

# **SHROPSHIRE CHARITY CONCERTS**

## **TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS** **for the Financial Year 1 September 2023 – 31 August 2024**

### **Chairman's Report**

The year has seen some major changes in the Choir's activities. We welcomed our new Conductor, Richard Robbins, whose position as Director of Choral Music at Shrewsbury School began in September, as well as a new Accompanist, James Kellas. Richard inherited a fine legacy as Music Director from Richard Stafford, and James proved to be a worthy successor to Calum Alger.

Richard has brought some new ideas with him, as evidenced by our first concert under his baton – the *Materna Requiem* by Rebecca Dale – as part of the St Cecilia weekend of music at the School. Composed in 2018 and broadly a setting for the Catholic mass, the *Materna Requiem* was written as a tribute to Dale's mother – a theme that would be echoed in the spring concert of Brahms' *German Requiem*, performed by the Choir in Shrewsbury Abbey. Both pieces were quite a challenge to the Choir, with some difficult music to master, and they rose to such a challenge with enthusiasm and verve.

Instead of performing a summer concert, it was decided to spend the time learning choral and vocal techniques under Richard's excellent tuition. A range of music, with different idioms, styles and dynamics – from the lyrical *Sure, on this shining night* by Samuel Barber to a barbershop arrangement of *Blue Moon* by way of Morten Lauridsen's *Dirait-on* – as well as breathing and voice projection exercises – enriched the Choir's understanding and appreciation of choral singing.

The concert that raises the most funds for local charities is always, of course, Handel's *Messiah*, which the Choir performed in the evocative surroundings of Shrewsbury Abbey in December. We had the services of Noxwode, an early music ensemble, who play on authentic baroque instruments, added a different dimension to this much-loved work, and was hugely appreciated by the audience.

Fundraising for local charities remains one of our core principles and we were able to donate £1000 each to three charities: Shropshire Wildlife Trust, PALZ (Professionals with Alzheimers) and the Shrewsbury Foodbank. Charitable connections such as these are very valuable, and not only for the sums raised to support their valuable work. By being able to promote each other's activities and aspirations, the Choir can bring its joy in music to a wider audience, while the charities can also spread their appeal to people who might not otherwise have heard of them and (hopefully) support them in the future. It is all about the power and connectivity of communities.

Finances have held up well, with a surplus of income over expenditure of £2,500. In these uncertain times, with the cost of living impacting on many people's lives and disposable income, it is heartening to know that the Choir both creates an enjoyable experience of live music that people can enjoy, and also provides an opportunity for singers to learn and deepen their appreciation of the richness of our musical heritage.

I was privileged to be chosen to take over from Howard Pearce as Chairman of the Board of Trustees in January 2024. I would like to express my gratitude not only to him for having run the Choir so effectively for a number of years, but also to my fellow trustees, without whom so much would not be achieved, and whose wisdom and experience will ensure the long-term future of Shrewsbury School Community Choir and Shropshire Charity Concerts.

Paul Bisson  
November 2024

## **Music Director's Report**

Since the last AGM, the choir has enjoyed a busy and productive few months.

The Messiah concert was a roaring success—a fantastic collaboration with some superb Baroque players (Hipsters). Despite a few unforeseen challenges, the Brahms concert also worked well. The model for that event, with solos in the first half, proved effective and well-received.

The highlight, however, was the recent Christopher Tin concert—a brilliant collaboration between us and the school's extraordinarily talented musicians. This was the first time this piece had ever been performed in a school setting, making us part of a world first.

The choir has excelled in managing new and challenging repertoire. I applaud the growth mindset that is making us more resilient, capable, and musical. Choral singing is truly a team sport, and setting aside doubts about unfamiliar works in favour of enthusiasm and curiosity allows us to discover new pieces together. Often, taking the riskier option leads to greater rewards than sticking with perceived safer choices. We should continue striving to blend the new with the old, as each informs and enriches the other.

We are exceptionally fortunate to collaborate with such outstanding musicians, especially the glorious and supremely talented James Kellas.

A note for all of us: the choir should make a concerted effort to proactively market every concert throughout the year. It's on all of us to ensure we fill the seats at every performance.

Richard Robbins  
November 2024

## **Treasurer's Commentary on Accounts**

I took over as Shrewsbury Community Choir Treasurer in January 2024. I replaced Paul Bisson, who took on the role of Chair.

The Cash Summary accounts show the 2022/23 and 2023/24 income and expenses and the variance.

Our total income of around £23,000 in 2023/24 exceeded the income for 2022/23 by around £1,500. However, we benefited from nearly £3,000 in Gift Aid in 2024, which covered both years' tax benefits. Therefore our income was effectively similar, despite there being no summer concert in 2024.

Our total expenses of around £19,000 in 2023/24 were around £5,000 less than the previous year. This is due to higher overall performance costs of the three (versus two) concerts in 2022/23.

