: Emma C, Emma A, Catherine and Sophie.

Joiners

This year we welcomed back Adel, it's been great to have her back.

We have also welcomed 2 new members to the chorus: Sue and Jill. They are both experienced barbershoppers and have slotted straight into LCS.

Recruitment

We have had less recruitment than last year as we are only looking to recruit basses due to the current balance of voice parts. We have been keeping a waiting list for other parts and have had 1 tenor and 3 leads waiting for a couple of months to come along to a rehearsal. We have a recruitment event planned for the 28th April with 6 prospective members signed up.

Feedback from the audition process is that it was very clearly explained and the prospective members felt well supported.

Thankyous

Thank you to everyone for keeping Harmony Site up to date as this helps us to ensure everyone is ready to perform when we have gigs and concerts. Thank you to the music team for supporting members with 1:1s or sectionals to ensure members are confident and concert ready.

Ruth Marr

Membership Coordinator 28th April 2024

4. Events

The Events and Communications role was handed over from Aurélie Gandour and subsequently split into two separate roles. Sally Chestnutt took on the role of Events and has been supported by a team who ensured the smooth running of all events.

Sally has been a member of LCS since 2020 and sings in the tenor section, she also sings with LABBS quartet, Sliding Chords.

There have been lots of wonderful and uplifting events this year.

- **Late Summer Concert** (September) was originally planned as the Summer Concert due to be held in June but was postponed to September due to the rail strikes and renamed. The guest act was a fantastic Barbershop quartet called The Sharrow Vale Blues who sang a wide variety of songs.
- **LABBS Convention 2023** was the first LABBS convention for LCS since becoming members of LABBS. It was a wonderful experience, topped by the success of achieving 5th place.
- **ChoirsRUs Christmas Concert** - LCS were invited as guests to perform at the Christmas concert of the wonderful ChoirsRUs.
- **Joint Christmas Concert with Meantime** (December) – both an afternoon and evening concert were held on a Saturday in early December with fantastic numbers attending both.
- **Joint Open Mic with Meantime** (February) – with fabulous accompanist from Meantime on keyboard many members of both choruses sang in solos, duos and quartets over the course of a very entertaining afternoon.
- **Retreat** (February – and lots of one to ones in the following week) – our annual event with our incredible coach who travels from the US to spend one rehearsal and a weekend coaching us.
- **LLHM** (April) - a super Sunday morning spent at the London Landmarks Half Marathon singing two sets for the runners and spectators.

Sally
25th April 2024

5. Communications

The Events and Communications role was handed over from Aurélie Gandour and subsequently split into two separate roles. Adel Hanily took on the role of Communications Lead towards the end of 2023 and is in the process of setting up support from chorus members.

Adel has been a member of LCS since 2016, with a short break in 2022 before rejoining in 2023 and sings in the baritone section.

Since last year we've been promoting lots of exciting things on our social media including the late summer concert, Winter Jam concert, LABBS, retreat with Rob Mance, and our performance at the London Landmarks Half Marathon. For the Winter Jam concert we ran a twelve days of christmas countdown on social media with Meantime Chorus.

We have been establishing a social media strategy for the next year and are gearing up for full promotion of our 2024 summer concert.

Special thanks go to Mariane for updating and managing the website.

Social Media platforms:

Instagram - 1047 followers

Facebook - 1.7k followers

TikTok - 36 followers

X (Twitter) - 887 followers

LinkedIn - 59 followers

YouTube - 196 subscribers

Adel

6. Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity and Belonging (DEIB)

DEIB is a new trustee role for the chorus created in 2023. It was held originally by Devi Joshi in 2023 but unfortunately she needed to resign from the position a few months later, she went on LoA and then left the chorus. Rachel became DEIB trustee in January 2024.

Rachel has been a member of LCS since 2012, with a break between 2016-2020 to make tiny humans. She sings tenor in the chorus and in an LCS quartet, Les Raclettes.

Much of the DEIB role so far has been looking at how our existing policies and documents approach DEIB and what we may still need to work on. To this end, we have:

- formed a DEIB group to work on DEIB issues together - members are welcome to feedback to us, join or make suggestions
- reviewed the standing rules and music policy and made some amendments
- updated our description with the charity commission
- drafted a DEIB policy which is almost finalised
- created a template document to try ensure our written documents are written in an accessible way
- done a polling session with the chorus trying to identify our community values for the chorus and some goals to help build our chorus community and make it more inclusive
- proposed concert partners for our summer concert, taking into account our desire to be more inclusive and diverse
- We have identified our chorus community values that will be shared with the chorus shortly for approval, and identified some goals for the forthcoming year to help build our community
- For the year ahead, we plan to work on these goals and continue to review existing chorus documentation to ensure it aligns with our approach to DEIB

Rachel - 29.04.24

7. 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.