The Messiah at Christmas 2023 made a loss of around £1,500 (whereas the Messiah at Christmas 2022 made a profit of around £500). This was mainly due to the higher cost of the Baroque orchestra in 2023 and also somewhat reduced ticket sales.

Our Brahms Requiem spring concert 2024 (detailed as Spring concert in the accounts) made a small profit of around £500 (whereas Haydn Creation in 2023 made a loss of around £3,500). This was due to reduced orchestra costs and increased ticket sales.

We had no summer concert in 2024 (which more or less broke even the previous year).

Our total members subscriptions at around £10,500 were slightly down in 2023/24 (by £500) which may have been due to having a reduced rate in the summer term as there was no concert.

(Please note that the annual figures include prepayment for the autumn term subscriptions during the month of August. In 2023-24 £540 was paid in which shows as an accrual on the accounts).

Our conductor and accompanist rehearsal costs remained fairly constant at £4,175 in 2023/24.

Our overall financial position improved by around £3,000, in that (dividing the Gift Aid across the 2 years) we made around a £2,000 profit in 2023/24, whereas we made a £1,000 loss in 2022/23.

We again gave away £3,000 in charity donations, this year to Shropshire Wildlife Trust; Shrewsbury Foodbank Plus and the local PALZ Alzheimer's charity.

I would like to thank Jackie Llewellyn for her invaluable help in preparing the accounts, and Paul Bisson for his enduring support as I become familiar with this Treasurer role.

Jill Anderton-Huang  
November 2024

### **Independent Examiner's Declaration**

**Shrewsbury School Community Choir**

**Annual Cash Accounts**

**Year Ending 31st August 2024**

I can confirm the accounts have been checked and verified according to the required standard for a charity of this size.

Jackie Llewellyn



11<sup>th</sup> December 2024

## **Cash Summary**

### **Shropshire Charity Concerts CIO**

**For the year ended 31 August 2024**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Choir Annual Subscriptions	10,125	10,669	-5%
Concert programme sales	374	465	-20%
Concert refreshment sales	355	469	-24%
Donations from the public	47	-	-
Gift Aid	2,875	-	-
Interest income	-	80	-100%
Messiah subscriptions and donations	285	281	1%
Other donations	510	-	-
Sales and hire of scores to members	500	281	78%
Scarves and foilders sold	20	78	-74%
Ticket sales - Creation	-	2,218	-100%
Ticket sales - Messiah	4,614	5,317	-13%
Ticket sales – spring concert	3,537	-	-
Ticket sales – summer concert	-	1,920	-100%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>23,241</b>	<b>21,778</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>LESS EXPENSES</b>			
Accruals	(540)	-	-
Advertising & marketing	1,007	672	50%
Audit & accountancy fees	200	200	-
Bank fees	78	22	259%
Card processing costs (Ticketsource, Sumup)	419	597	-30%
Charity donations	3,000	3,000	-
Concert expenses	305	-	-
Concert programme costs	86	318	-73%
Concert refreshment costs	321	392	-18%
Creation soloists	-	1,432	-100%
Creation concert venue hire & staging	-	709	-100%
Creation orchestra & Music Director	-	3,506	-100%
Creation performance costs	-	49	-100%

	2024	2023	Variance
General expenses	105	-	-
Gifts purchased for members (retirement etc)	44	-	-
Insurance	151	99	53%
IT software & consumables	-	80	-100%
Messiah orchestra & MD	3,993	2,648	51%
Messiah performance costs	-	174	-100%
Messiah soloists	1,350	1,500	-10%
Messiah venue hire & staging costs	760	952	-20%
Music purchase & hire cost to choir	12	570	-98%
Postage, freight & courier	-	11	-100%
Printing & stationery	84	-	-
Rehearsal conductor & accompanist costs	4,175	4,420	-6%
Rehearsal refreshment costs	387	653	-41%
Spring concert soloists & orchestra	2,117	-	-
Spring concert venue hire & staging costs	975	-	-
Subscriptions	380	200	90%
Summer concert expenses	-	116	-100%
Summer concert soloists & orchestra	-	1,060	-100%
Summer concert venue hire & staging costs	-	630	-100%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>19,408</b>	<b>24,562</b>	<b>-21%</b>

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<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>3,834</b>	<b>(2,784)</b>	<b>238%</b>
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<b>Net Cash Movement</b>	<b>3,834</b>	<b>(2,784)</b>	<b>238%</b>
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## Summary

<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>14,648</b>	<b>17,432</b>	<b>-16%</b>
<b>Plus Net Cash Movement</b>	<b>3,384</b>	<b>(2,784)</b>	<b>238%</b>
<b>Cash Balance</b>	<b>18,482</b>	<b>14,648</b>	<b>26%</b>