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	Emma Obertelli

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.

This year, we took part in our first LABBS Convention and finished 5th place. We brought two exciting arrangements to the LABBS stage by our musical director, Simon Arnott. The second of our songs, The Girl in 14G, pushed the boundaries of 'contestable' barbershop in numerous ways, but was a big hit with the audience! The chorus greatly enjoyed bringing our brand of barbershop to the LABBS competition and were delighted with the response from both audience and judges alike.

Our yearly retreat with Rob Mance was well attended and an exciting educational event. We further developed our singing skills with two new arrangements in the barbershop style.

We have had a variety of events with different groups to help spread the LCS style of barbershop to a wider audience. We were very well received at the Choirs R Us concert in December and sang with an exciting new ensemble at our summer concert with a focus on diversity in the choral world.

Simon.

8. 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 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 £3,761 on music education and paid for:

- Rob Mance from the USA coach LCS during the weekend in Feb 24
- 6 individual coaching sessions with Rob Mance
- Anthony Colosimo from the USA gave LCS performance coaching
- 4 individual coaching sessions with Anthony Colosimo
- Directors education course for Jenny Lycett
- Vocal Health course for one member
- Purchasing copies of "The Art of Possibility" books to support Simons work
- Travel bursaries were offered to two chorus members who attended educational events

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

9. Charitable Oversight

Sarah is the trustee in charge of oversight of our charitable activities. Sarah is the current Chair of LCS.

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, we have further developed our links within LABBS and the UK Barbershop organisations. By attending our first LABBS convention we were able to connect with other LABBS members nationally and meet the board in real life!

We took two new Barbershop arrangements and after an enjoyable performance we were incredibly proud to come 5th. We were able to share and promote our performances of our own unique Barbershop style and received great feedback from our judges and audience.

We have continued to open to new members this year and held 2 periods of open rehearsals in Nov 23 and April 24. This has attracted interest from both the Barbershop community and outside. We use these sessions to educate any members of the wider community who show an interest in what we are working on in the Barbershop world.

In the autumn we sat with our members and discussed LCS aims and objectives. We looked to members for their ideas and commitment towards meeting our charitable objectives. The trustees then reviewed this and created some projects which we are focused on within 2024.

We are incredibly proud of what we put on stage each time we perform and the hard work and dedication of our members to get there. We delight in entertaining our supporters and have been thankful to expand to new audiences.

How have our activities benefited the wider public?

We have been invited to perform outside of Barbershop events to promote the Barbershop form. This was the concert organised by Choirs R Us in Barnet and performed at the London Landmarks Half Marathon. These allow us to entertain and engross a wider audience with our songs and the Barbershop genre.

We have had a very active period, having delivered two summer concerts and the joint christmas concert with Meantime. These allow us to reach the public with performances and also give us opportunities for our inhouse or linked quartets. By

forging these partnerships and links we continue to give more opportunities to promote the Barbershop art form.

We have continued to have periods of open rehearsals during the year, these both allow us to educate existing Barbershoppers and expand our membership but also encourage education outside of the existing community.

For our Summer Concert in June 2024, we took the opportunity to invite a non Barbershop group to perform with us, the fantastic Vox Urbane Next Generation. This allowed us to attempt to reach new audiences and the collaboration will allow us to continue to promote Barbershop music to those outside of the Barbershop community.

Are our activities sufficiently educational?

Our music education budget continues to support our members in achieving education and coaching. This year we supported our new members in coaching sessions to learn more about the skills we look to bring each and every rehearsal. We have continued to support our music team in skills or training sessions.

Additionally our music education budget has been able to support the wider chorus having access to training and education from our coaches at Retreat and additional sessions. We continued to work on our relationship with Rob Mance who has continued to push and develop us within the Barbershop skills and again we see a jump in skills and understanding within LCS.

Education is a key part of our journey and will continue to remain a priority in the next year.

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

We continue to 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 were able to subsidise members at our core activities within the LABBS Convention and the annual chorus retreat. We have also looked to support the annual membership fees to the LABBS organisation, ensuring that members are able to participate fully in chorus activities. 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.

Sarah

10. Financial Report and Plan

Catherine Phillipson is the trustee in charge of Finances.

Reserves Policy

We started this financial year with nearly £11,000 on our balance sheet. We need around £5,000 to cover large cash flows and to give financial protection against unexpected events such as last-minute concert cancellations. We used £1,500 of the reserves to cover members' LABBS subscriptions – this is a one-off and the subscriptions will be included in the budget in future years. The remaining £4,500, which has been built up through our ability to reclaim Gift Aid, is primarily earmarked for music education and other activities in line with our charitable objects.

Regular income is covering core activities

Our members' monthly donations have just covered the “core” chorus activities - the rehearsal venue, MD costs, music, retreat and convention tickets. We built the membership numbers up during the year from 26 to 32, but with several members on leave of absence our monthly income has stabilised, and the trustees have agreed that future budgets should be based on 32 members as a steady rather than increasing chorus size.

We used fundraising to reduce additional costs

Additional fund raising allows us to subsidise some of the costs of retreat and convention, in order to reduce the number of times we have to ask members for more money during the year.

Our Summer Concert gave us an opportunity to showcase the talents of Shannon Vale Blues quartet while still making a small profit for the chorus of £426. The Winter Concert, done in partnership with Meantime, made a profit for us of £2,365. For both these concerts the ticket sales covered the production costs and the profits were really made from the refreshments and raffle sales – a big vote of thanks is due to all the people who organise those. The London Landmarks Half Marathon gig allowed us to take barbershop to a wider audience while also raising £300.

This year we were able to make all the contributions for convention costs optional, which allowed us to subsidise the costs for some members which was neatly covered by claiming Gift Aid back on the donations which were made. It is really splendid to be able to use our charitable status in this way, to ensure that anybody can be a London City Singer regardless of their financial status. We also covered all the basic accommodation costs for retreat and we paid for everyone's LABBS membership – in total we spent a total of £4,865 reducing these additional costs to members.

As mentioned above, we used around £1,500 of our reserves to do this, acknowledging the fact that fundraising opportunities are still in the process of recovering from Covid restrictions. This part of the budget should be more evenly balanced next year.

Gift aid is providing some excellent music education

We have received over £4,000 this year in Gift Aid, as well as getting £200 of education grants from LABBS, and as mentioned we also have around £4,500 of reserves available in this category.

This has allowed us to access some excellent music education opportunities, often at very short notice. We once again had Rob Mance visiting from the USA to coach us at retreat, and at the end of the summer we were able to have Tony Colosimo (who was guest education at BABS Harmony College) visit for an evening of performance coaching. We paid for six chorus members to have one-on-one coaching with Rob Mance, and four chorus members had one-on-one coaching with Tony Colosimo.

We have also paid for one of our Section Leaders to attend a Vocal Health course and one of our Assistant Musical Directors to attend a directing course. We have bought several copies of the “Art Of Possibility” to support Simon’s work on the way that we learn music and improve our singing. And we spent £150 on travel bursaries to encourage chorus members to attend BABS Harmony College.

Our focus on, and ability to fund, musical education, is a real differentiator, and I see it as one of the best benefits of becoming a charity. I am very proud to be able to hand over the finances to Ruth Howe, your new treasurer.

Catherine Phillipson

Treasurer



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

LONDON CITY SINGERS

1191118

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01-May-23	To	30/04/2024
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted to the nearest £	Restricted to the nearest £	Endowment to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Members dues	14,691	-	-	14,691	-
Prospective members fees	20	-	-	20	-
Performance income	6,230	-	-	6,230	-
Other income	244	-	-	244	-
Non-primary purpose trading	15	-	-	15	-
Members donations	325	-	-	325	-
Convention member donations	1,469	-	-	1,469	-
Retreat member donations	680	-	-	680	-
Gift Aid reclaims	4,023	-	-	4,023	-
Education donations	200	-	-	200	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for	27,897	-	-	27,897	-
A2 Asset and investment sales,					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	27,897	-	-	27,897	-
A3 Payments					
Musical Director	4,600	-	-	4,600	-
Rehearsal venues	4,986	-	-	4,986	-
Music sheets & tracks	327	-	-	327	-
LABBS	1,448	-	-	1,448	-
Convention chorus costs	3,700	-	-	3,700	-
Retreat chorus costs	972	-	-	972	-
Misc core expenses	354	-	-	354	-
Cash movement	- 128	-	-	- 128	-
Performance costs	3,348	-	-	3,348	-
Recording costs	64	-	-	64	-
Image	- 157	-	-	- 157	-
Convention per-person costs	3,418	-	-	3,418	-
Retreat per-person costs	2,306	-	-	2,306	-
Retreat coaching costs	1,887	-	-	1,887	-
Additional coaching costs	768	-	-	768	-
Sectional support	35	-	-	35	-
Education	1,071	-	-	1,071	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	28,999	-	-	28,999	-
A4 Asset and investment					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	28,999	-	-	28,999	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 1,102	-	-	- 1,102	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	10,780	-	-	10,780	-
Cash funds this year end	9,678	-	-	9,678	-

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

Categories	Details	Unrestricted to nearest £	Restricted to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £
B1 Cash funds		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	9,678	-	-
	(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			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
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	Amount due	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	